

Key Message/Question	Supporting Information and Messaging
<p>Are religious services and places of worship considered to be essential services or count towards essential travel?</p>	<p>Businesses defined in the Governor’s Order as essential businesses and operations do not include faith-based organizations or places of worship. The intent of the order is to limit gatherings of people and person-to-person contact in an effort to protect the health and safety of all Wisconsinites by slowing the spread of COVID-19. It is not a statement against the essential nature of faith and fellowship.</p> <p>Taking time at home to be mindful, meditate, and pray are great ways to practice spiritual beliefs individually or as a family.</p> <p>You can also safely view or listen to almost any form of religious services through television, radio, online video recordings, live streams, or podcasts. Speak to your religious or spiritual leaders to learn about other ways you can practice from your home.</p>
<p>Why isn’t Wisconsin allowing religious services and why are they not saying they count as “essential services” when other states are?</p> <p>Florida has a Stay at Home Order, but it specifically calls out religious services in a church, synagogue, etc. as essential.</p>	<p>Outbreaks in communities across the country have been linked to congregating for gatherings such as church services, choir rehearsals, funerals, and weddings. This has resulted in serious illness and deaths of multiple members of families and communities.</p> <p>The goal of Wisconsin’s Safer at Home order is to save lives. COVID-19 is an infectious disease that knows no boundaries or borders. The more infected people there are, the more strain will be placed on our health care system, leading to devastating results.</p> <p>Wisconsin is doing everything possible to ensure the safety of its residents. While we do not have control over what other states allow, we do have the ability to work together within our state to increase the chances that our friends, family members, neighbors, and greater community stay safe, healthy, and alive.</p> <p>Wisconsin’s Safer at Home Order protects our communities by making sure no gatherings of 10 or more people take place, and that physical distancing is practiced during all gatherings of less than 10 people. This includes religious gatherings, weddings, and funerals.</p>
<p>My community doesn’t have a confirmed case (or) My community only has a few confirmed cases. Why do I have to stay at home?</p>	<p>While there may not yet be a confirmed case in every county in Wisconsin, many new cases are confirmed every day in our state. Community spread is now documented across Wisconsin and we continually identify cases in previously unaffected areas. Because of this, it matters less if we have cases in a defined geographic area, because we are all part of a social network that has connections across the state and country to places where people have tested positive for COVID-19.</p> <p>We also know that the virus can spread before people show any symptoms, which means many people do not even know that they are spreading the virus when doing so. This makes it even more likely that the virus is present undetected throughout our state, making it all the</p>

	<p>more important to stay home, no matter how many cases are known to be present in your community.</p> <p>This means that even in an area where there are no or few confirmed cases, everyone can still play an important role in slowing the spread.</p>
<p>If our religious service is less than 10 people, is it exempt from Safer at Home?</p>	<p>There are limited exceptions to the essential travel and services restrictions described in Safer at Home. This includes essential gatherings of fewer than 10 individuals.</p> <p>It is strongly discouraged for groups of individuals to congregate no matter the circumstances or location. If a group of more than 10 individuals does congregate in a confined space (indoors or outdoors), they must practice physical distancing at all times. It is also important to limit gatherings only to people living within the same household to avoid transmitting the virus through social networks. Sick individuals should not leave their home unless obtaining necessary medical care.</p>
<p>Can our congregation gather in the church's parking lot if we stay in our cars?</p>	<p>Wisconsin's Safer at Home order does not allow for gatherings of more than 10 people in a confined space at a time, which includes areas such as parking lots and festival grounds.</p> <p>While an individual is safe in their car with the windows rolled up, it is extremely difficult to manage these types of gatherings. Areas such as parking lots also have limited access to restrooms, and participants may be tempted to get out of their cars to stretch and enjoy the weather, creating potential for the virus to spread through interaction.</p>
<p>How long are we going to have to do this?</p>	<p>The Safer at Home Order is currently in effect until 8 a.m. on Friday, April 24th, or until a superseding order is issued.</p> <p>We do not make the timeline, the virus makes the timeline. The Department of Health Services uses data to help us understand how the disease is spreading and what changes we can make to the recommendations. While we still do not know precisely how many cases we will have by April 24th, all models predict that there will be a strain on our health care systems sometime in April.</p> <p>The best thing we can do is plan for the worst and hope for the best, so that is what we are doing. When we all take Safer at Home seriously, we help to reduce the strain on our health care system and prevent increased infections and deaths.</p> <p>For now, we should not assume that we have done enough to flatten the curve, but rather that the virus is still prevalent in our state and likely increasing in spread. Our ability to continue to work together to stay Safer at Home will influence the timeline of the virus. The longer we wait to all do our best to follow the Safer at Home guidelines by challenging the order and making personal exceptions, the longer we will need to practice physical distancing.</p>