

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Intergenerational Discipleship at St. Paul's Smoke Church

A Thesis Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

By

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Intergenerational ministry through discipleship is found in the archetype of Christ and His disciples. St. Paul's Smoke Church in Windsor Township, Pennsylvania, has impacted and influenced the area through many centuries in the generational call to follow Christ. The church has seen its ebbs and flows. In the past decade, membership has tremendously decreased, but the heart of love for God and its community is lasting. The pandemic of COVID-19 had limited ministry in the traditional sense. Still, the unorthodox ways of ministry were sought out and employed to continue St. Paul's Smoke Church in its operation and functionality while hoping for growth. Sunday service was the strong anchor while prayer, encouragement, and practical solutions were the substance of ministry. Research methods include observation, first-hand knowledge, demographic data, interviews, surveys, and a Bible study on discipleship. The study shows that intergenerational ministry in love toward one another cannot be stopped by rules and regulations and in fact, causes many to walk closer with the Lord. The project does open a door to many other subtopics of research including successes, showing what worked, and failures, showing what was not working, in ministry during the pandemic. Further research should branch into church preparedness and prevention for the future existence of the church in power and authority outreaching with love into the world.

Intergenerational Ministry, Discipleship, Pandemic, Unorthodox, Glory

To my Mom, Julia, son, Aaron, and daughter, Cassie

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Abbreviations

DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
LUSOD	<i>Liberty University School of Divinity</i>
ELCA	<i>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America</i>
COVID-19	<i>COronaVirus Disease in 2019</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

The ministry to the younger generation at St. Paul's Smoke Church in Windsor Township, Pennsylvania requires serious attention. The problem is that there is little substance offered in discipleship training or programs that minister to young adults. The pastor had left for vacation and subsequently retired during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The membership majority at St. Paul's Smoke Church are in the sixty-plus age group and young adults are in the single-digit membership class while youth are just a little more in number. The church has been left through the pandemic as almost non-existent. The last permanent serving pastor did not have a young adult discipleship group. The church's membership has been on a steady decline. The need to attract young adults into the church and disciple those already present is an immediate concern. The ministry context includes attracting young adults to the church to disciple and raise up a generation within St. Paul's Smoke Church with significant attention to intergenerational ministry. Older adults ministering to and with young adults is the idea of the intergenerational ministry. The purpose is to teach the older generation to minister to the young adults to see their generation thrive into life and fulfill the legacy of St. Paul's Smoke Church.

Assuming the young adults would be present for a weeknight bible study on discipleship with the older generation, much work can begin with understanding and learning the process of discipleship according to the example of Jesus and the twelve apostles. Remembering that discipleship is the call to follow Jesus through the enlightenment by the holy Word of God and following Jesus in His carrying of the cross, the Bible study will serve well the people of St.

Paul's Smoke Church.¹ Loving discipleship manifests to the one who is willing to sit at the feet of Jesus through intimate relationship and witness the destiny of Christ through glorification.² The discipleship study can also be performed within the activities inherently held in St. Paul's Smoke Church. Assuming the older generation would be willing to attend the class and that the pandemic would not hinder the study, weekly meetings could be successful in training the generations. Limitations are noted with the pandemic and the spread of COVID-19. The fall and winter seasons present cold/flu season and COVID-19 must be considered along with strict adherence to proper social distancing guidelines with mask requirements according to the Governor of Pennsylvania, Tom Wolf, and the Department of Health Secretary, Dr. Rachel Levine. Proper sanitizing of chairs, handles, light switches, tabletops, and bathrooms are to be religiously performed before and after each meeting. The amount of time spent in this study is limited to attendance and the conditions of the pandemic. Online work and ministry were reported as not optional. The church does not have online service as many members do not use computers or have email addresses.

Ministry Context

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, church services were not held at St. Paul's until August of 2020. The acting pastor was on vacation with plans of moving straight

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Victoria Barnett, *Discipleship*, vol. 4 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), xvii.

² Christopher W. Skinner et al., *Cruciform Scripture: Cross, Participation, and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 145.

into retirement.³ The concern of COVID-19 spread did press hard on the fact that the church majority is elderly: above sixty or retirement age. St. Paul's Church reopened through an invitation for the researcher to come and serve in the Sunday service as a guest pastor during the third week of August. Letters were sent out to all the families of the church with a special invite to the young adults. An outdoor service was planned with car parking staggered and a place in the grassy area for members to sit in chairs spaced within proper six feet distancing. Masks were made a requirement and provided if needed. Bulletins with service instructions and guidelines were given upon entry to the parking lot along with communion cups. The first Sunday service was beautiful at nine o'clock in the morning with sunshine. A voluntary lector, with experience, of being eight decades young, was happy to step up and do the readings. Announcements were made about the coming week's roll call of lectures and those wishing to volunteer in helping with the parking lot. The first call of Christ to a disciple is often answered with an obedient deed rather than the confession of faith.⁴ The attendance was at forty-seven: a good turnout for the congregation. Members who could not be present due to illness were mentioned in prayer. After the service, the congregation, if desirous, stayed to meet the guest pastor. Many were encouraged to come back and bring members of their families and friends of the neighborhood with them. The following week's service was just as wonderful with two young men showing up who were invited by word of mouth from the researcher, now known as the guest pastor, to the father. For a disciple of Christ, there is a direct correlation between call and obedience.⁵ The obedient in

³ Elle Rulavage, Church Background. Personal, August 4, 2020.

⁴ Bonhoeffer and Barnett, *Discipleship*, 17.

⁵ Ibid.

attendance were forty members. During the following month of September service was led through the graciousness of retired pastors assigned from the ELCA, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, to St. Paul's Smoke Church. The attendance for the first week of September dropped to thirty. With the declining attendance in September, it is necessary to give this background of the Smoke Church today. Unfortunately, many on the board believed the church was being left to slowly die and that their church was diminishing in size but would like to see growth while being keenly aware of the pandemic and attendance issues therein. Consideration was previously given to the annexation from the ELCA with openness to available remedies.



Figure 1.1. St Paul's Smoke Church in Edenburg, Windsor Township, Berks County, PA.⁶

The record of attendance shows low numbers in Smoke Church's early beginnings, followed by growth, sustained growth, and diminishing attendance to this present day. The years have made marked success within the community. The establishment of the church is historic and many of the members attend with the hopes of seeing Smoke Church continue to outlast the weathered years of history. The endurance of Smoke Church is remarkable, especially with relevance toward its inception before the birth of the United States of America, with its land grant from John Penn and a group of early settlers. As Zechariah 4:10 reads, "For whoever has

⁶ Elle Rulavage (Hamburg, December 12, 2021).

despised the day of small beginnings shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel,” (English Standard Version).

St. Paul’s Smoke Church began with a land grant from John Penn and a group of early settlers on November 6th, 1756, with a log cabin building where the open fire would leak smoke through the seams to the outside, thus the name Smoke Church.⁷ The North American Indians found Pennsylvania home but were a contention for the early settlers. The church was burnt down by the Indians in 1768 and rebuilt by the congregation in 1769.⁸ The second log cabin church stayed for sixty-three years. In 1832, a new substantial Smoke Church made of stone was built. Although remodelled in 1868 and 1892, the same church stands today. Part of the cemetery holds graves of the friendly Indians. Through the centuries, much land was donated, purchased, and even some sold off.

The language of St. Paul’s Smoke Church was German up until 1913; all church services were spoken in German. In the year 1916, a bit of bad fortune literally struck the church building though a lightning strike. Several rafters caught on fire, but with the help of people nearby, it was extinguished quickly. Smoke Church’s history is full of prayers and miracles with breakthroughs of manifestation.

There was a time, not quite so long ago, when Smoke Church had a vibrant congregation with children attending Sunday school. Church records were kept well. Readings of the genealogies in the Bible are commonly perceived as boring, but the importance of recording and

⁷ St. Paul's Church, *St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Smoke Church* (Hamburg, PA: St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Smoke Church, 1981), 5.

⁸ *St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Smoke Church*, 5.

listing hold historical value with lineage.⁹ Baptisms recorded were highest in the period of the 1800s, while the 1900s dropped in number, and decline continued into the twenty-first century. The church's growth peaked in congruence with number of baptisms, in the 1800s, while every century after showed a significant decline. The decline became so great that in some years of this twenty-first century, the recorded number of baptisms was zero. Sadly, church participation has significantly decreased. If the members at St. Paul's Smoke Church are wondering if their church will survive, they may not be the only church. Defeat and discouragement are not unwarranted as sixty-six percent of churches are in decline.¹⁰ The older generation is the majority. The next generation is currently not active in bible study, which is partly due to the pandemic and its temporary orders. Another impetus to the non-attendance of young adults is the lack of discipleship programs or meetings in a formal setting other than the Sunday service in at least a decade.

When speaking with two young men and a younger woman of Smoke Church, discipleship training was noted as not provided nor presented for more than a decade. The young adults at Smoke Church are in the age range from eighteen to thirty-two and are few. The father of the two young men does attend church as well. However, the father, upon this researcher's first meeting with him, had mentioned his hopes for his younger adult son to come to church. A request was made for the invitation for the younger son to attend the following week's service, who did attend the following week and the next with his older brother. The mother and father of

⁹ David Arthur DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022), 159.

¹⁰ Thom S. Rainer, *Scrappy Church: God's Not Done Yet* (Nashville, TN: B & H Books, 2018), 19.

the young lady do attend church. There is hope as the surrounding community is an average size where many more fish can be caught and taught. The next generation must be called into the church and the discipleship process should begin to expand there. It's important to remember that the generation after Joshua did not know God, nor His works (Judg. 2:7) Psalm 78 tells of the importance of teaching the next generation. Standing here on the edge with this next generation in a place of longing to know God, His works and faithfulness are inseparable lasting connections to God and His character.¹¹ Like Joshua's generation, the people of God at St. Paul's should be active and engaged in the purposes of God but not so much so that they forget to teach the next generation.¹² The responsibility in telling the stories of those who went before in the faith and the witness of each testimony present is priceless to the process of growing the generations in the love of God. Generational accountability secures the spiritual climate in the local community in reinforcing the pillars of the faith in the local culture.

During the last century, St. Paul's Smoke Church had Sunday school classes and the Spies group. The Spies group consisted of younger adults and youth of teenage years that did a lot of fun and meaningful activities together such as cleaning and painting areas of the church, hayrides, bowling, and swimming parties. A baseball game was played between those in the church over thirty and under thirty in age; it was a great way to bring together older and younger generations for some fun and joyful activity. There was no mention of prayer before, during, or after the activities. Applying the teachings of Jesus in a very practical way to resolve problems

¹¹ Heath Adamson, *Until All Know: Wholeheartedly Devoted to Jesus and His Dream* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2017), 27.

¹² Adamson, *Until All Know*, 26.

and issues in the lives of young adults within the current culture is a great way to exercise faith.¹³ The Spies group could be a successful way of finding God and His word in real-life places and activities. Making the case for Christ and sharing God's Word and His ways are the best representation to living a whole life.¹⁴ Perhaps starting ministry with this old tradition of the Spies group could be useful and built upon to include the next generation, as with the baseball game.

Another tradition of St. Paul's Smoke Church is a sandwich sale that takes place six or seven times per year.¹⁵ Church members join together to make sandwiches and sell them to benefit the church. It is a great way to draw the community to the church and to also have an intergenerational ministry. The old and the young can help in the preparation of the sandwiches, taking orders, delivery, and pick-up. So many volunteers can help ease the burden and, when structured well, can prove great success. Easter candy is another similar activity/fundraiser done at St. Paul's Smoke Church. For about six weeks prior to Easter the candy-makers gathered once per week to work on the production of the infamous candy. The same reasoning works well as with the sandwich sales and the younger generation can learn priceless recipes with a wonderful memory. Both the sandwich sale and the candy making events were initially started in March of 2020, only to be placed on hold due to the pandemic. Unfortunately, neither have returned to active status. Relationships are active during these church activities and are vital in the faith of

¹³ Jonathan Pokluda, *Welcoming the Future Church: How to Reach, Teach, and Engage Young Adults* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2020), 22.

¹⁴ Ibid, 23.

¹⁵ Rulavage, Church Activities, Personal, October 25, 2020.

this generation. Experiencing community together through believing hearts is the conventional faith-builder, just as Jesus and His disciples did.¹⁶

Annually, the church held a Christmas Bazaar which took place the first Saturday in the month of November.¹⁷ Bazaars began at the end of the nineteenth century in the Church of England and many other churches, such as Smoke Church, and were essential as a viable source of income supplemented to the church through friends and people in the local area and kept in this tradition throughout the centuries.¹⁸ Tables were filled with local crafts, children's prizes, and other interests as the community and church gathered in the spirit of Christmas to benefit St. Paul's Smoke Church. Yearly, this event was always considered successful. Many local vendors, craftsmen, and artisans joined alongside St. Paul's Smoke Church to display their best of work and hot items that peaked more than enough interest to perpetuate a booming sale. Unfortunately, since the pandemic, the Christmas Bazaar has not been held at St. Paul's Smoke Church in Hamburg, Pennsylvania. Although the Christmas Bazaar has not taken place, there is still hope for a year when it will happen again. Also, the church employed Christmas caroling as a means of outreach to the community and especially to the local nursing home during the annual holiday season. This was an intergenerational activity as many adults and children enjoyed visiting the elderly bearing gifts and delivering a song of love. Christmas caroling has not been activated since the pandemic. May the same hope of resurrected life found in Christ to the believer be

¹⁶ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kindred, and Purity*, 239.

¹⁷ Rulavage, Church Activities.

¹⁸ S. J. Green, "The Death of Pew-Rents, the Rise of Bazaars, and the End of the Traditional Political Economy of Voluntary Religious Organisations: The Case of the West Riding of Yorkshire, c. 1870–1914," *Northern History* 27, no. 1 (1991), 205.

extended to the candy and sandwich sales too at St. Paul's Smoke Church through the believing faithful. May these long-standing traditions of the church make a roaring comeback that will create connections, fellowship in the faith, and great memories for all involved, while championing the case of discipleship in a very practical, but mystical way.

The Sunday service is by far the most ritualistic and traditional, characterizing its firm devotion of faith by all who attend St. Paul's Smoke Church. The church was consistently never without a Sunday service until the pandemic and had always been the most predictable act of faith in unison by the congregation of St. Paul's Smoke Church. The service follows the format of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Sunday school was available to the children in the classroom areas of the church.

Smoke Church has been kept well.¹⁹ The sanctuary is remarkably pristine. The other offices and school rooms are constructed well, kept neat and orderly. The front door requires minor repair in the glass area. At this time, offices are only used as needed due to the pandemic. Some historicity hangs on the walls in pictures and plaques giving a quick glimpse into the church. An office and a meeting room that holds a copier, computer, some paper, and many of the prayer and service books used throughout the years are located upstairs. The classrooms have traditional chalk and blackboard with many books and some toys. The downstairs holds a huge dining room or meeting area with a regular-sized kitchen. There are ovens, a refrigerator, a microwave, coffee pots, and many more of the utensils that make a church kitchen ready for use. A few recipes are recorded into an older notebook with hand-written ink. An older organ is kept downstairs with a very unique sound and a piano as well. Many books line some of the walls in

¹⁹ Rulavage, Elle, Church Building, Personal, August 23, 2020.

the downstairs. Bathrooms are located upstairs and downstairs, multi-use with stalls and designated separately for female and male. In spite of the pristine conditions and adequate resources, there is no Sunday school due to the pandemic nor church gatherings of celebration. The Israelites worshipped God with exuberant celebrations to thank God for what He had done and what He would do.²⁰ Let the evidence clearly show that St. Paul Smoke Church did gather in such rooms to celebrate with thankfulness to God and hopefully soon will do so again.

The council meets every second Wednesday of the month. At the meeting the researcher attended, Robert's Rules of Order or other standards are not the normal setting, which allows for open and free discussion. However, Robert's Rules of Order had always been utilized in the meetings prior to the pandemic. The September meeting happened as usual but only had five members in attendance. The council is formed through dual roles; congregant, a recipient of ministry, and leader, an instrument of ministry.²¹ The hope concerning the survival of this church is very much dependent upon bringing a younger adult generation into the church, a huge immediate need to minister to the very small group of young adults presently in attendance to train in discipleship, and activities that promote a practical application of healthy and wholesome life in Christ. At the initial meeting in August, with the partial council in which the researcher attended, the focus was pointed toward the younger generation and the ministerial hopes for the mid-life generation to mentor. Asking advice from those with wisdom engages others to be in synergy with ministry goals.²² An intergenerational ministry was briefly mentioned along with

²⁰ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kindred, and Purity*, 142.

²¹ Ann A. Michel, *Synergy: A Leadership Guide for Church Staff and Volunteers* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2017), 64.

²² *Ibid.*, 70.

the need to understand this generation through love and kindness with direction and guidance. Through time, in time, and by time the interest of leadership is proven through prolonged outcomes. The generative nature of team leadership accenting relationships with personal invitation gives rise to new leaders and synergistic expression.²³ The council was beginning in a very good place. All in attendance for the meeting were concerned about the abundant life of the Smoke Church and its continuation to serve its members and the people of the community. The council was looking forward to the first outdoor summer service. Directives were given for mailings which informed church members of the service along with a special invitation welcoming any young adults. Communication and participation were cordial and inviting. The preparation followed in the next two weeks to set up the parking lot for the Sunday service. Much excitement and a sense of hopefulness were felt in anticipation of and during the first summer outdoor Sunday service. A core group of members with care and attention helped to facilitate the grounds and dynamics for a Sunday service. Much preparation was specifically addressed to the sound system that stretched into the parking lot to allow the attendees to hear the service from each parked car. This was achieved with the assistance of many but most especially one member of expertise in delivering sound. The weather cooperated and the first outdoor summer Sunday service at Smoke Church during the pandemic of the year 2020 went very well. Grateful hearts were beating to the good and sound rhythm of the Sunday service continuum.

²³ Michel, *Synergy*, 46.



Figure 1.2. Anniversary Wooden Cut-Out of St. Paul's Smoke Church.²⁴ Figure 1.3. 250th Anniversary Vase of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Smoke Church.²⁵

Problem Presented

The problem is that St. Paul's Church in Hamburg, Pennsylvania, has trouble in ministering to young adults in the age range of eighteen to thirty-two years. The older adult population of sixty-plus years is the church majority while the younger adults in attendance have greatly subsided through the past recent decades. Young adults in weekly church attendance are normally below ten. Little to no discipleship programs or mentoring are provided to the young adults and youth members. The past serving pastor did not employ Bible study or a weeknight gathering of meeting, and the reason was not given, but members of St. Paul's Smoke Church were in attendance to Sunday service.

²⁴ Aveline Stees, n.d., n.d., accessed December 12, 2020.

