

Macon County Faith-Based Organizations,

Thank you sincerely for all that you have done during this pandemic to limit the spread of illness and save lives. We are incredibly grateful for the sacrifices you have made and adaptations you have implemented to protect the members of your organization.

If you have been monitoring the COVID-19 situation in our community, you are probably aware that our numbers continue to move in a negative direction. Numbers are surging in Macon County and across the nation and we are encouraging you to take additional steps to help us battle this pandemic.

At this time we are strongly encouraging all places of worship to transition to virtual services only through at least January 15, 2021. Our local statistics are already extremely concerning and with holidays, winter, and flu here and increasing, the situation is expected to get worse. We continue to encourage people not to gather for the upcoming holidays with people outside of their households. However, based on the data up to this point, we are confident that people will gather and additional spread of COVID-19 will be happening. These exposures put everyone, including your staff and members, at greater risk. This is not just about the risk posed if someone gets COVID-19, but also the risk of overburdening our healthcare system and long-term health implications experienced by those with COVID-19.

If you need data to support this decision, our statistics can be found at the following locations:

- 1) Our daily releases: www.maconcountyhealth.org and our Facebook page (Macon County Health Department – Decatur, IL)
- 2) County-specific metrics reflecting a positivity rate that is over double the target PLUS information regarding hospital availability: <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=6>
- 3) Mitigation Measures: <https://dceocovid19resources.com/assets/Restore-Illinois/COVID-19-Resurgence-Migitations.pdf>

If you choose to continue in-person services, please adhere to all public health guidance and recommendations. We also encourage you to follow the capacity limit of 25 people or 25% of overall room capacity, whichever is less.

We realize this presents your organization with a difficult decision to make, but we feel this is a critical time to make difficult, life-saving decisions. We appreciate all you have done and we hope that you will do everything you possibly can to help protect the lives of those in our community and beyond.

Sincerely,

Brandi Binkley