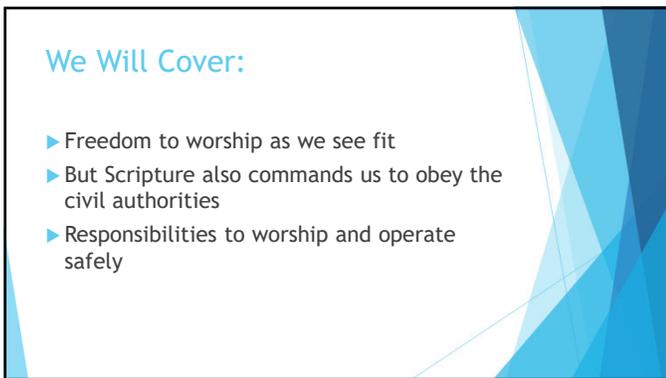
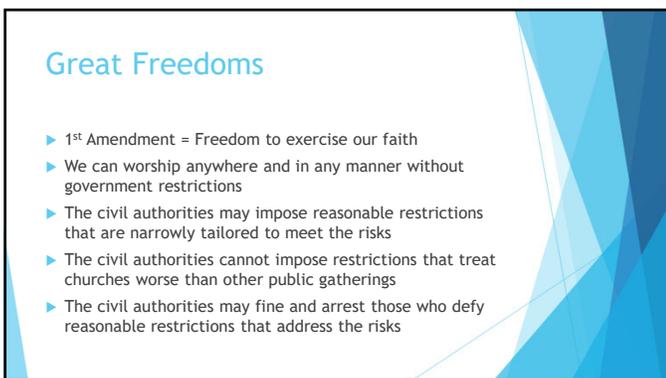


1



2



3

Responsibilities

- ▶ Integrity and excellence impose responsibilities on the church beyond government requirements
- ▶ Romans 13:1-2: *Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities (and their laws).*
- ▶ 1 Peter 2:13: *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution.*
- ▶ Titus 3:1: *Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities.*

4

Responsibilities

- ▶ The church exposes itself to liability if it fails to address risks in a reasonable manner
- ▶ Reasonableness is measured by the civil authorities mandates and suggestions
- ▶ If the church disobeys civil authority mandates and someone becomes infected at church, then the church is likely liable.
- ▶ If someone becomes infected at church, the church is also likely to be liable to everyone else that person infects.
- ▶ The chain of infection and liability will follow as far as tracing allows.

5

COVID-19 Risks

- ▶ Most cases originate with airborne droplets within six feet of the infected person
- ▶ Singing and preaching can sling droplets up to 20 feet
- ▶ Most cases require 10-15 minutes with the infected person
- ▶ Droplets may stay in the air for 1-2 hours after being released

6

COVID-19 Risks

- ▶ COVID is 2-3 times more infectious than the flu
- ▶ Each person infects 2-2.5 persons (compared to .9 for the flu)
- ▶ People transmit the infection for up to 3 days before symptoms appear
- ▶ COVID has a death rate 4 to 15 times greater than the flu

7

COVID-19 Risks

- ▶ COVID death rates escalate with age or serious illnesses
- ▶ 91% of deaths come from those over 65
- ▶ Lowest risk is to children

8

Re-Convening In-Person Worship

- ▶ Every community is different - develop plan to address known risks
- ▶ Follow all federal, state, and local suggestions, guidelines and mandates
- ▶ Plan a soft opening by inviting a small group to attend to test processes
- ▶ Tell high-risk members to stay home or develop separate service

9

Re-Convening In-Person Worship

- ▶ Have a written plan developed by small group
- ▶ Assign someone to monitor federal, state and local announcements
- ▶ Plan the experience beginning with the parking lot

10

Virginia Re- Convening In-Person Worship

- ▶ Seating 6 feet apart except families
- ▶ Seating must be marked in 6 foot increments
- ▶ Suggest attendees wear masks
- ▶ No items passed between nonfamily members
- ▶ Single use, pre-packaged sacrament elements only
- ▶ Signs must be posted at entrances prohibiting entrance if symptomatic
- ▶ Must hang posters

11

Virginia Re-Convening In-Person Worship Suggestions

- ▶ Use separate doors for entrance and exit
- ▶ Through facilities cleaning between services
- ▶ Prop open inside doors
- ▶ Offer hand sanitizer in multiple locations
- ▶ Use touchless door entry systems and hand towel dispensers

12

Virginia Re-Convening In Person Worship Suggestions

- ▶ Eliminate bulletins and handouts
- ▶ Suspend the choir
- ▶ Suspend children and youth services
- ▶ Separate services for high risk individuals
- ▶ Suspend use of common items

13

Re-Convening In-Person Worship

- ▶ Offer masks and gloves
- ▶ Use a single entrance so you can monitor capacity issues
- ▶ Prevent congregating at entrance and lobby areas
- ▶ Monitor social distancing - even in the restrooms
- ▶ If you include congregational singing, consider requiring masks and increase social distancing

14

Re-Convening In-Person Worship

- ▶ Children services should follow all state childcare rules
- ▶ Consider using a waiver
- ▶ Dismiss a row at a time (like a funeral)

15

Planning for the Inevitable

- ▶ Develop a plan for when a attendee develops COVID-19 after attending a church event
- ▶ Plan should NOT include naming the infected individual without their permission
- ▶ Plan should address who should receive notification of the infection
- ▶ Plan should require staff to self-quarantine for 14 days if in close contact with the infected person

16

Re-Opening the Office

- ▶ Two laws: OSHA and ADA
- ▶ OSHA requires employers to provide a safe workplace
- ▶ Employers must provide personal protective equipment (masks)
- ▶ Employers must safe-distance employees from each other
- ▶ Employers must prevent congregating in groups without social distancing and masks

17

Re-Opening the Office

- ▶ ADA requires employers to reasonably accommodate disabled workers
- ▶ High risk individuals are likely protected by ADA
- ▶ Churches must work with high risk employees to find reasonable accommodations
- ▶ Sometimes the accommodation is a remote work arrangement
- ▶ Sometimes the accommodation is isolation

18

Thank you!

- ▶ Frank Sommerville, JD, CPA
- ▶ fsommerville@nonprofitattorney.com
- ▶ fsommerville@wkpz.com