²⁵ Ibid.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMin action research thesis is to train St. Paul's Church members to minister to young adults aged eighteen to thirty-two. The older population desires to see the younger generation thrive and keep the legacy of the church at St. Paul's vibrant. St. Paul's Smoke Church was born before the birth of the United States of America as a nation. The church has survived the test of time through nearly three centuries.²⁶ Membership was increasing since its inception and started declining in the later 1900s.²⁷ The church today is primarily supported by its older members who are the majority. Young adults are needed and wanted within the four walls of St. Paul's Smoke Church. Young adults with families can breathe life into the church and follow the path of many generations before them in celebrating Christ and His victory for the believers at Smoke Church in Windsor Township, Pennsylvania.

Basic Assumptions

Assuming that the congregation is capable of interacting with the surveyor and able to answer questions regarding the size and attendance, as well as ministry to the young adults throughout time, answers will be relevant to the study at hand. Responses may be a small amount as the church size has been in steady decline of membership. Because the young adult members are very few, the ratio is a step down from old to young adult members, limiting resulting interpretations. The church has seen significant and steady decline during the last two decades and the young adult membership is in the single digits, therefore, it will be assumed that any

²⁶ St Paul's Church, *St Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Smoke Church*, 5.

²⁷ Ibid, 124.

single digit growth is a positive result and any growth of discipleship in sustaining the number is a positive result in ministry.

Definitions

Discipleship is found in the Biblical definition, Matthew 28:18-20, and follow the way of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Young adults in this study are within the ages of eighteen to thirty-two years of age. COVID-19 is defined as the new coronavirus that has caused the worldwide pandemic in the year 2020.²⁸

Limitations

Information and facts of the church are limited to the supply of resources such as two commemorative books, verbal knowledge acquired, observation, and surveys taken. Surveys will be limited in number according to the participatory church members; the congregation is small. Answers to surveys will be dependent upon the understanding of questions by the respondent. The pandemic limits the participants and church attendance in a practical setting. Virtual or online church ministry is not available to the congregation, and it is a limitation in outreach or connection and possible response. Church services are subject to change according to an available pastor, attendance, and the pandemic. The pandemic guidelines in the state of Pennsylvania are subject to change according to the order of the Governor and Secretary of Health in the state. At the beginning of the pandemic, the acting Governor was Tom Wolf, and

²⁸ Lauren M. Sauer, "What Is Coronavirus?," Johns Hopkins Medicine, accessed date? March 19, 2021, <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus>, 1.

the Secretary of Health was Admiral Dr. Levine, MD.²⁹ As of January 2021, Dr Levine was followed by Dr. Denise Johnson, MD.³⁰ The council of the church ultimately permits or decides upon the acceptance of programs of discipleship, groups, and meeting times. The number of active members of the church who are willing and able to participate may limit the results.

Delimitations

Discipleship is a vast study and will be limited to the direct need and response of St. Paul's Smoke Church. The pandemic is an active reality and face masks or cloth coverings in conversation and meetings are required. Meetings may happen in person, through email or over the net in a Zoom conversation. A phone conversation may be substituted in preference to face-to-face meetings or interviews.

Thesis Statement

If adults at St. Paul's Church in Hamburg, Pennsylvania learn to minister to those younger, ages eighteen to thirty-two, then intergenerational ministry may occur and the legacy of St. Paul's Smoke Church, an older church in Berks County, will be vitalized and active in growing up the next generation. Growing the next generation requires dedication in service with attendance. Ministry between the young and the old is an essential part of giving of the cross as in the way of giving or sharing a part of oneself to another. Giving love, support, direction,

²⁹ "Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf," Governor Tom Wolf (2022 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, July 15, 2022), accessed date, <https://www.governor.pa.gov/>.

³⁰"Leadership," Department of Health (2022 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania), accessed September 26, 2022, <https://www.health.pa.gov/About/Pages/Leadership.aspx>.

guidance, a word of wisdom, patience, time and so much more is all part of the process of discipleship. Core biblical beliefs concerning legacy, identity, belonging, and purpose unites all generations.³¹ If the younger adults have the time to take to spend in a study with those of the older generation, a great exchange can occur, which is priceless.

³¹ Meredith Gould, *Transcending Generations: A Field Guide to Collaborations in Church* (City, state: Liturgical Press, 2017), 32.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

Themes are expounded upon in the literature review section of this chapter. The literature review is the section that supports the thesis project proposal and is richly filled with corresponding information. The theological context provides supportive study of the faith through much use of commentary. The theoretical foundation is expanded to provide visionary steps of action with reactionary resultants.

Literature Review

Teaching the Next Generation True Discipleship

Scholarly authors tend to agree the process of discipleship in the Church is multi-generational and dynamic. Ken Castor argues that “Like a relay race, God’s blueprint for discipleship and evangelism historically has been the generational hand-off of faith and leadership.”³² Discipleship is a process that places a young child or baby born into the family of Christ into growth. Growing can be spurred on through many factors including prayer, teaching, mentoring, and interaction with others. There is a divine doctrine of theology found in the four gospels of the church. Kevin VanHoozer files it as a process: from learning what Christ said and did, His doctrine, to doing, speaking, and being for Christ; in the discipleship of Him, theology lies in service of the Church.³³

³² Ken Castor, “God’s Equipping Pattern for Youth and Young Adult Ministry,” in *Teaching the Next Generations: A Comprehensive Guide for Teaching Christian Formation*, by Terry Lindart (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 188.

³³ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers: A Pastor's Guide to Making Disciples through Scripture and Doctrine* (Bellingham, VA: Lexham Press, 2019), 9.

Discipleship begins with the call of Christ Jesus. The call in the words of Christ Jesus goes out and the obedient follow.³⁴ Seeing Christ, the disciple hears His words and follows; faith is found. A portrait of faith found in the action of obedience to the call. It is not a spoken confession of faith but an action of obedience that validates the proof of faith. Discipleship begins and furthers in obedience to the call of Christ. The obedient remain disciples and continue in the practice of listening to Christ and following His words through the free will of obedience. Who drops everything and follows Christ? Why, a disciple does of course! The disciple is not coerced, threatened, pushed, or pulled. The disciple has clearly heard the simple call of Christ Jesus and follows Him.

Today, young adults are speaking of connection. In Christ, there is so much more than just connection. Adam Thomas prefers to think of it as a place where two or more are gathered in Jesus' name which brings more than connection but rather a place of communion.³⁵ Before and through the COVID-19 pandemic, the church was a place a disciple went to. Chap Clark and Steven Argue write that the house church is virtually reaching into disciple's homes just as the early church's beginning was formed with success in small house churches and furthers in stating that adoptive ministry is the placement of every believer into a Christian community; the mission is connecting with Christ here on earth in the family.³⁶

³⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Barbara Green, and Reinhard Krauss, *Discipleship: Readers Edition* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 17.

³⁵ Adam Thomas, *Digital Disciple: Real Christianity in a Virtual World* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), chap.2, EBSCO, Ebook Collection.

³⁶ Chap Clark and Steven Argue, *Adoptive Church: Creating an Environment Where Emerging Generations Belong* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 4.

The call to discipleship is more than a mind thing positioned in the land sweet by and by. Jeff Vanderstelt asserts that the disciples of Christ in the church uniquely see time, money, and abilities as assets to serve those in their cities and the church in bringing the love of Christ and salvation.³⁷ Giving with a heart of love is a part of a disciple's very being in gifts and talents. The church knows it as binding up the broken-hearted, proclaiming Christ's victory into freedom for those who are held captive, and bringing light into the darkness in the name of Jesus. This is the road of men and women into discipleship for this generation and the next.

Development of Self and Others in the Process of Discipleship to Further Character, Purpose, and Identity

The process of discipleship develops oneself and others continually. Craig Blomberg and Elisabeth Nesbit Sbanotto argue that growing in the faith within the church should be a womb-to-the-tomb proceeding reaching past the threshold of salvation and into the entirety of the life journey.³⁸ The journey is anointed through salvation and moves along through the counsel and wisdom of God with power. Terry Linhart argues that the stratagem of God is necessary and powerful when building the devoted Christian into an alliance with His Spirit.³⁹ Stratagem is that which maps the movement of His kingdom into reality on earth. Within the book of Jeremiah, readers learn that God knew them before He formed them in their mother's womb. As a disciple,

³⁷ Jeff Vanderstelt, *Saturate: Being Disciples of Jesus in the Everyday Stuff of Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 23.

³⁸ Craig L. Blomberg and Elisabeth A. Nesbit Sbanotto, *Effective Generational Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 260.

³⁹ Terry Linhart, *Teaching the Next Generations: A Comprehensive Guide for Teaching Christian Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 212.

Christians rise from death to life of everlasting glory in the grace, mercy, righteousness, and power of Christ Jesus.

Jana Sundene and Richard Dunn believe relationships are found in discipleship rather than formularies.⁴⁰ Relationships are founded from birth within the family and grow in time to include friends and professionals. In discipleship, there is a commitment to serve others and God in allowing His divine to enter the world and, most especially, into every community. Holly Allen thinks that partnership with God and people is willful and that a choice to change for the sake of another in humility is Christ-like.⁴¹ It is the love of God that compels Christians to love another in act of helping or answering a need. Prayer, the way to dialogue with God, is a daily choice as somedays prayer is often and others a one-word groan. Finding God present and working in relationships throughout life shows His faithfulness and dedication to Jesus' promise to His disciples of always being with them as written in Matthew 28:20.

Every person is valued and gifted by God. Many leaders are brought up firm in the faith through the power of discipleship. Clark and Argue believe that through partnering in leadership, sons and daughters minister in celebrating the importance of a child finding their unique identity in Christ.⁴² Development of oneself can be practiced through prayer, reading God's word, and doing, or living, the Word of God. Each child is unique and special with a plethora of experiences and talents that make each priceless as a pearl to this world in bringing a very

⁴⁰ Jana L. Sundene and Richard R. Dunn, *Shaping the Journey of Emerging Adults: Life-Giving Rhythms for Spiritual Transformation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 48.

⁴¹ Holly Catterton Allen, *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2018), 43.

⁴² Clark and Argue, *Adoptive Church*, 86.

personalized part of heaven to this earth and another facet of love to God. Children of God grow to know the importance of a bright light in a dark world and keeping with Jesus to stand firm as a son or daughter of God in the gift of grace upon grace.

Kent Van Til and Richard Mouw believe that the practice of the theological virtues requires a focus on Christ and utilizing what God has given.⁴³ God has given a body, a mind, heart (soul), and a spirit to every human being. The fulfillment of every part of the human being in discipleship is found and satisfied through the presence of Christ. Setting God as the ultimate good and letting go of self-indulgent ideas or behaviors while choosing to please God and not themselves, or men, fulfills the ultimate aspiration and longing.⁴⁴ Jesus is the ultimate teacher and the standard for virtue. He is the living water that quenches the human thirst for their soul and produces rivers of life within each heart.

A consuming love for Jesus is the motivation that will keep the disciple enduring through disappointments and sorrow while following Christ. Following Christ and beholding His image makes one more Christ-like while thoughts are transformed into His mind and the heart is full of His love. Don Hawkins states that the disciple chases after the things the Teacher did, yet remarkably, some in Christianity may still be chasing after things Jesus did not.⁴⁵ He furthers in saying the disciple identifies with Christ and must be willing to carry his cross; a willingness to

⁴³ Kent A. Van Til and Richard J. Mouw, *The Moral Disciple: An Introduction to Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2012), 70.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 148.

⁴⁵ Don Hawkins, *Master Discipleship Today: Jesus's Prayer and Plan for Every Believer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Ministry, 2019), 20.

suffer unfairly and to be placed in wrongful judgment.⁴⁶ While the desire for the things of this world passes slowly away from the believer's heart, the steps are ordered by the good Lord Jesus, and the disciple obediently walks. What was once bad news becomes good news through the provision of the Savior, who lavishes His love upon humanity and brings forgiveness with the hope of everlasting life.⁴⁷

J. T. English writes that discipleship is not the path to autonomous self-improvement that leads to a throne but rather a path of self-denial that leads to the cross.⁴⁸ Through the Father's gift of love to the world, the Son, Jesus, is born to save the believer in the "agape" love of God. This love is more than self-aggrandizement, but a love that impels the disciple to help others despite contradictory feelings or rationality. The saving grace of Christ's love is magnified and multiplied within every disciple; so-much-so that the same grace and love once received is now joyfully given away. The love of a disciple is deep because the love of God is deep and inexhaustible, while His goodness and beauty are bottomless.⁴⁹

Greg Ogden determines that relational vulnerability and mutual accountability in living the Gospel together based upon the fact that the centrality of truth sharpens and grows one another.⁵⁰ An iron in use becomes dull, but when another iron scrapes off of it, it is sharpened.

⁴⁶ Hawkins, *Master Discipleship*, 20.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴⁸ J. T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2020), 22.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵⁰ Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 8.

Disciples living in the community and gathering together for prayer, study, praise, and Sunday service help one another to experience the extraordinary life of Christ in an ordinary world.

VanHoozer writes that Jesus' steps took Him into the desert and then into the Father.⁵¹ Every disciple mimics this path in a unique way. The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove is encountered at salvation, and the desert journey begins in faith and ends in power by the in-filling of the Spirit. Mary Jane Gorman teaches that a disciple should walk the path of alone time with God to be energized into life with friends and family.⁵² Vitality dynamically overcomes the monotonous or stale drudge of life and infects others with born-again creativity to find solutions with resolve and peace.

Adult Ministry as the Generational Call to Christ to Serve the Legacy of Believers

The generational call to discipleship is critical now in gaining youth and young adults into sonship and fellowship with the body of Christ. The clarion call of Christ to Cephas, James, and John resounds through the centuries to this generation of youth searching for a savior. Linhart believes the perpetual ministry of Christ and the plan of God has not been remitted from its initiation to share the faith with the succession of generations.⁵³ The legacy of the Gospel is a definite command of Christ, and the Old Testament speaks of the family repeating the goodness and faithfulness of God to its generations. In the Great Commission, found in Matthew 28, making disciples is a definite command that begins with baptism, followed by teaching all the

⁵¹ Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers*, 11.

⁵² Mary Jane Gorman, *Tending Body, Heart, Mind and Soul: Following Jesus in Caring for Ourselves* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 34.

⁵³ Linhart, *Teaching the Next Generations*, 188.

things Christ taught and did, which all the books of the world cannot contain. Essentially, once enrolled in the school of discipleship, learning is lifelong.

Homelife is the kitchen of the delicacies of God. Afterall, Christ was born into a family. Jesus at a young age, knew and understood the Torah. He was presented at the Temple by His parents, Mary and Joseph. Mary kept with her son and was standing with Jesus at the time of His painful, grave suffering at the cross. Family life is the idea of Father God. Kendra Creasy Dean states that youth ministry begins at home in Christian formation.⁵⁴ Early days of prayer at night and at the table are pre-cursors to the effective prayer of the righteous. Family love and faith is passed along in different occasions and challenges. Parental love is the beginning of knowing the “agape” love of the Father. Discipleship partakes in the same “agape” love to share much with others, even as strangers.

Ogden believes that Christians who intentionally walk alongside youth and young adults in disciple-making into the Gospel by means of encouragement, correction, challenge, and love, are ensuring that each will grow into the maturity of Christ.⁵⁵ Walking alongside another requires time with steadfastness and in the bigger picture of life, years of steadfastness are required. The blessed hope brings much to pass in the changing of a young newborn into a headstrong and young born-again believer. Dunn and Sundene write of the easy-button as desirable, but state in the long scheme of things that there is nothing more lasting than life change through Christ that

⁵⁴ Kendra Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (New York, NY; Oxford University Press, 2010), 111.

⁵⁵ Ogden, *Intergenerate*, 8.

sets one on a path uniquely made for a purpose without inefficiency.⁵⁶ Prepared disciples are ones who have voluntarily allowed the Holy Spirit to direct each step into muddy waters while wanting a drink from the deep well of sparkling clear salvation.

Disciples are a part of movements that bring the love of God to others in many different ways for multi-faceted purposes. The key, according to English, is to know how-to, whom-to, and when-to raise the bar in discipleship.⁵⁷ Today's young adults would like to be disciples while ministering as leaders in mission-based movements. The local church must be able to press forward to want to not only make disciples but grow disciples out of young adults. Just as foresight and protection is significantly placed towards baby believers not drowning in deep waters, so must the same wisdom know that shallow waters must deepen for the maturing believer.⁵⁸ Selah! That's a wow! Taking that statement to task requires intentionality for the greater glory and purpose of God while diligently overseeing and planning opportunities for growth in the body of Christ with prayer. The church must do more than keep disciples; they are to forge each into the fresh water of cultivation and growth for the young Christian adult.

The disciples knew the propulsion of discipleship through the love of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Rod Dempsey and Dave Earley look to the twelve young followers of Christ, who abandoned all and immersed into His life.⁵⁹ Suddenly each was transformed into an apostle

⁵⁶ Sundene and Dunn, *Shaping the Journey*, 58.

⁵⁷ English, *Deep Discipleship*, 3n.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2013), 85.

that lived and died for the faith. If Christians want youth and young adults to be like Jesus, then they must move them from the huddle to the game.⁶⁰ Just like the young disciples of Christ, the youth are being called today. Mark DeVries and Scott Pontier claim that young adults are actively looking into ways to make an impact and change the world through the Gospel.⁶¹ Has the church responded to the cause? To answer that question, the following facts and figures are presented.

Challenges of the Church

Although the church wants to follow the instruction of the Word of God, it is a possibility for some aspects of legacy to be compromised from generation to generation through many attacks of evil in sin and some recognized as cultural changes within the onset of technological successes. Although the church, and most especially its leaders, would have every successive generation in nature be a disciple of its dominion, recently, in a polling of Americans and the subject of faith, most sadly, quite a different result is shown. Surveys and data report that younger adults are less active in religious places and activities than those in prior generations. According to an American Perspectives Survey, about one-third of young adults, within the age group of 18-29, say they have never experienced attending church in their formative years, while a little less than one-third of young-adults have said they have attended church with their parents

⁶⁰ Chap Clark, *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century: Five Views* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 164.

⁶¹ Mark DeVries and Scott Pontier, *Sustainable Young Adult Ministry: Making It Work, Making It Last* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2019), 60.

once weekly.⁶² Fifty percent of seniors today have said they experienced attending church in their formative years. The results show that younger adults have participated less often in family prayer or church services than the generations before.⁶³ A 2017 survey shows that thirty-nine percent of young adults aged 18-29 years are unaffiliated to any religious belief.⁶⁴ A twenty percent difference in comparison with adults between the ages of 50-64 where eighteen percent are religiously unaffiliated. In today's USA, around thirty-five percent of those aged 18-49 were married in a religious setting and roughly seventeen percent were married by a religious leader in a non-religious location.⁶⁵ Compare that figure with the roughly fifty-six percent of those who were married in a religious location with a religious leader within the 50 plus age group and eleven percent married at a non-religious location by a religious leader.⁶⁶ The decline in age groups is twenty percent in weddings in a religious location with a religious leader and an eight percent decline in weddings still employing a religious leader but in a non-religious setting. When comparing younger parents in the age group of 18-29 with those who are now 65 and older, and at one time were raising children, there is roughly a twenty percent decline in the younger age group in the portion of parents who took children to church and a thirty percent

⁶² Daniel Cox, "The Decline of Religion in American Family Life," American Enterprise Institute, (American Perspectives Institute, December 11, 2019), <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/the-decline-of-religion-in-american-family-life/>.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Erin Duffin, "United States: Religious Affiliation by Age 2017," *Statista*, July 2, 2019, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/245453/religious-affiliation-in-the-united-states-by-age/>.

