



January 3, 2022 | Nashville, TN | South Central Conference

The South Central Conference administration would like to thank the pastors and church leaders of each South Central church, company, and group for their part in staying safe over the last 24 months during the pandemic by keeping the sickness and death rate low among our membership.



As you are aware, a new variant, Omicron, is on the rise, and the protocols recommended by the conference's Emergency Response Team (**ERT**) continue to be a safe way forward for the South Central Conference. The ERT continues to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 virus and the variants affecting our communities. The medical communities and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) still call for caution, mask-wearing, physical distancing, and frequent hand washing.

The ERT continues to not recommend a return to virtual worship only for all churches. Considering the highly contagious Omicron variant, however, churches can temporarily close their buildings and return to virtual services on their own. At the very least, the ERT is recommending shorter worship services, along with continuing the mitigating practices:

- Face masks for everyone, including the vaccinated
- Social distancing of 6-feet – including hugs and “holy kisses”
- Frequent hand washing
- Clean and disinfect common areas, especially bathrooms
- Increase ventilation in the sanctuary and other spaces used for meeting
- Pray for divine protection over God's people during this pandemic

When a word of a positive test of someone who attended service is received the ERT asked the following procedure to be followed:

- Notify all church members and any others who attended at the time. Members have a right to know they may have been exposed.
- Advise members to monitor themselves for the recommended number of days and get tested.
- Close down in-person worship for at least 10-days while the church building is re-cleaned and disinfected.
- Review safety protocols and tighten up in areas that need attention.

We encourage our members to continue to wear face masks, practice social distancing, and consider responsible vaccination.

Recognizing the fluid nature of the virus, the South Central Conference administration will continue to monitor the situation and share updates at appropriate times. The safety of our employees, staff, students, and constituents remains our highest priority.

We join you in staying prayerful and being adherent to the counsel found in God's word, “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*” *Philippians 4:6 NIV*

*South Central Conference headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee serves as the regional office of the Seventh-day Adventist church serving Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and counties of the state of Florida west of the Apalachicola River. South Central comprises more than 38,000 members in 149 congregations and is one of the eight conferences located in the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

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