⁶⁵ Cox, "The Decline of Religion".

⁶⁶ Ibid.

decline in parents who used religious education or Sunday School services. DeVries and Pontier note that less than ten percent of churches place a high value on young adult ministry.⁶⁷

James Emery White mentions that this generation is the first in Western society to grow up in a post-Christian world where sexual fluidity and global circles are a given, but Christ is not.⁶⁸ With little to no parenting and latch-key school years, this generation seems to be “growing much older, younger.”⁶⁹ The church needs to allow God to show up in His powerful voice, whichever medium that is, with blinding flashes of light that record thunderous volumes of growth.⁷⁰ Intersectionality of the virtual connectedness with isolation transposes a pioneer of virtual paths through cell phones and tablets into virtual environments that have the capability in bringing the witness of Christ through virtual people. Problems arise with the incarnation as Jesus came in the flesh and so being together or gathering and being in one accord in discipleship is more than a virtual experience, but a living reality. While the virtual seems to be a safe space to parents, the methods to fraud and posers are many for those who infiltrate with harmful intent while the temptations of sin to the user are limitless. Safe spaces are defined by ideology but proven within performance results. The living reality of Christ to every believer is a safe prayer space coupled with an empowered spirit that does good, often with signs and wonders, in their place of this world.

⁶⁷ DeVries and Pontier, *Sustainable Young Adult Ministry*, 11.

⁶⁸ James Emery White, *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017), 58.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 97.

God's response may take years while Google's response is instantaneous.⁷¹ The church is losing young adults in its exclusivity, hypocrisy, and failures to a rise of the "nones" – those with no religious affiliation.⁷² Vanhoozer brings up a good point in writing that the church is included among the institutions distrusted by extreme suspicions today, yet the church is the only institution biblically mandated to make disciples throughout the world.⁷³ A metaphoric interpretation written as a conundrum of distrust while appealing to seekers to trust in Jesus. If the "nones" are not seeing Jesus, they are not hearing Jesus either. The Gospel, unfortunately, has been used at the expense of many to the advantage of a few select chosen ones. Pedophile priests or pastors have paved a road of hardships to victims of abuse while an air of absolute disgust and distrust was left in its wake. Young adults and youth have heard the testimony of abuse and viewed the witness of church hurt in the #churchtoo movement where the church has done little in sincere, earnest faith for an apology and even righteousness.

Of those young adults that have tried church for a certain amount of time, much disappointment and disinterest have resulted. DeVries and Pontier comment that while church-speak says that waiting longer is an apprenticeship, they suggest the church should shift from high-intensity messages to group learning environments that proliferate social change and justice missions.⁷⁴ Many young adults are successful CEOs running high-tech companies while still encountering little to no responsibility or respect from the church. Young adults polled said that

⁷¹ White, *Meet Generation Z*, 5.

⁷² Clark and Argue, *Adoptive Church*, 26.

⁷³ Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers*, 80.

⁷⁴ DeVries and Pontier, *Sustainable Young Adult Ministry*, 66.

mentorship, depth, social justice, and community are the substantial factors that would help to keep them in church attendance.⁷⁵ Yet, it is found that many of those employed by the church do ministry to the saints not with the saints. English coins this the expert-amateur divide: those on stage, some with microphones, some writing curriculum, and others teaching or instructing who may be much more interested in performance than inviting others into participation.⁷⁶ These spiritual ministry leaders may consider themselves the elite, while the so-called amateurs sit and observe. But St. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:12 that the purpose of the church is to equip the saints, and that is not merely observation, but to prepare the saints to do the work of ministry. Truly great leaders in the church remove distance between the student and teacher by inviting each to participate in the five-fold ministry of the church.⁷⁷ John Mabry has found that many young adults agree that spiritual growth is important but cannot exactly define what spiritual growth is.⁷⁸ This is a very telling answer to an inexperienced generation of Christian young adults of ministry.

Due to the mainstay of the world-wide-web, culture is rapidly changing, and discernment of truth is in high demand for young adults. Edward Hammett, Paul Anderson, and Cornell Thomas write about how the church offers its own culture, yet the church can be a safe place for

⁷⁵ DeVries and Pontier, *Sustainable Young Adult Ministry*, 60.

⁷⁶ English, *Deep Disciples*, 44.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ John R. Mabry, *Faithful Generations: Effective Ministry across Generational Lines* (New York, NY: Morehouse Publishing, 2013), page number.

cultural exchange for togetherness.⁷⁹ Young adults along the journey of faith may face challenges within their distinctive generational culture in relation to the church. Every generation is born into a special, selected time that no other has quite rightly experienced the same way. The call of Esther, from the book of Esther in the Bible, is known for being born for such a time as this. This generation experiences different circumstances and cultural changes when considering prior generations. Sundene and Dunn note that young adults of this generation have chosen to delay marriage and parenthood while looking to the path of career stability hoping for financial independence with emotional freedom.⁸⁰ While many earlier generations had known family life and parenthood before career from the early age of adulthood, eighteen and beyond. The young adults of today know instantaneous results, response, with many times immediate short-term success. Childbearing is more understood to be in practice as Plan B, an emergency contraceptive used the morning after sex or up to 72 hours after for birth control. It is readily available and easily purchased with little to no long-lasting side effects other than no child. With all the quick fixes and ease in response time, the recognition of duration and staying power may be challenging within the virtue of patience to generation Z. This is a generation that has been given much but the question which matters most remain: how much will they give? Time is telling the need for more and more Christians to lay down their lives and give much love to an arriving generation that has so much more help at their fingertips than any other and whose perception of need may be skewed in physical outcomes rather than the salvation of souls, due in-part to advances in science and technology and possibly the church's advancement into the

⁷⁹ Edward H. Hammett, Paul L. Anderson, and Cornell Thomas, *Reaching People under 30 While Keeping People over 60: Creating Community across Generations* (St. Louis, MO: TCPBooks, 2015), 24.

⁸⁰ Sundene and Dunn, *Shaping the Journey*, 24.

same. Young children are exposure to sexual conduct and different genders is now a normal part of school life. Acceptance of gay marriage and alternative sexual lifestyles is quite usual and commonplace. Could it be that the believers of faith are now conforming to the world instead of separating from the world? Or is it that parents who are busy working are in lack of knowledge of today's marvels afforded to sin and the preachers are silent to its being and ill-equipped in remedy.

Allen states that the church may be lacking accommodation for young adults, but God is not as He appears in a world to humanity.⁸¹ The world is filling with poverty, wars, racism, injustice, oppression, abuse, terrorism, and many other evils, yet the peace, or "shalom," of God is available through Christ's atoning work at the cross and repentance. Young adults may be transformed into individual and collective world changers in the pursuit of justice. The wisdom of the church can empower the younger generation. A new and polished skillset with a strength given by the Holy Spirit can allow for wise choices into meaningful decisions that bring lifelong sustainability through the power and truth of the Word of God. The church cannot expect youth and younger adults to mature on their own. So many collective hurts befall this generation whose minds are often found programmed in a belief system that is far from faith in Christ. Today's basketball court of faith to salvation is filled with no-gamers, multi-gamers, bizarre gamers, out-of-the-way gamers, and offbeat gamers. Still the score is set to Jesus Christ three (3), all others nothing (0). The only shot which counts is with the ball trademarked, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and is colored a deep, rich red with God's love through Jesus Christ. Clark writes that the

⁸¹ Allen, *InterGenerate*, 41.

church can teach and live the Bible as the multi-cultural and multi-generational work it is by living the Word.⁸² The generational call of ministry has been from the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Not one is left behind as a new one is entering or making the scene. Discipleship requires wise and stable adults who know their God and the faithfulness of His good work ministering to a younger, curious, and hopeful generation just branching out into a world of success and growth still facing some of the same temptations and challenges of a life filled with new gadgets and better lighting. The writings of the review are rich in the many ways of discipleship, yet the disciples are growing less to a church that is dimming in the bright light of an LED tomorrow.

Theological Foundations

The first call to discipleship is found in Matthew 4:18. From that starting point, and continuing to read throughout the New Testament, the study of discipleship is formed for the Christian. Jesus invites His disciples into a real-life classroom where each are students and He is the teacher.⁸³ In Luke 5, catching Peter in His net, Jesus directs him to come, and He will teach him to be a fisher of men. The calling of the original eleven disciples succeeds, and each follows Jesus, not exactly understanding what this call means nor knowing what is to come, but trusting in the Christ. The journey of most of the team of the original disciples moved into oneness of

⁸² Chap Clark, *Deep Justice in a Broken World: Helping Kids Serve Others and Right the Wrongs around Them* (Grand Rapids, MI: Youth Specialties, 2008), 133.

⁸³ Martin G. Collins, "What the Bible Says About Discipleship," Bible Tools/Forerunner Commentary, 1992, <https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/4950/Discipleship.htm>.

Christ that brought headship as leaders in the original church. The answer of “yes” to the call leads each disciple into the greatest adventure within the love of God.

The calling of discipleship is still heard today to go and make disciples throughout the world and is found in the Great Commission of Christ in Matthew 28:16-20. Baptizing every disciple in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the initiation into discipleship which travels the narrow path into everlasting life. Discipleship is an on-going process of transformation and repentance, where the disciple picks up the cross and follows Jesus, no matter what the challenge and often with risk, as Jesus tells his followers in Mark 8:34-38.⁸⁴ Wesley writes that it was not until after the Pentecost that the disciples were called Christians, at Antioch in Acts 11:26; prior Galileans and Nazarenes.⁸⁵ Discipleship starts with the Father, Jesus says in John 6:44, is secured in the revelation of Christ as Peter was in Matthew 16:16, and confirmed in the words of Jesus in John 14:9. In the journey, a true disciple will stay with Jesus or abide in Him, which means to keep alive through Him and draw strength from Him which brings boldness and courage in living.⁸⁶ Life is kept in and through the truth that sets each free. One continues in His word and keeps in His way as a dedicated follower of Jesus. Christ is seen through the words one speaks and the deeds one does. As St. Paul told the Corinthians to follow him as he follows Christ (1 Cor. 11:1) church leaders show Christ by example. Remembering the words of the good Lord in John 16:7, the disciple knows that the Helper brings advantage and

⁸⁴ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 2. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 206.

⁸⁵ Kenneth J. Collins and Robert W. Wall, *Wesley One Volume Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2020), 995.

⁸⁶ H. Franklin Paschall and Herschel H. Hobbs, *Teachers Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2014), 42.

welcomes the Holy Spirit. This part of the journey brings the disciple onto a new road inspired by God and aided with power and zeal from on high.

Discipleship requires commitment through the ups and downs of life. Life is full of experiences placed together in relationships, which sometimes are challenging. A deeply connected relationship with God and with others, 1 John 3:24, is a result or part of the training in living everyday life with a devotion to Christ while sharing, caring and being present. Connection becomes communion through the one Spirit of the good Lord. Gathering in the Lord is part of the way that Jesus and His disciples lived. The disciples spent much time together, even the arguments of the disciples are recorded in the New Testament. One example is the time the disciples argue as to who is greater (Luke 9:46) and topics that seem silly later in the revelation of the power and kingdom of Christ.

A disciple is taught by the Lord Jesus and commissioned by Him. Jesus is mentioned as Teacher with His disciples throughout the Gospels. Students in the rabbinic tradition would always hope to not only master but desire to exceed the teachings of the Rabbi. However, in Christ Jesus this is not implied as He is the sole authority in which His students can become like Him.⁸⁷ Throughout the Gospel, one reads of Christ doing miracles, signs, and wonders and then commissioning the disciples to do so as well. The compassion of Christ is what is caught into the heart as Jesus never turned away the needy. His heart goes out to those hurting, as in the Greek, *esplanghine*, is used in the Gospel of Luke accounting the story of a mother and the young

⁸⁷ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke* (City, State: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company/Apollos, 2015), 184.

man resurrected.⁸⁸ Jesus uses the word *egertheti*, or be raised up by God, and the young man is brought back to life in His call.⁸⁹ Every disciple of Christ is called by the Lord Jesus and raised up by the Lord in the Spirit of Christ within His mind and heart. Each disciple is commissioned to proclaim the kingdom of God and heal the sick or preach and perform the message of the Gospel as in word and deed. Power and authority are given to the disciple who trusts and obeys Jesus. Dependency on the Lord Jesus for the mission is all that is necessary for the disciple and to follow His instruction, which also includes reliance on nothing but Him. A disciple is given teaching from the Lord Jesus concerning many things, even rejection: shake the dust from one's feet and move on. A disciple knows the gift of patience well and acquires a fine taste for the acceptance of God's will.

Gathering at the table of the Lord is for the disciple who desires Christ Jesus to sit at the head seat while partaking in communion together. The daily life of Jesus and His twelve chosen disciples was normal in essentials of eating, washing, feelings, etc. The Last Supper is written in all four Gospel accounts. Jesus and His disciples had dined together for about three years, but this meal was incredibly special. The disciples and Jesus came together for the Feast of Unleavened Bread or the Passover meal. The remembrance of the Israelites being freed from the Egyptian slavery, and more specifically the passing over of the angel of death from those who had the blood of lamb over their doorposts, is celebrated and the priests in the temple slaughter many Passover lambs.⁹⁰ In the last supper of Christ with His disciples, the invitation to the very

⁸⁸ Grant R. Osborne, *Luke: Verse by Verse* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 132.

⁸⁹ Osborne, *Luke*, 132.

⁹⁰ Jey J. Kanagaraj, *John: A New Covenant Commentary* (City, State: Lutterworth Press, 2013), 163.

gift of redemption is not a coincidence but fulfillment of the Scriptures given to His followers first. Jesus is declaring His death and resurrection in the new covenant of His blood poured out for all. This meal is the invitation for all followers of Christ to partake in the new covenant in which Jesus Christ brings divine redemption and all things given freely through His endless love.

Relationships are intentional in drawing all to the love of Jesus and to the Father. The prayer of Christ after the washing of the disciples' feet in the Gospel of John reveals His existence and the community that has been built in relationships. The cycle of relationships becomes seen through Christ for all to the Father and from the Father.⁹¹ The focused relationship of a disciple and Jesus is ultimately important. Peter inquires the Lord of another disciple in the last chapter of the Gospel of John and Christ places the significance back onto Peter to follow Him. Every disciple's path is forged through the love of Christ with uniqueness and is personal. In Him, each comes to know the abundant life. Every relationship begins with the sole purpose of connectivity of the cycle through Christ to the Father and is now used in many relationships while building a community of believers and lovers of the Lord to allow His kingdom to come and be seen on earth.

Praying together is an important part of discipleship. Jesus taught the disciples how to pray in the Lord's Prayer. Often in Scripture, Jesus was found praying by His disciples. Jesus requested and advised His disciples to pray. The Gospel of Luke records that Peter's revelation of Christ comes as Jesus was in prayer during the transfiguration on the Mount of Olives.⁹² In the

⁹¹ Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: Contextual Study of John 4, 1-42* (City, State: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 218.

⁹² James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus According to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2019), 45.

Garden of Gethsemane, Christ prays and admonishes His disciples to pray to not come into temptation.⁹³ There is an immediacy in prayer. Ian Boxall illuminates the writings of Leo the Great, and especially that of the wondrous exchange where Christ takes on the weakness of humanity, the certain fear, in the Garden to transform it.⁹⁴ One of the ingredients in this transformation is all-night prayer, and another is earnest prayer. A disciple's future should be sealed in prayer as urged by Christ for the time of each disciple's flight.⁹⁵ Jesus taught Christians to pray not only for the now but for the future generations when He prayed for those who will come as believers, as recorded in John 17. Disciples of Christ and leaders in the church know the importance of praying for the immediate and future generations. Praying is a definite requirement and attribute in the life of the disciple.

Growing the next generation in discipleship requires wisdom and develops a legacy. Right conduct in holiness does include building a better future for the next generation.⁹⁶ An essence of true religion is remembering a time of want and retelling it to the following generations. God directs the Israelites to retell their story with God through the generations. Training up a child is more than how to tie their shoes and brush their teeth. Training in the way one should go is accomplished through the way of the Word of God, who is Christ. The next-generation ministry was never a perfunctory role by God. The consequences of failure to minister to the next generation were grave, resulting in the loss to worship the one, true God and

⁹³ Dunn, *Jesus According to the New Testament*, 45.

⁹⁴ Ian Boxall, *Matthew through the Centuries* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2019), 385.

⁹⁵ Dunn, *Jesus According to the New Testament*, 40.

⁹⁶ Daniel Durken, *New Collegeville Bible Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 180.

eventually the loss of the land. Joshua tells the people that the twelve stones placed by the river Jordan at Gilgal would be a remembrance of what God had done and to tell the next generation. Complacency in the present generation may lead to the near-future ministry failure, as close as one generation away. God's Word must be brought as a proclamation, noting a reception, while teaching with boldness through relationships bonded in love; where the patriarch sits with the disciples.⁹⁷

Peter, who was once Simon, son of Jonah, a fisherman, becomes Cephas whom the Lord uses to build His church (Matt. 16:18). Jesus prophesies Peter's destiny on the day He called Simon in the Matthew 4, but it was not until twelve chapters later where Simon is truly transformed through Christ into Peter, the carved rock of Jesus, on which Christ's Church would be built. Peter receives the revelation of Christ through the Father, who is the same Father as Jesus. Remember, there is a father of some who is the Devil. On this day, Jesus promises more to Peter in the keys to the kingdom of God. The progression of a disciple who is called is now transformed with purpose and destiny at hand. Some argue the stone is always Christ, yet Jesus distinctly calls Peter the stone through which He will use to build His Church.⁹⁸ Christ is the foundation but Peter's purpose in Christ is the carving stone of Christ's Church. Peter is the one who is first given the vision to extend salvation to the Gentiles and does. This proves what Christ promised in the keys to the kingdom of God in the binding and losing in a governmental authority through Peter for the church. Later the Council of Antioch determines more in this

⁹⁷ David A. Sánchez, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, and Margaret P. Aymer, *The Gospels and Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2016), 354-355.

⁹⁸ Boxall, *Matthew through the Centuries*, 250-251.

governmental authority. Remembering that Jesus promised each disciple that they will do what He has done, and greater works also, because He goes to the Father (John 14:12).

For the disciple of Christ, destiny is unique with purpose, some to the establishment of His kingdom in a place and time as never seen before. Sometimes, mentorship is employed; the disciples underwent *mathetes* or to learn.⁹⁹ Jesus is referred to as a teacher many times throughout the Gospels, but in the earliest churches, it is not noted as much.¹⁰⁰ Taking the time, as Jesus did with His disciples, to raise up the next generation is responsible with due diligence to the continuation of Christ's Church in this very place for this particular time. Peter and the Apostles of the early church took the time, effort, and prayer to train up and grow the body of Christ. Discipleship to the next generation ensures the future promise of the kingdom of God in the practical, everyday lives of new disciples, followers, and their lineage in many years to come.

Theoretical Foundations

Just as Jesus went out and called His disciples, the Church should go out into the community with its net and pull-in a great catch with many different types and sizes. The great catch is gained through the Spirit of God penetrating the commonwealth of God in the local area.¹⁰¹ God's people, many of whom He calls, are of different character and some are of ill-repute. Jesus called outside of the Temple and so should the church. Going into the community and offering assistance to those in need or to pray with others will make the body of Christ

⁹⁹ Dunn, *Jesus According to the New Testament*, 13.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 224.

visible in the neighborhood. Perhaps a good type of jealousy may very well invoke others who may want to join in with the church and incite effort or offer to do so. Being present in the body of Christ to the world is showing up in the neighborhood. Bake sales, Thanksgiving food baskets, home-made Easter eggs, and many more efforts in the Church invite connection between the church and the community.

Meeting together at least once a week in a Bible study on discipleship with current young adults of the church and with those who are of the older generation is a good ingredient for a solid foundation of faith. Growing the young generation alongside of the older generation through the study of God's word can aid in interaction with understanding and compassion towards one another. Feeding people, trusting and obeying Jesus with courage, and imitating Jesus through the example of the leader and the reading of the Word of God are all ways to grow more in the process of discipleship.¹⁰² Being ready, and receiving the Holy Spirit and His power is a part of discipleship in willingness to be used by the Lord. If the young generation at the church would help the older generation in activities, much intergenerational ministry may occur. Linking together the ministry efforts and keeping the various departments of the church well informed will surely help to integrate appropriate generations into ministry.¹⁰³ Innovating new and meaningful ways of ministry and outreaching to young adults in the area who are not currently part of a discipling church are great ways to be hospitable within the community while envisioning a new road map of growth in the environment. Discipling is a process of deepening and strengthening the faith and love of the Christian believer by expressing the Gospel of Christ

¹⁰² Sánchez, Kittredge, and Aymer, *The Gospels and Acts*, 151.

¹⁰³ DeVries and Pontier, *Sustainable Young Adult Ministry*, 136.

in evangelization to the surrounding community and the broader world with a missional impact. Tent meetings may be a great way for the younger generations to grow in the Lord, especially within the season of COVID-19. As time progresses, the Church may offer an overnight camp for the younger generation to sleep under the stars together in Christ and awake to attend Sunday morning service. The possibilities are endless as Christians remember that all things are possible with God (Luke 1:37).

Even in the face of stagnant growth, many churches look at the bottom line and believe that if the bills are being paid, there is little to no reason to change.¹⁰⁴ While the community has changed the church is resistant and finds itself failing to minister. The harvest of souls is worth the time and effort of the church. Church survival is dependent upon the life and love of Christ in the next generation. It is critical to keep the door of invitation open breathing new life to old things for the sake of legacy to the many following generations and for the glory of God. Cindy Klick offers some advice in the practical ways of building relationships by observing and participating in current trends while planting seeds of faith.¹⁰⁵ Feeding the body while feeding the soul is a great way for the older generation to invite the younger into uncharted territory of the church dining hall.

As the young adult generation stays in the discipleship program, each may become more Christ-like. Through the young adult years, many families are formed with the blessing of children and marriage. Young adults in the process of life, love, and discipleship help to grow the church naturally. Learning about covenant and commitment through a discipleship class can

¹⁰⁴ DeVries and Pontier, *Sustainable Young Adult Ministry*, 79.

¹⁰⁵ Cindy Klick, *Guidelines Ministries with Young People: Empower Youth and Young Adults in Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Cokesbury, 2016), 16.

be taught by the leader, but there is extraordinary value in hearing the real-life experiences of older adults. Making a covenant with the Lord to honor His holy day and attend church can be understood through the Bible study/discipleship class. Understanding and wanting to commit to the Lord the things that are His is a sign of a growing disciple. Praying and breaking bread together while discussing many more things in a relationship is a sure way to bond the generations and grow the disciples. Gathering around the table is a natural way to make pleasant memories and have good conversations. In this generation, so much of family table time has been passed over. The church can teach the priceless benefits of eating together and breaking bread at the table of the Lord.

Ministering to the younger generation by leaders who want the church to grow can begin in small group bible study that will discuss the Lord's heart for people and His holy way to walk, which will show positive change and a lasting love of Christ. Leaving a legacy of life in Christ to the next generation will bless the people of the church, God, and the community. As efforts to minister to the younger adults begin, more friends or family members of the starting group may join. With the blessing of God, prayer, and effort by leaders, so many more than the original number of young adults will be reached. The effort and prayers to God by the older generation and the leaders are well worth the time in sacrifice to know first that their heart posture was aligned with the Lord's heart and second, that they did act with intentions to leave a legacy. The promise of the Spirit coming to the new generation in the church is founded in prayer, and the transition comes to reality through the witness of the successive disciples.¹⁰⁶ Determining more responsibility and allowing growth as disciples of Christ will help to empower the young adult

¹⁰⁶ Craig S. Keener, *Acts* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 100.

generation into new projects and ministry to help build up the church in the community while keeping communion with the heart of God. The young adults may serve the older adults in the time of pandemic in very practical ways or perhaps aiding in the pick-up or delivery of needed things. The time and the season of the pandemic may challenge the outreach. Masks must be worn in meetings, and social distancing of at least six feet must be adhered to. Group number limitations may apply. Some church members may not trust gathering in a group indoors due to the COVID-19 virus' super spread characteristic. The differences are very real during this pandemic and may determine a slowed outcome of increase and a definite strained result on effort. The heart of God is to grow the church. The people may have difficulty growing the church while the action is limited.

Making the church home to the generations reflects the model of the house church in the early beginnings. The Epistles, or letters to the early church, authored by St. Paul, were written to different churches that began in a house. Bible study can occur in a local house in small groups. The early saints met daily to pray and partake in communion together (Acts 2:42). A local house can serve as a meeting place to pray and partake in communion daily.

The house church that began the buildings of the church has multiplied into many church buildings. Sunday service, Bible study, and children's church occurs in many churches weekly. In the COVID-19 pandemic, the church has the added care of being compliant with local and state regulations concerning public health and safety. The church can consider using its building as an online learning center for the children of the church. When schools close due to outbreaks of positive tests in the local school, parents can rely on the local church as a safe place for children to attend daily online school as the parents go to work. Parents can know the church as a safe and clean place for children to study online while having the freedom to continue to work.

Gathering of the saints can occur inside a house, outdoors in a park, in a church building or anywhere that fits the situation. Jesus gathered His followers on the side of a mountain (Matt. 5). He also taught in the Temple (Luke 21:37). Wherever the situation fit, Jesus preached the things of God. Jesus sensed the opportune moments and opened the window to heaven. There are no boundaries that can stop the arm of the Lord. The body of Christ can grow in the community simply by gathering together in the community in the name of Jesus. The promise of the presence of Christ is kept in the event of two or more gathering in His name. The kingdom of God comes to earth in small, precious, and meaningful ways. Throughout the Gospel, one reads of many precious miracles of the Lord given to one mother in the resurrection of her son. Another example is read in Matthew 6 where Jesus heals in the temple one man's hand and later teaches many in the olivet about the healing of a hand. Jesus knows the heart and desire of one, and the one matters significantly to the Father. In thunderous ways, God moves in the earth and in the daily faithfulness of a sunrise. The Lord Jesus is present and ministering with His love to the request of one son or daughter, and nothing is too small or too big. The example of the Lord is seen with ministry to the one and to the five thousand or more. Jesus has come for people to have abundant life. The ministry of Jesus can be replicated in the community through one or many. The sending of the disciples is rooted in the sending of Jesus, and by His authority much fruit is born.¹⁰⁷ The sending of the seventy-two found in the Book of Luke chapter ten shows the preparation of a locale to receive the good Lord Jesus and the harvesting in a field of white to bring the kingdom of God to earth.

¹⁰⁷ Okure, *The Johannine Approach*, 66.

The inclusive nature of Christ is seen within the story of the intentional pursuit of the Samaritan woman. The invitation to believe in Him and know the hour of true worship, which brings revival and life, is a message to share today.¹⁰⁸ Jesus does not forget those whose story is written in a different culture and goes full-on search to share the river of everlasting life. Many young adults have searched for acceptance from man when the one true empowerment and acceptance is found in the cup of life through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ does not waver in pursuing a person who may not fit in with the group. One might know the astonishment of the disciples to find Jesus with an outsider. In fact, they marveled at what they saw Jesus doing (John 4:27). It was a marvelous thing! Young people with the promise and vitality of life stand as the hope and future of the church within their survival. When prompted into learning through early leadership, while deepening their spirituality in volunteering and within the utility of different forms of ministry to a secular world, young Christians will brighten the mores of society with salvation and singing through engagement and active participation. A two-way process of learning and worshipping God occurs when the old timers of the church allow the young to do new ministry in different ways in a safe space that allows the young leaders to tell while the congregation of the older church is willing to listen and learn.¹⁰⁹ Including others in the discipleship group regardless of factors that separates them brings the blessing of unity found in Psalm 133. Jesus Christ is alive and well today, tomorrow, and always, and the Word of God becomes flesh because Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father now and is one with His

¹⁰⁸ Jey J. Kanagaraj, *John: A New Covenant Commentary* (City, State: Lutterworth Press, 2013), 71.

¹⁰⁹ Katarina Westerlund, ““And the Word Was Made Flesh?” – Exploring Young People’s Situated Learning in Leadership and Spirituality in a Secular Context,” *Journal of Youth and Theology* 20, no. 2 (2021): 142–64.

disciples. Jesus' promise to every generation thereafter is that each will do the things that He has done and even greater things, according to John 14:12. One learns in John 21:25 that Jesus did many more things and if all were written down, there would not be room enough in all the books of the world. The young believer has just bought into a new life that promises abundance.

Miracle upon miracles, events of good, signs and wonders, moments of joy and laughter, hearts of love in unity, revelation gifts, and manifestations and ways of escape are all found inside the satisfaction of long life abundance. But there will be trials and tribulations sometimes as a disciple partakes in the sufferings of Christ. The road to glory is found in Christ's sufficiency, not theirs. And a disciple might call to trust in Jesus, while walking into the greater things. Limitless are the possibilities in Christ for all things are possible with God if a disciple believes.

Discipleship is done by teaching: instilling the words and ways of Jesus Christ. Studying the four Gospels is a very good place to start in striving to know who this fully God and fully man is. Jesus, the son of Joseph, from the line of David, from father Abraham, has his genealogy written in Matthew 1. He is Mary's Son, and nephew to Elizabeth and Zechariah (Luke 1). Jesus is the cousin of John the Baptist, who is the son of Elizabeth and Zechariah. Jesus is the friend of sinners (Matt. 9:13). Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). The list goes on and on as one continues in the New Testament into Acts and through Revelation. The Old Testament foretells the coming glory of the Savior and Redeemer.

Some teaching is done by pure example. Christ taught His disciples through His life of prayer and oneness with the Father. His obedience was exemplary even to the cross and His faith in the love of the Father proved glorious in resurrection power. Pastors and teachers within the church keep in healthy, wholesome boundaries of God's word. Discipling others is a full task characterized by the life and times of Jesus Christ. Everyone in the body of Christ is awaiting the

coming of the bright and morning star born anew in the heart to a faithless generation exposed to the trickery and deception of the kingdom of darkness. The end times may bring darkness, but the light of Christ shines greater. For the sake of the elect, the time is shortened, and salvation is nigh. While all of heaven rejoices over one sinner repenting (Luke 15:10), a disciple's soul rejoices in the Lord and exults in His salvation (Ps. 35:9).

Christians know the importance of allowing the Holy Spirit to move and be the third person of God, the Comforter. Jesus said to the disciples in John 16 that it is best for them that He go away so that the Helper would come. And the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, did come with a mighty rushing wind and in power! Tongues of fire were distributed with supernatural knowledge of foreign languages and the ability to speak the glory of God. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is important to every disciple, so the rivers of life not only sustain them, but others may take a drink. Jesus is the river of life inside of every disciple now; until He comes again in glory on the Mount of Olives and reveals Himself as Messiah. But until then, disciples know that anything in prayer they ask of Jesus, He will do for His chosen ones. His promise is that He will be with them always, and they know that they would not have it any other way (Matt 28:20).

Chapter 3

Methodology

The research study did include direct and indirect methodology at St. Paul's Smoke Church in Hamburg, Pennsylvania. Direct observation involved direct examination of activities related to discipleship which were assessed. Direct exchange of information was achieved through communication in conversation and surveys. Books and first-hand knowledge were tools used to gather input and data regarding the past and present church life at St. Paul's Smoke Church. Indirect methods of acquiring knowledge were acquired through personal perspectives in interviews and/or questionnaires; other areas included church history concerning attendance and means of discipleship. Through interviews and/or surveys, data is focused or chosen, but in observation, the observer has no choice in what is being told.¹¹⁰ Like a two-edged sword, one slice may be beneficial for a time and later another slice may classify as TMI (too much information). The inverse is found true also. Information received from interviews is the telling of what is and its description through speech, shaping a picture of reality in which the responsibility of the painter is accountable in the study.¹¹¹ All input and data regarding the past and present of St. Paul's Smoke Church was voluntarily shared or given. The Church council was involved in the study from the earliest contact and members of the church thereafter. The council was initially engaged, and contact did continue. Church members were friendly and welcoming to the idea of the study. The importance of the study cannot be underrated, considering the long life of Smoke Church in the community and its declining membership. The

¹¹⁰ Gale Miller and Robert Dingwall, *Context and Method in Qualitative Research* (London, UK: Sage, 1997), 65.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 57.

researcher knows the sacredness and honor in purposing to aid God's intentions for His church and considered the option of losing Smoke Church as too costly to the community and to the Lord.

The basic and applicable research is a qualitative and quantitative study. Through manually writing the responses of the questionnaire, a record was kept and logged with the anonymity of the participants. Active listening in conversation with the members of St. Paul's Smoke Church was vital to the study and to a relationship with members of the church. The techniques employed qualitative research. Quantitative efforts were applied through conducting a survey which was then translated into percentages. Percentages were calculated to show the results of the survey considering variations. Variations are shown to include differences in age group, understanding, and prior knowledge of the subject matter. The study of research is elemental in helping to disciple the next generation at Smoke Church in Windsor Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania. Both qualitative and quantitative efforts were employed to facilitate a better understanding of the dynamic of Christianity and discipleship in its present locale.

Primary data was collected by the researcher through first-hand conversations, interviews, visual encounter or field observation, a survey, and a series of short questions. The participants involved in the survey/questionnaire were voluntary. Initial meeting of some of the members of Smoke Church took place through the services held at St. Paul's Smoke Church. Secondary data was received from the anniversary books of St. Paul's Smoke Church, the oral record, and pictures (see Appendix A).¹¹² Scholarly secondary data that was utilized by the

¹¹² St. Paul's Church, *St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Smoke Church* (Hamburg, PA: St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Smoke Church, 1981).

researcher included books on discipleship, websites, journals, and the Bible. St. Paul's Smoke Church's history was employed to notice trends, marked increase or decrease of membership, and ways of ministry with specific attention to discipleship. Smoke Church history was examined through church records and books, along with the oral record (see Appendix A).¹¹³ A walk-through of the St. Paul's Smoke Church occurred, including a visual encounter involving the sanctuary, entrance/foyer, offices, classrooms, bathrooms, kitchen, and gathering area. Throughout the foyer and hallways St. Paul's Smoke Church has memorabilia on its walls of church history; from licensing of the church to people gathered in past events. General demographics of the local community were considered as a resource. Church artifacts including pictures, awards/plaques, hymnals, a bulletin board, and memorials were utilized as an observational resource. Smoke Church's sanctuary, classrooms, and downstairs were employed for gatherings initially.

A survey was taken before and after the intervention. Biblical discipleship is the core of the intervention while intergenerational discipleship is the relevant focus. Because Smoke Church's body is overwhelmingly attended by the older generation, the call to discipleship would include their wisdom. Over-the phone interviews were completed due to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and its relevance on safety and health. Results and recommendations will be provided to those participating in the study.

General demographics to the local community were considered as a resource. Windsor Township is mapped within the county of Berks in the state of Pennsylvania. Population of

¹¹³ St. Paul's Church, *St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Smoke Church 260th Anniversary*, vol. II (Hamburg, PA: St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Smoke Church, 2006).

Windsor Township is about twenty-four hundred people (see Appendix B).¹¹⁴ Hamburg, Pennsylvania is a borough that is adjacent to Windsor Township on its North and East sides. Hamburg is within a mile of St. Paul's Smoke Church. Hamburg's population is at 4,353 people (see Appendix B).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ "Population of the Windsor Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania (Township)," *The Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States - Statistical Atlas*, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://statisticalatlas.com/county-subdivision/Pennsylvania/Berks-County/Windsor-Township/Population>.

¹¹⁵ "Hamburg, PA," *Data USA*, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/hamburg-pa/>.

Population by County Subdivision in the Reading Area

There are 74 county subdivisions in the Reading Area. This section compares the Windsor Township to the 50 most populous county subdivisions in the Reading Area. The least populous of the compared county subdivisions has a population of 2,350.

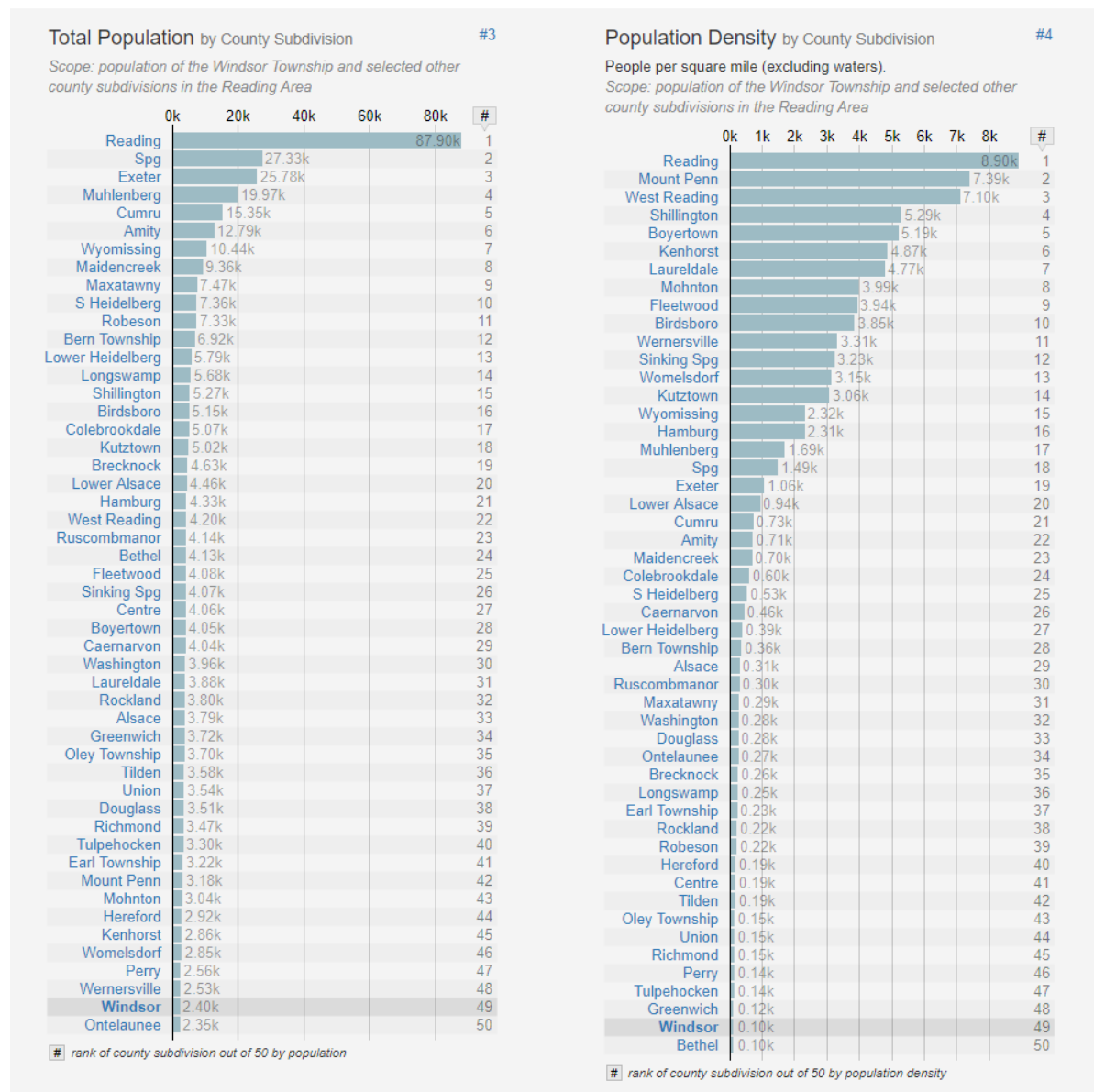


Figure 3.1. Population by County Subdivision in the Reading Area.

The researcher believed it important to show the number of people living within reach of St. Paul's Smoke Church and the possibility and to draw friends, neighbors, and family through a discipleship experience with the potential of growing the church. The centrality of love in thought and action of overcoming evil with good in the life of a disciple can only be found in the

power of Christ through discipleship as His words clearly tell what a disciple should do; without resisting the evil person but rather, in kindness, doing good.¹¹⁶ The significance of outreach to the younger generation in continuing the mission of the founders and prayers of each saint that attended St. Paul's Smoke Church at one time period or another is tremendously important to the area then and now and most importantly to God. One may never know what the areas located in and around Windsor Township would have been like without Smoke Church. It is clear by considering its long-staying power that the hand of God has been with them in His holy will. Windsor Township grew so huge that the Hamburg Borough broke off and was established from it in 1837; prior had been laid out and named distinct in 1779.¹¹⁷ Perry Township in Berks County, Pennsylvania also was originally a part of Windsor Township from the years 1740 through 1851. It became a separate voting district in 1821, but it was not until 1852 that it was established as its own township.¹¹⁸ Perry received its name from a group of thirty-five plus men who came from that area and fought in the War of 1812; notably Commodore Oliver H. Perry, its namesake, and Captain John May.¹¹⁹ Growth in population and size is a sign of prosperity. Prosperity is within the blessing of God found in the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah the prophet tells the plans of God to prosper and to give a future and hope, Jeremiah 29:11. St. Paul Smoke Church has outlasted winters, wars, the depression. Now, the pandemic of 2020 is at center stage

¹¹⁶ Rhonda Burnette-Bletsch et al., *Encyclopedia of the Bible Online*, s.v. "Lex Talionis," accessed date, <https://doi.org/10.1515/ebr.lextalionis>, 421.

¹¹⁷ Hamburg, PA, "Hamburg Area Historical Society," Hamburg, PA (Weebly, March 6, 2021), <https://www.hamburgpa.org/business/hamburg-area-historical-society/>.

¹¹⁸ "History," Perry Township Berks County (Weebly), accessed January 4, 2023, <https://www.perrytownshipberkscounty.com/history.html>.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

and the protection of the elderly of the church is its greatest concern along with the survival of its anointed and chosen families that have flourished the area through the generations.

Intervention Design

A gathering of service together including communion will be held. Young adults, incidentally the number who actually partake is 25%, and adult members will be invited to a Bible study. A survey will be asked by the members about their beliefs of, and vision for, St. Paul's Smoke Church. The survey will include the following questions:

1. *Are you satisfied or disappointed with the spiritual food of St. Paul's Smoke Church?*

☐_disappointed ☐_a little disappointed ☐_satisfied ☐_somewhat satisfied ☐_other:

2. *Are you satisfied or disappointed with the attendance size of the church?*

☐_disappointed ☐_a little disappointed ☐_satisfied ☐_somewhat satisfied ☐_other:

3. *Through the past decade including now, do you believe that the church discipless?*

☐_yes ☐_no

4. *Do you know what discipleship is? If yes, please write what you believe it is.*

☐_No, I do not know what discipleship is. ☐_ Yes, discipleship is

_____.

5. *Are you satisfied with the amount of young adults, (ages 18-32), who attend service at Smoke Church?*

☐_Yes, I'm satisfied with the number of young adults attending service.

☐_No, I would like to see more young adults attend service.

6. *Are you actively involved in a discipleship program?*

☐_yes ☐_no

7. *Do you have reasonable hope that St. Paul Smoke Church will survive through this next quarter-century, (25 years)?*

☐_yes ☐_no

8. *Would you like to see Smoke Church survive and thrive?*

☐_yes ☐_no

Figure 3.2. Survey.

Questions such as why one believes one is not involved in a discipleship program will be asked, along with asking how one thinks a discipleship program should occur. Validation of confusion in a practical setting allows the disciple to move into a realm of understanding while the good fruit brought forth in research is cultivated.¹²⁰ The intention is never to create discord but rather unity of purpose; although tension in the air can emerge.¹²¹ The primary benefactors of such in this study are the kingdom of God and St. Paul's Smoke Church. An intergenerational Bible study will occur once for about an hour and a half. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, the study may be limited in attendance and will be conducted through mediums such as Zoom, telephone, and/or in-person meetings. This was not the original intention of the researcher, but the alternate plan to allow research to flow and discipleship to be understood and with the possibility of faithful implementation. The study will be on the topic of discipleship. Bible verses from the four Gospels will be referenced and read. Teaching will be given. A

¹²⁰ Bennett Zoë et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology* (Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018), 4.

¹²¹ Ibid., 168.

discussion will follow the teaching and include questions about discipleship, the day's lesson, and the experience at Smoke Church. After the study, the first survey will be reconsidered and asked if the answers would differ. The differences will be noted and studied. There are secondary benefactors which result from this study and always include the community, while many may be found in family or community relationships with those involved in the study, especially the area to which one resides. Outcomes will be recorded. Results and recommendations for St. Paul's Smoke Church will be given in the hopes of furthering the church into discipleship with success and growth.

The design was planned to acquire immediate knowledge to and from the members concerning discipleship in the church. The central thought and action of overcoming evil with good in the life of a disciple is the empowerment from on high provided by the Holy Spirit, which makes every Christian more than a conqueror.

Questions were designed to allow the members to freely speak about past personal experiences involving fellowship at St. Paul's Smoke Church and efforts by the members of St. Paul's Smoke Church of outreach to the community. The researcher honored the process of protection in ethical research and ensured that those speaking would be left with freedom through anonymity.¹²² A fine and easy asseveration was employed to prevent and clear up any differences of understanding by transcription as a simple, repeat-back or echo of what was heard by the researcher to the speaker.¹²³ An affirmation or negation was noted through obvious speaker response and changes were made accordingly by the researcher in the due process. The

¹²² Zoë et al., *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology*, 178.

¹²³ Ibid.

view is always from a human lens which is settled within a context that enlists a unique perspective. The case of discipleship by the congregation at St. Paul's Smoke Church is human within this specified church while each perspective was considered with distinction. This distinction, although separate, carried similarities in thought and experience as the subject matter remained constant. The questions were the same for each individual and the focus was specific to discipleship. The method was consistent while the answers were sometimes unique with understanding per individual response.

A short study on discipleship provided insight into the long-developed process Jesus used within Biblical reference. Defining what it means to be a disciple and what the Lord Jesus did for and asked of His disciples visualizes the active involvement of discipleship. Figure 3.2. displays the breakdown of the discipleship outline for this project.

I. Biblical Definition

A. The Great Commission

1. Matthew 28:16-20

a. Follower of Jesus Christ

b. Matthew 4:19

2. Following Jesus

a. Learning from The Teacher/Rabbi

1. Examples

a. Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5-7

b. Prayer, Fasting, Giving to the Needy

1. The Lord's Prayer

II. Living in Discipleship

A. Acts 1:8

1. Power from on High

a. Luke 10: 19

2. Location central

a. Beginning in Jerusalem/Windsor Township, Going into Judea, Samaria, etc.

B. Loving One Another

1. John 13:34-35

2. 1 John 4: 19-21

Figure 3.3. Discipleship Outline.

Included in the explanation of discipleship is the biblical account of Jesus and His disciples, also known as the twelve apostles. In the Gospels, one reads the beginnings of discipleship with Christ from the call to discipleship to the Spirit-filled disciples. The first appearance of disciples comes at the onset of Jesus' ministry (Mark 1:16), and later are commissioned on the Mount of Olives (Mark 16:15). The fallibility of the disciples is read throughout the Gospel. Still, it is raptured through the power and in the name of Jesus, which ushers in the infallibility of God. Jesus generously granted His disciples the exclusive gift of the mysteries of the kingdom of God (Matt 13:11). As the New Testament progresses, the power and presence of Christ is seen in the apostles and Paul through the Holy Spirit.

Diligent investment is the key factor that engages the disciple in the life of Jesus Christ and permits His power to move daily in the lives of young adults and teenagers.¹²⁴ The Lord gave of Himself daily to the disciples and is still giving today. Every church leader should be doing what Jesus did: walking, talking, and doing life with the disciples. The calling of the disciple is just the beginning of a lifelong journey together in the kingdom of God. Faithful servant leaders are teaching often and give a lot of themselves to the sheep. Jesus warns of the wicked servant who becomes lazy and is satisfied to stop at the calling.¹²⁵ Sitting in the pew is not enough to develop the disciple into the unique creation God designed. Development of gifts and talents necessitate a heart-motivation for God's glory found in the life of Christ where the follower one day awakens to a canvas begging for creativity which the disciple partners with the Almighty Creator and paints something wonderful...something beautiful...something that brings glory to the earth and those who dwell therein. In the little things, God is there.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

Contact with Smoke Church began with the church council. A short introduction meeting was held at St. Michael's Church, which is very near Smoke Church in Tilden Township, Pennsylvania, after the Sunday service on August 9, 2020. St. Michael's Church was holding outdoor services at the time due to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. The setup for church service was exemplary of the novel idea of church in the car for the area. Many who attended stayed in their car while listening to the broadcast service over a local AM designated dial on the

¹²⁴ Steven Kozak, *Beyond the Edge of the Water Reclaiming Biblical Discipleship for a Rising Generation*. (Ashland: BMH Books, 2020), 89.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

radio. The church is a powerful force in the world and the local church is considered the primary source of representation of the mission of Christ.¹²⁶ Through the trial of a pandemic, the community of the church is more than ever crucial to believers. God is always faithful to make a way where there seems to be none. What St. Paul's Smoke Church and many other churches were experiencing with the presentation of the Coronavirus beckoned an uncanny approach for the church and the community.

The Smoke Church council meeting occurred that coming Wednesday night at seven in the evening. The meeting comprised five council members (two women and three men), and the researcher. A discussion was had concerning re-opening the church to have an outdoor service after the closure in February 2020. The church council desired the ministering of the saints and considered its urgency after the long pause and especially during the reality of unfamiliar illness as critical with utmost importance. The tremendous innovation of an outdoor service differed than the typical Sunday service. The church is a gathering place of believers to worship God together and to bring encouragement, hope, and peace.¹²⁷ And the effort proposed was definitely worth the time and energy to be given. The redemption into a type of new life for St. Paul's Smoke Church was looking very hopeful. The gift of redemption through Jesus Christ is forever remembered by His church while the here-and-now remembrance empowers a transformation of glory perhaps never experienced before.¹²⁸ Letters went out the following day, August 13, 2020, announcing the church's re-opening through an outdoor service. Hope was giving way to

¹²⁶ Mark E. Powell, John Mark Hicks, and Greg Mckinzie, *Discipleship in Community: A Theological Vision for the Future* (City, State: Abilene Christian University Press, 2020), 18s.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 18r.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 1897b.

expectancy and all involved were cautiously enumerating next steps. Even the enveloped message was considered with attention to clean hands/gloves. Preparation in planning and implementation followed through a core group meeting on Thursday, August 17, and another meeting on Friday, August 18. Thursday's meeting was differentiated with volunteers who provided much aid in implementation. A discussion was had to sift through the design plan. The following morning and afternoon of August 19 were also devoted to the next day's opening service, especially in final preparation. The sound system was set up on the grass and on the cement entrance to the side door of the church that faced the parking lot. The system was tested to allow for all attendees in cars to hear the service despite the intermittent Sunday morning traffic sounds that arose from Old Route 22 traffic. The organ was plugged into the sound system and the organist signaled through a window when to commence. Short line markers were drawn with spray paint to guide cars to be staggered in the parking lot. Communion packets were made within a single-serve baggy and given out with the weekly service booklet. Communion is the gift of a thankfulness meal of bread and wine as the Lord's nourishment and His provision through the completed work of Christ.¹²⁹ The sign of peace was given with a wave or the blowing of the car horn. The offertory was collected at the end of the service. As cars left the lot, participants placed their donations to the church into the baskets located at the end of the driveway upon exit. The service went on with a few minor glitches and all were ministered to in the word of the Lord and His gift of Holy Communion. Both before and after the service, greetings were given to members by a short walk-around while wearing a mask and standing six feet away (the recommended social distance by Pennsylvania law) from the researcher. Many of

¹²⁹ Powell, *Discipleship in Community*, 1897b

the members were joyful and grateful to see the church services continue and to participate. Multiple communions are found in the presence of Christ. This day realized the communion of the saints, the oneness through His body and blood, and the communion of the community.¹³⁰ To overcome the ill effects of the Coronavirus, one of the most important forms of church communion with the Father was presented through bonding in an act of creativity: a church service implemented into an unorthodox setting.¹³¹ The following week's Sunday service was welcomed by about thirty-five people in attendance.

The third week's service was performed by a retired minister who lived locally and served at the church for eight years. His presence was welcomed by many. He was glad to help the church and his sermon was enlightening. Services continued with different pastors who are transitionally serving, retired, or volunteering. Sunday service moved indoors within the sanctuary of Smoke Church. Rules for safety in social distancing and mask-wearing were held according to the state of Pennsylvania's order for COVID-19 compliance presently continuing at St. Paul's Smoke Church. All other activities had been cancelled for the remainder of the year. The ninth Sunday since the opening brought an indoor service due to the colder temperature; about twelve members were in attendance.

Sunday services continued through Christmas with a short break thereafter. Average attendance was small; less than twenty. The church always remembered those who were sick and suffering in the service with prayer. The bulletin consistently recognized the sick and suffering members with a call-out to pray. The elderly of the church ministering to the youth or young

¹³⁰ Powell, *Discipleship in Community*, 1897a.

¹³¹ Kozak, *Beyond the Edge*, 90.

adults of the church was extremely limited. The pandemic placed an initial, severe strain and hold on the ability to connect the older generation with its younger. The risk factors were high and increased with age and health status, while the spread ability of the virus, often referring to an event as a *super-spreader*, was incredibly easy; that is highly contagious and able to infect a large number of people.¹³² The worldwide church was ministering in uncharted waters while empowered with unexpected possibilities to keep afloat.¹³³ However, Smoke Church had survived centuries of illness and viruses, including the 1918 Influenza Pandemic. Also more widely known as the Spanish Flu, it was more virulent; killing 3-5% of the world's population.¹³⁴ Yet, Smoke Church survived and now finds the new pandemic limiting its regular behaviors of gathering together. Local, state, and federal governments were all involved in the suppression of the pandemic's infected growth count by use of emergency powers within rules of order and recommendations. Pennsylvania had its own set of emergency guidelines for the pandemic, especially concerning public and social gatherings. Social distancing, separating one person from another by a distance of six feet or more in public places, was the new requirement and the protocol for church service to minimize the risk of illness.¹³⁵ Challenging as it was, Smoke Church and the planning/implementation committee made a commendable effort for members of

¹³² Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: America's Most-Trusted Online Dictionary, s. v. "super-spreader," accessed date, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/super-spreader>.

¹³³ William B. Kincaid, "Moderate Symptoms, Underlying Conditions and Unexpected Outcomes: Congregational Life and COVID-19," *Encounter* 81, no. 1 (2021): 2.

¹³⁴ Dennis Wayne Hiebert, "Self-Sacrifice versus Self-Interest: Christian Responses to Pandemics Then and Now," *Journal of Sociology and Christianity* 11, no. 1 (2021): 1.

¹³⁵ Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: America's Most-Trusted Online Dictionary, s.v. "social distancing", accessed date, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20distancing>.

the congregation to attend initial re-opening services within the parameters of guidance given by the Pennsylvania Governor and the Department of Health. Throughout the continuation of church services, St. Paul's Smoke Church kept safely within the recommended guidelines of rules and regulations of the church's geographical location. Nursing homes throughout the state of Pennsylvania did not allow in-house visits, while many families visited the elderly through window visits (see Appendix C).¹³⁶ Some family members even dressed according to the holiday style in celebration while showing cards or notes of love and giving virtual hugs through the window glass or meeting hands together by pressing on the glass in the same position. All were hurting. The younger generation was hurting inside their hearts for the older while employing responsibility through limited encounters. The older generation was at the highest risk of the virus. They were frightened and stayed away from people and places that could present unnecessary vulnerability. Loneliness was a daily part of living as depression numbers rose. St. Paul Smoke Church's body was primarily formed by the elderly, hence the conundrum. Although Smoke Church's survival through the centuries had precipitated this storm, the novel coronavirus, unlike the viruses before, targeted the significant majority of the church. St. Paul Smoke Church faced an additional obstacle: no permanent pastor. The pandemic found churches in a state where the current pastors were no longer operating while others were looking to hire pastors afresh.¹³⁷ St. Paul's Smoke Church was left without a pastor going into the pandemic and solved the issue by re-opening church Sunday service through the research and the continuum of

¹³⁶ "Interim Guidance on Visitation in Nursing Facilities During COVID-19," Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (Pennsylvania Department of Health), March 12, 2020, accessed date. <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Providers/Documents/Coronavirus%202020/Interim%20Guidance%20on%20Visitation%20in%20Personal%20Care%20Homes%20and%20Assisted%20Living%20Residences.pdf>.

¹³⁷ Kincaid, "Moderate Symptoms, Underlying Conditions, and Unexpected Outcomes," 3.

Sunday service without a permanent pastor and utilizing substitutional pastors. Fear was on the rise in Pennsylvania and the United States because of the severe virulence and the unknown factors related to the Coronavirus. Essentially, the older generation stayed home and so did the other generations. But the elderly was home without the normal routine of family visits while experiencing less freedom in care-free shopping and routine senior activities. One church member remarked how she hadn't seen her grandchildren in nearly a year. Disheartening as it was, the decision made by the congregant thought it was the best or wisest thing to do, especially knowing the extremely high risk to a grandparent suffering from cancer or a disease that lowered immunity. The temporary pause in visits seemed to become near-permanent as the year passed on without the stop of the virus but within the hope of vaccination. The virus seemed to have thwarted the generational flow of life together. Unfortunately, it also did the same in ministry.

The council of St. Paul's Smoke Church was soberly aware of the situation brought on by the pandemic and were very concerned for the elderly members of the church. From the early beginnings of the "just two weeks of shut down" to flatten the curve, which turned into an actual six weeks and still pervaded with lockdown, two elderly members of the St. Paul's Smoke Church were infected with COVID-19. The infection had nothing to do with church services as there were none at the time. Sadly, one person did die. The members of St. Paul's Smoke Church were grieved and a little shaken. Upon earliest encounters with the members of the church, concern was conveyed to the researcher and the heartfelt loss of a member from the virus. Due to the pandemic and to the church's immediate experience with the COVID-19 virus, decisions for the safest operation were enhanced within COVID-19 compliance. COVID-19 compliance meant that research could still be done but alternative forms of engagement or connection must be utilized.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) released in May 2020 specific recommendations for communities of faith and continued updating. In March 2021, in large print at the top of the page, was a written warning giving notification that risk of COVID-19 infection was increased upon attending gatherings and events. The notice went on to strictly advise that individuals “do not gather with those who do not live with you”, and “Stay home to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 (see Appendix D).”¹³⁸ The warning was the beginning of its considerations specifically targeted at communities of faith and follows with paragraphs of instruction to scale up operations. Operational recommendations included “Safety Actions,” which encompass health practices, masks, disinfection, social distancing, minimizing community sharing of materials, childcare or nursery specifics, and the training of staff into the safety actions.¹³⁹ The site goes further into “Monitoring and Preparing,” under which are guidelines for checking for signs and symptoms, plans for infection of a congregant or staff member, how to maintain healthy operations, and posting signs and delivering messages. There is the last section which addresses “Closing” by checking with the local church’s state and local health departments and disinfecting the building before reopening.¹⁴⁰ The *new normal* was the term for life in the pandemic and meant that situation with previous custom was changed to become a new way as normal.¹⁴¹ The term had been used since the 1920’s but was new to this generation. When

¹³⁸ “Considerations for Communities of Faith,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, date of creation?, accessed March 1, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ “New Normal Definition & Meaning,” Dictionary.com (Dictionary.com, LLC, 2022), accessed date, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/new-normal>.

searching in 2022 for these guidelines and accessing the recommendations, they can no longer be found online. A profound lesson of changeable information upon the click of a mouse and perhaps the questionable denial of existence.

Each guideline challenged the church and many other churches who incorporated childcare with services, to rigorous and religious efforts aimed to stop the spread of infection and prevent the transference of any infection from an object such as a chair or hymnal to a person. St. Paul's Smoke Church had no childcare during church service nor child classes of religious education throughout the research of this study and did not for a few years prior. Some states fined businesses and people with high fines, sometimes reaching in the tens of thousands of dollars for not adhering to the law. Most churches were respectful of the law and did their best to practice good and acceptable new normals of operation.

The Mitigation, Enforcement and Immunity Protection Order was signed by Governor Tom Wolf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (see Appendix E).¹⁴² Within Section 11 of the order, the exemption is written for communities of faith to gather for its religious service, but does strongly encourage physical distancing between members, the required wearing of masks, and other mitigation measures.¹⁴³ Other religious gatherings such as conventions, retreats, and other gatherings are not exempt and must follow the order.¹⁴⁴ All religious services must follow

¹⁴² "Order of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania For Mitigation, Enforcement, and Immunity Protections," Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, November 27, 2020, accessed date, <https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/20201123-TWW-mitigation-enforcement-immunity-order.pdf>.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

the Universal Cloth Face Covering Order updated by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health, Dr. Rachel Levine (see Appendix F).¹⁴⁵ The order affects the church services by requiring all to wear a cloth facial mask or a facial shield when gathering within the church building for the worship service and when outside if closer than six feet to another person. It's important to recognize the COVID-19 protocols and rules because it absolutely affects the ministry. Also, church buildings were to operate within a fifteen percent capacity for other events such as conferences, studies, etc. The virus has affected every area of our lives. The elderly most especially was lonely and at the highest risk. The elderly, as stated before, were the majority population in St. Paul's Smoke Church. However, there were still volunteers who allowed the researcher to conversate in person within social distancing and over the phone concerning discipleship, membership, and their experience of St. Paul's Smoke Church.

The idea of a digital cathedral and virtual service was a non-performer for St. Paul's Smoke Church because of the non-existence of internet availability throughout the church and at most of its members' homes. The church had no media team at work within the church and did not utilize business efforts for media outside the church. Smoke Church had no social media or online presence. There was no Facebook page designated for St. Paul's Smoke Church, nor a YouTube channel, Twitter account, Instagram page, or any other platform designated to the church. There were no services viewed through an online presence in the past. And there was no talk of moving forward with online service due to the elderly without technological understanding and availability. There is an exception of a church website,

¹⁴⁵ "Updated Order of the State of Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings," Pennsylvania Department of Health, November 18, 2020, accessed date, <https://www.health.pa.gov>.

www.stpaulssmokechurch.com, that had not been updated since the February 2020 newsletter.¹⁴⁶ Pictured church events on the website were from 2017 and 2018 alone.¹⁴⁷ The prayer list also on the website had some names of members who have been deceased since 2020.¹⁴⁸ One of the three revolving profile pictures shows a sign outside of the church inviting the community to the Christmas Eve Service of 2020. Although the sign still states Sunday school, there had been none for some time before the pandemic. Figure 3.3 displays this announcement.



Figure 3.4. St. Paul's Church Welcome Sign with Message in December 2020.

Participating members were reached by phone to answer the survey questions along with qualitative questions. The initial intention was not to complete the survey and questionnaire over-the-phone but in person or by using pencil and paper. Paper would have been left at the initial Bible study meeting for those who would like to fill it out and then be dropped into a

¹⁴⁶ "Newsletter," St. Paul's Smoke Church, March 2, 2020, <http://www.stpaulssmokechurch.com/newsletter/>.

¹⁴⁷ "Galleries," St. Paul's Smoke Church, November 4, 2018, <http://www.stpaulssmokechurch.com/galleries/>.

¹⁴⁸ "Prayer List," St. Paul's Smoke Church, June 5, 2020, <http://www.stpaulssmokechurch.com/post-1022/>.

shoebox as to anonymously record answers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rule of law in Pennsylvania given by Governor Thomas Wolf and the State Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine, indoor gatherings were held at fifteen percent capacity with safety protocols defined for operation. Any church gathering that was not normal Sunday service was highly recommended to stop. This virulent pandemic was not a time for church civil disobedience but compliance to the recommended rules of law and order concerning it.¹⁴⁹ The church council did decide there would be no extra church gatherings besides the Sunday morning service at 9:00 a.m. A request for the Bible study to be held weekly in person at the church was considered, but due to the concern for the majority within the church falling into senior population and at high risk for serious illness through COVID-19, along with the recommendation to stop any other church gathering from the Pennsylvania authorities, the request was understandably denied. The survey and short study had taken place over the phone; God always makes a way where there is no way (Isa. 43:16).

Twelve people participated. Twelve disciples of Christ in parallel through many generations. Place matters more than ever now because of the virtual world of disembodiment.¹⁵⁰ Due to the acute onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and regulations, the phone was the place of meeting. Each was called over the phone and some returned calls after a message was left upon the unanswered initial call. Upon connection, the survey was completed along with the teaching on discipleship. About nine of those asked would like to continue in Bible study during the winter months of the COVID-19 pandemic, but all were concerned for the COVID virus and

¹⁴⁹ Hiebert, "Self-Sacrifice vs. Self-Interest," 5.

¹⁵⁰ English, *Deep Discipleship*, xxxvi.

safety. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rule of law in Pennsylvania, indoor gatherings were limited to be held at fifteen percent capacity. The church council did decide there would be no extra church gatherings besides the Sunday morning service at 9:00 a.m. Due to the concern for most of the elderly at risk for serious illness through COVID-19 and the immediate newly ordered regulations of the PA State government in the pandemic, extra gatherings were limited. The survey and short study took place over the phone. Ministry took place over the phone.

Gathering together, in and outside of the church, is important to discipleship and the continued sustainability of the church. As a body, Christians are meant to not only share ministry but also their lives with each other; essentially making whole disciples.¹⁵¹ Every member is valued and offers individual uniqueness to the church and community of St. Paul's Smoke Church. Sunday school is only the beginning of discipleship at church. Churches last when growing disciples create a congregation of maturing disciples.¹⁵² Career, education, age, relationship, and gender differences offer a rich cornucopia for the horn of the church to stand in the community and blow into a clarion call. The sound of the horn will increase in volume, strength, and tone, and may attract others to join in study and the church. Growth can occur when those in attendance are learning, sharing and excited about the ministry of teaching and fellowship received. The more the disciples of Christ Jesus spent time with Him, the more each was being transformed into His image as a son or daughter of God. The grand designer of the universe has a purpose for each child to fulfill throughout the earthly mission, just as Christ had. Each child becomes empowered through the Holy Spirit and emboldened to do His will through

¹⁵¹ English, *Deep Discipleship*, xxxvi.

¹⁵² English, *Deep Discipleship*, 3m.

knowing Christ and ultimately worshipping the Father God in spirit and truth. Through Christ every disciple can know relationship with the Father and be strengthened with knowledge, counsel, and wisdom to journey into purpose that completes the body of Christ.

The disciple's relationship does not stop at knowing God the Father through Christ the Son. The disciple is relational to the lost, the broken, and the hurting of this world. St. Paul's Smoke Church normally reaches out to the community with holiday food sales. As a group of disciples from St. Paul's Smoke Church, the efforts and/or ideas of traditional and non-traditional outreach to the surrounding community can normally be planned and implemented without much controversy. The Coronavirus pandemic had put a temporary pause or restraining order on all extra activities of the church. The mission of St. Paul's Smoke Church was still the same as written in the biblical story and for the sake of God's glory.¹⁵³ Remembering and knowing that discipleship is walked out in daily life with God, family, co-workers, and friends, the disciple's journey continued. The pandemic reached and affected some of the most sacred places of a disciple's life. The call for personal prayer was immediate and necessary with every living day. Many prayers were prayed over-the-phone with much encouragement from the Word of God. A reminder of the need for prayer life was given and received as the utmost importance in this challenging season of life.

The researcher thought it would be remiss not to mention the constant exceptions to normal life during this pandemic. Remembering also that St. Paul told the early Christians to be good citizens and pay taxes, the church today still has an ethical duty to honor their local

¹⁵³ Christopher J. Wright, *Here Are Your Gods: Faithful Discipleship in Idolatrous Times* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 115.

governments.¹⁵⁴ Restaurants, bars, and places of gathering were closed throughout the winter holidays in Pennsylvania by the order of the Governor and the Secretary of Health. Since then, some restaurants have opened at fifteen percent capacity. The sandwich sale at St. Paul's Smoke Church and Easter Egg Making was not an option. At the time of this writing, the distribution of the vaccine had recently begun in the county of Berks, Pennsylvania, but supplies were limited. The local grocery store, Weis Markets, was giving out the Pfizer vaccine through its pharmacy. Weis Markets, located in Hamburg, Pennsylvania, is about a mile down the road from St. Paul's Smoke Church. Online registration is required to make an appointment to receive the vaccine. Due to the demand and limited supply, most find it is difficult to access the online waiting room. The group that is eligible to be vaccinated in Pennsylvania at the time of this writing are those in 1A guidelines. The 1A group is designated for those sixty-five years and older.¹⁵⁵

The church group at St. Paul's Smoke Church is majority in this 1A group, and most want to receive the vaccine. At the very beginning, the vaccination program seemed quite easy enough to access. Local pharmacies within stores such as Weis Markets and Rite Aids would be administering the shot. The distribution was overseen within Pennsylvania's Department of Health. However, there was one glitch. The registration for the vaccine took place online and often required slot time availability. Most of the senior adults within Smoke Church did not have internet access while others were not computer savvy enough to schedule the appointment. Certainly, this was little fault of their own as there was never much a need for internet activity

¹⁵⁴ Wright, *Here Are Your Gods*, 127.

¹⁵⁵ "Covid-19 Interim Vaccination Plan V7.0 Pennsylvania," *Covid-19 Interim Vaccination Plan V7.0 Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Department of Health, 2021), date accessed, <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Programs/Immunizations/PA%20Interim%20Vaccine%20Plan%20V.7.pdf>, 15.

during their heyday of work and life. An impractical way for an aging generation to access a much-needed vaccination was implemented. One senior member, who is computer capable and tried repeatedly each day to schedule a time to receive the vaccine always received a message which read, “There are no appointments at this time, please check back tomorrow when new ones maybe added.” The local Weis Markets in Hamburg, Pennsylvania was administering the shots and how convenient this would be for them, since there was an illness of cancer between the couple. Driving far away would be an unexpected hardship and the proximity in location served the church and community well. But the difficulty presented with online registration and appointment availability. Remembering that Christians are fellow workers in the building projects for God, when they let go of ideals there is no sphere that kenosis cannot enter.¹⁵⁶ The researcher, in praying together and speaking with the member, suggested that the browser which gave the message should be closed out and keep retrying to enter for an appointment. When the member did so, early in the morning, before 6:00 a.m., on a Wednesday, the member was able to schedule two appointments (one for the husband and one for the wife). The member remarked that when the message was given to “try back tomorrow,” the member had believed it. The researcher tried to explain that there was no waiting room for those who could wait when the system was busy with others who were scheduling. So, for this instance, the message would be sent; it was a way to filter out the busy from the platform. Those who did not receive the message were able to schedule, but those who did tried at a time when the system was busy. The simple fix was to log out by closing out the browser and starting over or trying again.

¹⁵⁶ Eugene Baron, *Majority World Perspectives on Christian Mission* (Auckland Park, South Africa: UJ Press, 2022), 45.

Responding to human needs, especially during this crisis, is a spiritual task deeply rooted in the early church and discipleship.¹⁵⁷ Later, the following month, a waiting room was added to the site. Through the researcher's confirmational knowledge, nine adults over age 65 within the church have received the vaccine as of May 2021. The availability is now open to many more in Pennsylvania.

The church in Hamburg, Pennsylvania should see revival and growth while seeking the Father and His heart for the local community, the next generation, and the grand-scale view of the world. With the many maladies in social, economic, business, and cultural life today offering little to no cures, the public wants something substantial that is life-altering from their present-day norm while making everyday stabilization more prevalent with peace and prosperity. Success and greatness become bold and synonymous with the recognition of Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁸ St. Paul's Smoke Church has survived two and a half centuries with different seasons filled with trials and many successes. Yes, even through a pandemic or two, and more so in its earliest years, the church has survived and grown beyond; consider the H1N1 Influenza pandemic, also known as the Spanish flu of 1918. Also, there were known early struggles with the original Indians, followed by many wars, including the Revolutionary War. There were economic hardships that the people of the church had endured, such as the Great Depression and many recessions. St. Paul's Smoke Church has shown to have the staying power that only the grace and favor of God can bring from on high. The pandemic of the Coronavirus, COVID-19, has placed many at high risk at St. Paul's Smoke Church on the sole basis of age factor. The majority of the

¹⁵⁷ Baron, *Majority World Perspectives on Christian Mission*, 117.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Westwood Carr, *Lifestyle Christianity: Christian Counterculture Theology Made Simple* (Chicago, IL: Austin Macauley Publishers, 2021), 109.

church is within the senior population or elderly who are praying and believing to leave a rich legacy of discipleship in their communities of Windsor Township, Edenburg, and Hamburg, Pennsylvania. The prayer of the saints is that the same power that has sustained the people of St. Paul's Smoke Church continues to keep them alive and well through this pandemic and into the growth of new life. The church is found to be held captive to the Lord and this strong faith is not to just God but the resounding phrase of "Our God," which proves to be faithful through time and trial.¹⁵⁹ There is no power greater than that which comes from on Highest, El Elyon, through "Our God" Most High. The temple of St. Paul's Smoke Church will be filled with smoke because of the glory and power of God (Rev. 15:8).

¹⁵⁹ Carr, *Lifestyle Christianity*, 127.

Chapter 4

Results

Results for this thesis project were variable; often dependent upon the extreme, unusual, and limiting circumstance of hardship encountered through the pandemic of COVID-19. The survey results overwhelmingly showed the heart for Christ among the members of St. Paul's Smoke Church. There is a necessary and sweet desire found in the older generation for the younger generation within the church and within the immediate community to have relationship with Jesus Christ and with each other. Members overwhelmingly agree that they would like to see their church survive and grow through this new century. Oddly enough, question eight of the survey, which specifically addressed desire for survival and growth of the church, was drafted with especially limited understanding towards the huge effect of the challenging time of a pandemic. The researcher had little experience in ministry within a pandemic and even less experiential knowledge of a worldwide pandemic. Afterall, the researcher is among the majority consensuses. The last pandemic with most severe effects in recent history was the Influenza Pandemic of 1918, more commonly known as the Spanish Flu, according to the CDC (see Appendix G).¹⁶⁰ The initial reasoning for the question considered the actual decline of attendance in St. Paul's Smoke Church from its inception to the period of research: the academic year 2020-2021. The question seemed to fit well within the scope of the entirety of St. Paul's Smoke Church. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, and its sober numbers that show astronomical illness within the United States and gross grave effects on the elderly population and those with

¹⁶⁰ "1918 Pandemic (H1N1 Virus)," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 20, 2019, accessed date, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-pandemic-h1n1.html>.

pre-conditions, question eight not only holds more validity and value, but resonates an unforeseen agent, whereby life and death are factored by a causal force of epidemic without consent from those who would normally hold the gavel of demise or the reward of prosperity. St. Paul's Smoke Church is held in wait or limbo of a pandemic along with so many other churches within the area. Sadly so, the desired growth of St. Paul's Smoke Church has not yet been actualized. The survival and viability of St. Paul's Smoke Church is holding on as so many other places of worship due to the limitations and cautions of a pandemic and its virility.

The miracle of the situation is that the death march of a contained conundrum of rules and regulations with the unexpected acute virility of a novel virus, which is known for its super-spreading capability and grave incidence to the elderly, has affected St. Paul's Smoke Church but there is still life in Sunday service. The prayers of the saints are being heard as they stand firmly on the rock of their foundation, Jesus Christ the Lord. The church is still and knows that He is God. Once again, reference to question eight concerns survival and growth, but the researcher has stopped to notice the biblical significance of the number eight. Eight stands for new life in the Bible, as on the seventh day the week was complete. Eight is the beginning of a new cycle filled with the promise of new life. Looking back on the creative efforts of the survey and question eight, one can see the promise of God and His faithfulness divinely written with hope and steadfastness for St. Paul's Smoke Church. The pandemic continues for now but even more-so does St. Paul's Smoke Church. The unforeseen "question 8" was foreseen by our God in sovereignty, perhaps delightfully so in response to the multitude of prayers through the centuries of generations prior, who lived in Windsor Township, Pennsylvania and attended Smoke Church.

The number of COVID-19 deaths within the United States of America was marked at 535,478, and counting, on February 23, 2021.¹⁶¹ Within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania the rolling numbers for COVID-19 of positive cases have surpassed one million and deaths are grievously over twenty-five thousand (see Appendix H).¹⁶² Within the county of Berks, where St. Paul's Smoke Church is more precisely located, the number of those known to have been infected with the virus rises over forty thousand and the number of deaths stands at a sobering nine hundred thirty.¹⁶³ Figures 4.1 and 4.2 showcase the spread of cases in the state of Pennsylvania and Berks county, Pennsylvania respectively.

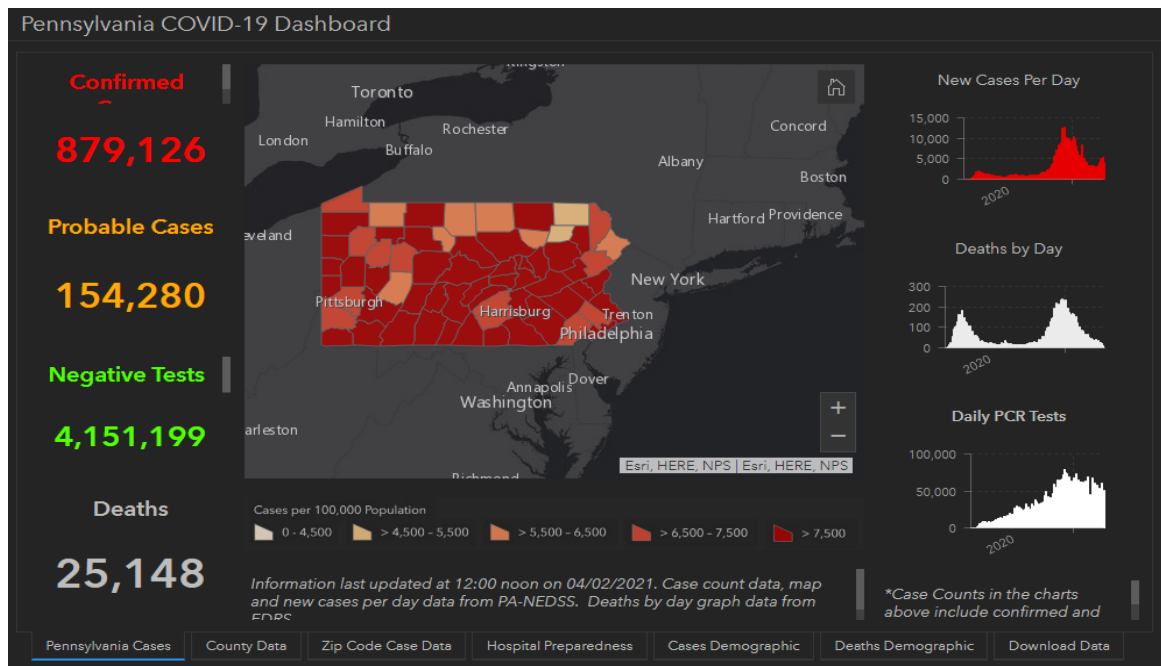


Figure 4.1. Pennsylvania COVID-19 Dashboard on April 2, 2021.

¹⁶¹ “COVID-19 Data from the National Center for Health Statistics,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 23, 2021, accessed date, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/index.htm>.

¹⁶² “Pennsylvania COVID-19 Numbers,” Department of Health, April 2, 2021, accessed date, <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Cases.aspx>.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

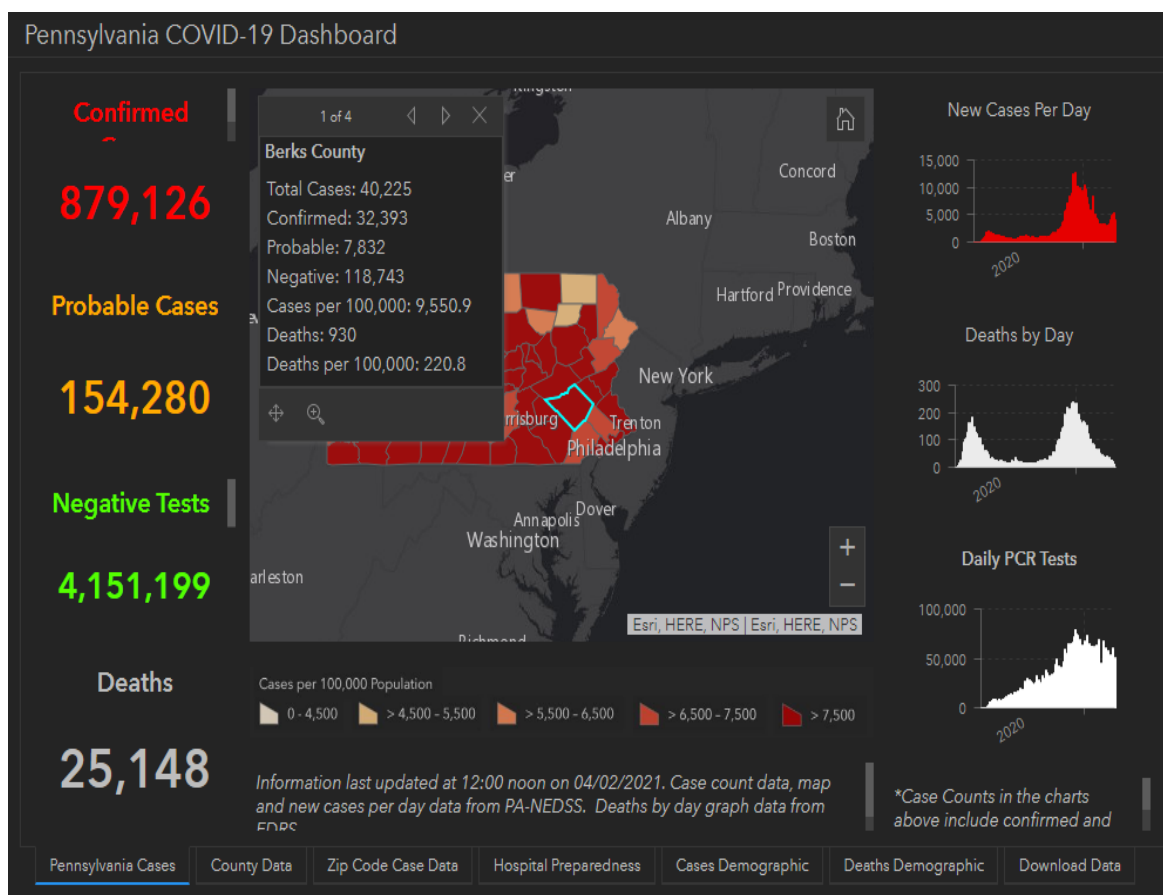


Figure 4.2. Berks County, PA Specific COVID-19 Dashboard on April 21, 2021.

Every county represents one person and is significant to the vitality of a community. In this case, Berks county, in the state of Pennsylvania, in the United States of America is focus of these results. From the very-near beginnings and introduction to the words of “COVID -19” and the “pandemic,” unfortunately, a member of St. Paul’s Smoke Church was infected with the virus. The member went on to be with the Lord in heaven. The church of St. Paul’s was very affected and saddened upon hearing about the one or two of their own becoming infected and suffering. When members had learned about the passing of their friend, of course they were

saddened, concerned and a bit frightened. From earliest days forward in the pandemic, the members of St. Paul's Smoke Church knew the deadly potential of the virus through first-hand knowledge and chose the path of caution with responsibility toward one another. Although the actual church building had been closed during this period, from the earliest days of March 2020, the people of St. Paul's Smoke Church were shaken not only to the news of this pandemic, just as the masses were, but also in the passing of their friend and church family member. One must consider the actual death of a member of the church as first sacred to God and holy to the church. The people of St. Paul's Smoke Church had profoundly encountered the virus with its most severe outcome of death. Rightly so, in humanity, the family of the church grieved and many worried to the future weeks and months facing each in this pandemic. The council remained grounded within caution yet open to hearing ideas.

Limitations were unexpectedly everywhere. Under the limitations section of this thesis project were the words typed "dependent upon the pandemic." The researcher had little-to-no first-hand knowledge of limitations due to a pandemic prior to the study. At the beginning of this research project, the broadened definition which incorporated limitations dependent upon the pandemic was written undefined with many possibilities. Throughout the year of study, the limitations were severe beginning with an opening of a pleading request, which was heard as a fifteen-day plan to slow the spread or to flatten the curve by staying home authorized by President Donald Trump and his COVID-19 task force.¹⁶⁴ The task force led by Vice President Mike Pence in cooperation with Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Birx turned the two week plan into

¹⁶⁴ Dan Mangan, "Trump Issues 'Coronavirus Guidelines' for Next 15 Days to Slow Pandemic," CNBC, March 16, 2020, date accessed, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/16/trumps-coronavirus-guidelines-for-next-15-days-to-slow-pandemic.html>.

six weeks and limitations were severe. Workers and businesses were legally defined as essential and non-essential. Sunday service was ruled essential according to the Constitution of the United States of America. Every state was ruled by its governor and mandatory requirements varied from state-to-state. Pennsylvania, where St. Paul's Smoke Church resides, joined into an interstate cooperative with New York, New Jersey, Connecticut.¹⁶⁵ The Northeastern cooperative added more states along the timeline of progression through the effects of the coronavirus. The multi-state cooperative monitored the highs and lows of the infection and death rates, while keeping with interstate travel and mitigation of the spread through a regional, coordinated approach upheld with requirements, orders, and in certain instances, monetary fines. St. Paul's Smoke Church received zero fines or warnings and chose to remain available to its members during the Sunday service alone.

Television, radio, and the internet broadcasted a plethora of information concerning the pandemic. Daily, the White House Coronavirus Taskforce gave updates regarding the pandemic. In Pennsylvania, Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of Health, Dr. Rachel Levine, gave daily updates which involved numbers of cases and deaths along with orders concerning mitigation efforts. The internet was utilized as a place for the transfer of much-needed information and regulations concerning pandemic life to the public. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter showcased official government sites. Both the PA Dept. of Health and Governor Tom Wolf claim a page on each site. For many of the elderly at St. Paul's Smoke Church, the internet was not the mode of choice in access. The television, local newspaper, and radio were.

¹⁶⁵ "Pennsylvania Joins New York, New Jersey and Connecticut's Regional Coalition to Combat COVID-19," Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, March 23, 2020, accessed date, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/pennsylvania-joins-new-york-new-jersey-and-connecticuts-regional-coalition-combat-covid-19>.

In the news, one would hear or see the biggest, the best, the worst, and the least stories, often with sobering contemplation and breeding fear. Much ado was made about one specific incident or one preferred viewpoint echoing throughout the media force. For instance, one businessman, an owner/operator of a gym/fitness center in upstate NY was fined fifteen thousand dollars for one day found opened in defiance of the shutdown order.¹⁶⁶

Another example was the earliest headlines of those young and old who were infected with the COVID-19 virus and tragically died. Hospital reports of the number of deaths from the novel Coronavirus were emulsified with heart attacks, motorcycle accidents, and other non-related tragedies as long as the test was COVID-19 positive.¹⁶⁷ Reimbursement to hospitals from the government for patients admitted and/or deaths with those who test positive for COVID-19 was a factual increase of twenty percent.¹⁶⁸ In some cases, the hospital was awarded fifty thousand dollars for the fight against the virus.¹⁶⁹ The incentive to find the virus in a patient who was dying from a motor cycle accident was very beneficial to the welfare of operations at any healthcare facility during this pandemic. Attaining a positive result can sometimes prove easy through the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test. A single molecule can be spun out and multiplied to thirty-two times which is the size of a whole DNA strand. The test carries the

¹⁶⁶ Ryan Whalen, "Orchard Park Gym Owner Won't Pay Fine for Gathering, Plans To Open Monday," Spectrum News, November 25, 2021, accessed date, <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/buffalo/news/2020/11/25/orchard-park-gym-owner-faces--15-000-fine-for-gathering>.

¹⁶⁷ Chris Talgo, "Is US COVID-19 Death Count Inflated?," The Hill, September 3, 2020, accessed date, <https://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/514915-is-us-covid-19-death-count-inflated>.

¹⁶⁸ Van Tieu, "VERIFY: Do Hospitals Get More Funding by Marking Deaths COVID-19 Related?," abc10.com, July 31, 2020, accessed date, <https://www.abc10.com/article/news/verify/verify-do-hospitals-get-more-funding-by-marking-deaths-covid-19-related/103-36834bad-1113-4f67-8804-5d97e6593745>.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

capability of making a whole lot of somethings from one thing. The test itself was proving to be controversial in the fact-finding. Remembering that every person's body contains a normal flora of bacteria, germs, viruses, etc. that keeps an amazing homeostasis in life and immunity may significantly question accuracy. Many of the elderly at St. Paul's Smoke Church did not understand everything concerning the virus. Many were concerned and some even fearful, praying to God for a quick end to the spread and termination of all illnesses caused by COVID.

The virus is real, but many were determined to stay the course; believing that it had little effect, and that the effect was less than the yearly flu. With the sudden cessation of the annual running-count of influenza cases, COVID-19 cases were rising as the flu counts seemed to disappear in Pennsylvania (see Appendix I).¹⁷⁰ The United States showed the same magical disappearance of the annual influenza. Some were not personally wearing masks. Others, who were employing mask-wearing as a preventative measure, sometimes were angry with those who did not. Mixed messages were coming from Dr. Fauci, a revered leader on the Coronavirus Task Force who served as a physician adviser to many presidents of the USA, along with being a member of the National Institute of Health (NIH). First, Dr. Fauci claimed that masks did not work to stop the infection and were more symbolic.¹⁷¹ Later, as the pandemic continued, Dr. Fauci said they were necessary and effective, commanding the use of mask-wearing as "the

¹⁷⁰ "2020-21 Flu," Department of Health, April 10, 2021, accessed date, <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Flu/Pages/2020-21-Flu.aspx>.

¹⁷¹ Jim Hoft, "Masks Are Symbolic,' Say Dr Fauci and The New England Journal of Medicine," The Gateway Pundit, May 28, 2020, accessed date, <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2020/05/masks-symbolic-say-dr-fauci-new-england-journal-medicine/>.

better part of valor and an addendum to the physical separation.”¹⁷² Recently the recommendation from Dr. Fauci was for doubling up the masks.¹⁷³ With the changes in recommendations, people viewed the virus in having the same components and question the efficacy of the requirement and the expertise of Dr. Fauci with distrust.¹⁷⁴ Christians go on to trust God in all things. With every ounce of confusion and distrust created by those in authority, Christians found themselves leaning more on God. The people of St. Paul’s Smoke Church kept their faith in God while obeying the governor’s orders.

Washing hands, albeit necessary, leveled up to critical, and many sang the Happy Birthday song twice, while most Christians recited the Lord’s prayer instead. Many corporations and people profited hugely from the differences found in daily routines and needs. Hand sanitizers were quite a necessity, and many new manufacturers of the product entered the market. Some were detrimental to health and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began recording a list of the hand sanitizers which were toxic.¹⁷⁵ The active ingredient of toxicity was either methanol (wood alcohol) or 1-Propanol.¹⁷⁶ One can understand the fear and confusion brought into an everyday child of God. Every person is now in the trust of federal agencies and institutions to an

¹⁷² Joshua Nelson, “Dr. Fauci Recommends People Wear Cloth Masks in Public, Urges Caution on Coronavirus Treatments,” Fox News, April 7, 2020, date accessed, <https://www.foxnews.com/media/anthony-fauci-hydroxychloroquine-use-coronavirus>.

¹⁷³ Leah Groth, “Dr. Fauci Just Said If You Should Double Mask,” msn.com, February 2, 2021, date accessed, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/dr-fauci-just-said-if-you-should-double-mask/ar-BB1dkg5W>.

¹⁷⁴ Grace Panetta, “Fauci Says He Doesn’t Regret Telling Americans Not to Wear Masks at the Beginning of the Pandemic,” msn.com, July 16, 2020, date accessed, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/fauci-says-he-doesnt-regret-telling-americans-not-to-wear-masks-at-the-beginning-of-the-pandemic/ar-BB16P84e>.

¹⁷⁵ Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, “FDA Updates on Hand Sanitizers Consumers Should Not Use,” U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), date published, accessed April 7, 2021, <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-updates-hand-sanitizers-consumers-should-not-use>.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

extreme portion never realized before in this lifetime. Who can obviously see the difference between methanol and ethanol? Alcohol is needed in sanitizers, and both are forms thereof. Some manufacturers listed ethanol as the main or active ingredient in the product but tested positive for methanol by the FDA.¹⁷⁷ Trust was again on the attack. The members of St. Paul's Smoke Church were holding fast to the Rock from which they were hewn. The congregation trusted God.

The new challenging circumstances riddled with conflagrations and embellishments had placed many people, both believers and non-believers, in a most precarious and grave situation. This new place of existence brought a new set of limitations that could, and would, change with the flow of numbers which were recorded concerning the virus in this pandemic. The USA, once held with Judeo-Christian beliefs in its founding and the practice thereof in the two centuries that followed, was settling into a new form of existence as un-believers and nones, seeking after science. When looking into the measurements and subjects, one finds the tweaking of results is possible and may be advantageous or disadvantageous in every mountain of life. Healthcare was the number one focus with the highest concern placed upon the elderly and those with pre-conditions. America was essentially closed for business or shut down. Every American was asked to stay home for at least fifteen days from school or work to slow the spread or reduce the curve of COVID-19.¹⁷⁸ The initial cry by the Coronavirus Task Force, which includes the acting Surgeon General Jerome Adams, for the first fifteen days to flatten the curve rolled into a full six

¹⁷⁷ Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, "FDA Updates on Hand Sanitizers Consumers Should Not Use," U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), date published, accessed April 7, 2021, <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-updates-hand-sanitizers-consumers-should-not-use>.

¹⁷⁸ "Coronavirus Updates from March 16, 2020," CBS News, March 17, 2020, date accessed, <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-updates/coronavirus-updates-cases-fears-deaths-us-latest-2020-03-16/>.

weeks to slow the spread and reduce the pressure on healthcare facilities.¹⁷⁹ Sheltering in place smoothly progressed into “stay-home if you can” and continued to be an ongoing recommendation as the pandemic moved into the first season of its second year while limiting the number of people allowed to gather together in at-home cookouts or gatherings. When one looks at the report put out to Americans in the first two weeks of the lockdown from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, an eerie prophecy of an eighteen-month or longer-lasting pandemic is noted.¹⁸⁰ Christians at St. Paul’s Smoke Church have stayed the test of time and circumstance with faith in God and continue to believe that there is a light at the end of this tunnel in the name of Jesus and His unfailing love. The born-again believers understand that life is a gift from God and pray diligently for the grace to overcome this attack of evil on life during the length of this pandemic.

Within all the changing regulations and rules, churches throughout Pennsylvania were very dedicated to remaining open and used as much will through knowledge with wisdom to do so. Many churches turned to the Lord for help in finances at the inception of the pandemic and found relief as time and resources continued. St. Paul’s Smoke Church stayed within its long-standing will and remained available to the people on Sunday Service. The other activities of St. Paul’s Smoke Church were consistently closed, including the weekly Bible study. The ELCA advised no singing and only one speaker/reader during service. The council felt strongly about adhering to the recommendations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the orders of

¹⁷⁹ Andrew Denney, “Surgeon General Says 15 Days 'Not Enough Time' to Slow Coronavirus,” New York Pos, March 18, 2020, date accessed, <https://nypost.com/2020/03/18/surgeon-general-says-15-days-not-enough-time-to-slow-coronavirus/>.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

Governor Tom Wolf for the benefit of the safety of its members. Other churches throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania did so also. Some churches found a way to remain open and available to their members throughout the pandemic.

One must consider the liability in holding events that were prohibited by state law. At fifteen percent volume, the capacity to gather for events would require strict oversight not only of the number in attendance but also the recommendations for disinfection. One must evaluate at what point does the organization of St. Paul's Smoke Church hold attendees' and members' health in their hands. In civil court this question is answered without the necessary "beyond the shadow of a doubt" required in criminal cases. The lines maybe blurred with much circumstantial evidence and liability is at a premium. That premium to insurers is quite costly, and throughout the pandemic many non-profits saw an extreme rise in coverage cost. If the non-profit wants to hold a charitable outdoor event with many in attendance, the cost of coverage had, in some cases, increased ten-fold. That seems to be an extreme increase but considering this is a novel virus with little-to-no actual data available to so many areas that fall into liability, one must choose sound wisdom. Some areas within liability to consider would be the fact that certain strains are super-contagious, and gatherings are termed as "super-spreaders" with caution and limitations on such (see Appendix J).¹⁸¹

Short-term effects of the virus were becoming evident as time and the pandemic marched forward. Some lengthier six-month effects were found through short-term study with obscurity

¹⁸¹ "Considerations for Events and Gatherings," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 7, 2021, date accessed, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>.

into even longer sufferings (see Appendix K).¹⁸² Symptoms seem to continue through time and continue to effect daily life. Multi-organ symptoms are now noted, and the duration is unfortunately unknown.¹⁸³ Mental health has been greatly under attack with viral entry into the nervous system and neurological effects proving to be sometimes lasting. People were lonely and many experienced loneliness to an exponential degree within the first six-week period of lock-down. Many at the height of viral inception were sadly dying alone in a hospital room without friends or family visitation due to strict hospital regulation or no-visitors policy. Temple Health Hospital and its campuses across the Philadelphia region within Pennsylvania were still operating under a no-visitor policy through year one and into year two of the pandemic (see Appendix L).¹⁸⁴ Being a patient without visitation from friends, loved ones, and/or family members was so disheartening and almost despairing to both the patient and the family. Tower Health in Reading, Pennsylvania of Berks County was allowing one visitor per patient. This practiced continued into 2021 (see Appendix M).¹⁸⁵ Volunteers were limited to those clinically required and flowers, food, or gifts were not allowed; so much for the aesthetics.¹⁸⁶ The tremendous suffering of those who died and those who endured was incalculable. The suffering and sick are remembered by the church in prayer and especially so at the weekly Sunday service

¹⁸² “Post-COVID Conditions,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 8, 2021, date accessed, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects.html>.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ “Visitor Restrictions at All Temple Health Hospital Campuses and Outpatient Offices,” Temple Health, date issued? 2020, date accessed, <https://www.templehealth.org/2019-novel-coronavirus/visitor-policy>.

¹⁸⁵ “Visitor Guidelines,” Visitor Guidelines | Tower Health, February 17, 2021, date accessed, <https://towerhealth.org/covid-19-information-center/what-expect-tower-health-facilities/visitor-guidelines>.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

of St. Paul's Smoke Church. Christians throughout the community, state, and nation are steadfast in prayer for the termination of the pandemic. Pastoral care was limited by the virus and still is in certain areas. Pastoral care at St. Paul's Smoke Church is limited without a permanent serving pastor.

The need for discipleship is great during this extremely cautionary life of COVID-19. Discipleship among believers of faith within a community is extremely limited and lessened throughout the COVID-19 experience. Remember that all activities other than Sunday service were at first not allowed and many churches, as St. Paul's Smoke Church, have not reinstated additional activities yet. Relationships are limited to in-person meetings and gatherings. COVID-19 rules were respected and upheld by many especially within the realm of human touch. Hugs and kisses are heading into possible extinction while one pretends not-to-be in the need to cough or sneeze in front of others. From its inception, many were afraid to admit to being sick even with allergies. Any tickle in the throat, cough, or runny nose was concern for infection of COVID-19. What happened to spring fever, allergies, and the normal yearly virus of vomit around the Easter celebration? COVID-19 was the corona of disease focus in this past year and still holds the crown. But Lord Jesus is the King of kings who rules over coronavirus; believers must hope and trust in Him. Discipleship did continue but in other unexpected ways. The phone was a great tool to use to minister to others, as was the internet. Messaging on various platforms provided a means to reach out to one another and keep the faith. Telephone calls, texting, television, radio, and online platforms served as mediums to exchange the Good News.

Since its inception, COVID-19 had shut down all non-urgent medical care while classifications such as essential and non-essential were born. President Trump and his administration's Coronavirus Task Force recommended to limit hospital surgeries to allow for

supplies and medical professionals to go where first needed with treatment in the crisis of the novel coronavirus pandemic.¹⁸⁷ Even workers and work were categorized as essential and non-essential. Businesses were closed and not allowed to open that were considered non-essential within Pennsylvania and throughout the nation. Governor Tom Wolf signed a disaster emergency order that closed all non-life sustaining businesses and closed all restaurant dining.¹⁸⁸ Closures were a serious order that put non-compliance on the receiving end of fines and possible non-renewal of license. Churches mostly were compliant considering the plethora of reasoning, fears, excuses, absence of members, and so much more. Many pastors, who were aging and at risk due to pre-conditions, were seriously concerned and many did not visit the sick. St. Paul's Smoke Church had a pastor pre-pandemic who took vacation and did not return during the pandemic, but rather retired. St. Paul's Smoke Church is one where the believers continued prayer at home with understanding to the caution of the situation with no Sunday service. From late summer through the time of writing, the Sunday service is the only gathering of the believers at St. Paul's Smoke Church. The Sunday Service has missed a few weeks here or there, for reasons unknown, but still endures the pandemic; pressing on to serve the faithful. Pastoral care was limited due to the non-availability of an intermediate pastor.

Discipleship is a hot commodity that requires a strong and clever effort from those who follow Jesus in this season. The intentional connection to Christ broadens relationships and yet

¹⁸⁷ Nathaniel Weixel, "Trump Administration Advises Delaying All 'Nonessential' Medical Procedures," The Hill, March 18, 2020, date accessed, <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/488249-trump-administration-advises-delaying-all-nonessential-medical-procedures>.

¹⁸⁸ Tom Wolf, "Order of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Regarding the Closure of All Businesses That Are Not Life Sustaining," § (2020).

strategically incorporates responses to culture and trends while influencing the intergenerational bonds of the church.¹⁸⁹ Many churches broadcast the weekly service online through platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. Streamlining of daily word and prayer is also a great outreach that many Christians employ. St. Paul's Smoke Church does not broadcast or go live on the internet with the Sunday Service. There are no extra activities that accompany the Sunday service. Talking socially after the service is not allowed within the church, nor recommended. Safety and precaution, to and for most of the elderly who are the majority within the church, is held to the standard gold seal and prudentially so. The annual extra events of St. Paul's Smoke Church are left in wait to a time prayerfully soon into the near future where the virus is not an eminent threat to the lives of believers who frequent the church. Discipleship, for now, is basically the Sunday service and personal prayer without traditional weekly designated and focused meetings. Discipleship also occurred through telephone call, messaging, and watching a Bible teaching or study.

Survey Results

The survey was given to twelve Christians who are members of or attend St. Paul's Smoke Church. The telephone was employed as the means of communication and all volunteers surveyed were congenial and candid. Each were assured anonymity with response. The researcher was the only other person who heard and recorded the responses on a piece of paper with pencil. It is important to note that all answers were genuine and in no way were the

¹⁸⁹ Mike Severe and Mark H. Senter, "Forty Years of Youth Ministry," *Christian Education Journal* 17, no. 3 (2020): 457.

surveyed baited or recommended to respond in a certain manner or answer. Table 4.1 shows results.

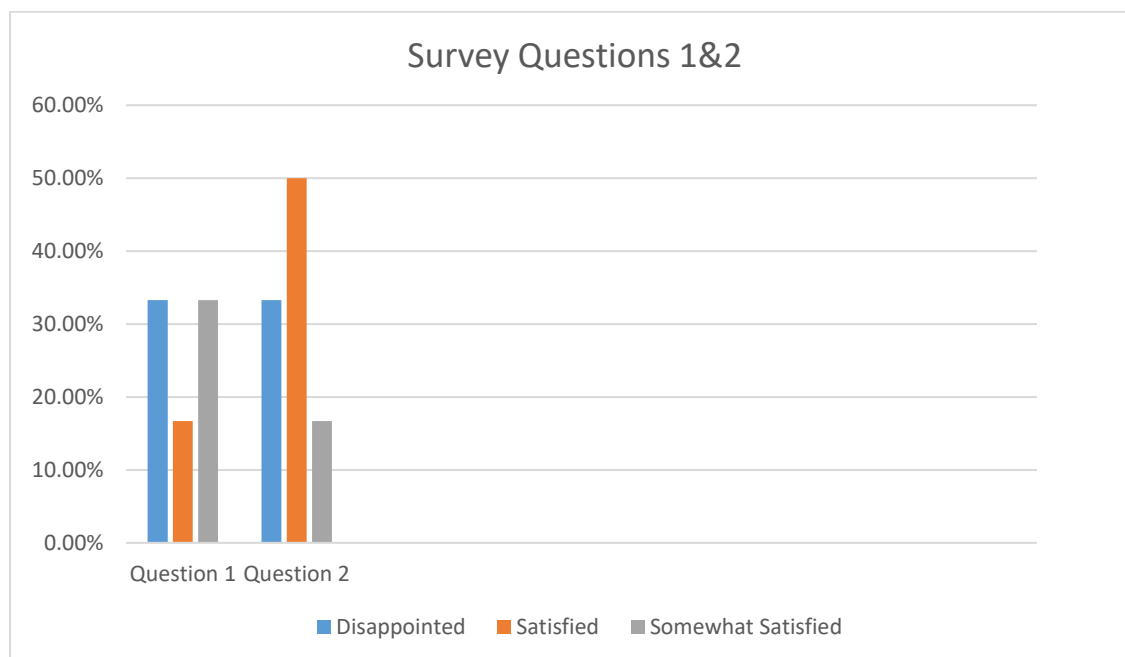


Table 4.1. Survey Responses for Questions 1 and 2.

Question one asks if the surveyed is satisfied with the spiritual food at St. Paul's Smoke Church. Four (33.3%) responded they were disappointed, two (16.7%) were a little disappointed, four (33.3%) were satisfied, and two (16.7%) were somewhat satisfied. Four are satisfied with attending Sunday service as the only spiritual food while about 50% want more. It's important to note that the pandemic is understood to be the reason for the Sunday Service only spiritual food.

Question two asks if the surveyed is satisfied or disappointed with the attendance size of the church. Four (33.3%) responded with a little disappointed, six (50%) were satisfied, and two (16.7%) were a little satisfied. When considering the value of the responses, it's important to remember each were given during the extreme challenges of the church to the pandemic.

Question three, found in table 4.2, asks if the surveyed believes the church disciples, with specificity to the last decade. Seven (58.3%) responded “yes” and five (41.7%) responded “no.” Some members went onto explain there has been no Bible study in this time.

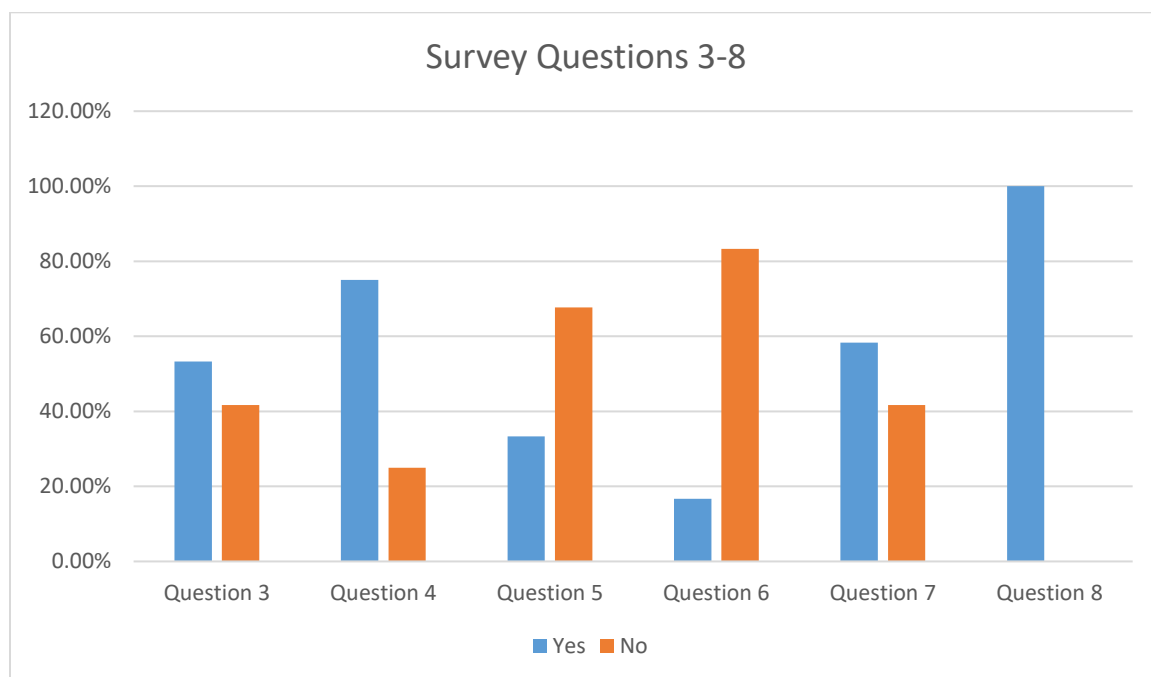


Table 4.2. Survey Responses for Questions 3 through 8.

Question four asks if the surveyed knows what discipleship is and furthers to request the definition. Three (25%) responded “no.” Nine (75%) responded “yes.” Three of the definitions for discipleships were “going to church.” Two more of the responses were “praying together.” One response was “I don’t know.” Three responses included many answers including “following Jesus,” “reading the Bible together,” “being together and doing things together,” “encouraging each other” and “praying for one another.”

Question five asks if the surveyed is satisfied or not with the number of young adults who attend service at their church. Four (33.3%) responded with satisfaction and eight (66.7%) responded they were not.

Question six asks if the surveyed is actively involved in a discipleship program. Two (16.7%) responded “yes” and ten (83.3%) responded “no.”

Question seven asks if the surveyed has reasonable hope that St. Paul’s Smoke Church will survive though the next quarter century. Seven (58.3%) responded “yes” and five (41.7%) responded “no.”

Question eight asks if the surveyed would like to see St. Paul’s Smoke Church survive and thrive. All twelve (100%) responded “yes.”

For question eight, all of those questioned responded overwhelmingly with a resounding yes. They want to see their church survive and thrive. Seeing a vision of the church in the future inspires the presence of the kingdom of God and its work through personal and corporate involvement.¹⁹⁰ Perhaps some were thinking or believing for survival through the pandemic, while others may have thought of long-term survival as into the future, even until Jesus returns. All have a good heart’s desire to see Smoke Church prosper. All teaching on the broad term of discipleship was interactive. Communication by the researcher was basic, clear, and concise. Over-the-phone and in-person interactions and exchanges were always a pleasant conversation without pressure nor demands. Regardless of the current condition of the church, each is in want of a legacy of faith, hope, and love to the community in Windsor Township and beyond.

It is very crucial to consider the severe strain once again on the church during this season of watchfulness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Within each question, the answer must be perceived through the lens of intergenerational ministry while including marked influence on the pages of limitations, distress, illness, and death that affected each survey. New boundaries and/or

¹⁹⁰ Antje Jackelén, “What May We Hope?,” *Dialog: a Journal of Theology* 61, no. 1 (2022): 14.

restrictions present in this time of crisis that were not previously present, and hope emerges in parallel with novel opportunities forged under pressure.¹⁹¹ The family of God knows the local families and continues with intergenerational ministry to one another through this experience.¹⁹² Smoke Church wants the generations of their immediate community to continue in the goodness of God. The researcher never knew nor experienced a pandemic of this vast effect, nor did the present believers at St. Paul's Smoke Church. It was impossible to surmise what would happen in the passing of time from the very first days of lockdown and on. At the time of this writing, a year has passed, and many lives have been tremendously and detrimentally affected.

The church congregants of Smoke Church who answered the survey may not have the perfect scholarly definition of discipleship, but they sure have the heart for their church. Discipleship is so broad and encompasses time, space, teaching/learning, growing, fasting, prayer, activities, relationships, and so much more all while following Jesus. The biblical definition of discipleship was taught as written in many passages of the Bible beginning with Matt. 4:19: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (ESV). Christians are to respond to Jesus' call just as Matthew rose and followed Jesus (Matt 9:9). Going with Jesus is another part of discipleship, as written in Matt. 5:1. Listening to Jesus and learning from Him is another essential piece of discipleship, as written in Matt. 11:28-30, 10:1,18, and 17:5. Disciples are commissioned to make disciples of others as noted in the Great Commission found in Matt. 28:18-20. Intergenerational discipleship was founded at its inception and continues today.

¹⁹¹ Jackelén, "What May We Hope?," 17.

¹⁹² Denise Muir Kjesbo and Lou Y. Cha, "Family Ministry: Past, Present, Future," *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry* 17, no. 3 (January 2020): 499.

Time will tell if the church does survive and thrive. Serving the generations is found in the families as teaching and transforming into power the Christ-like believers.¹⁹³ Bringing the convictions, faith, passions, and traditions of the people in the recent decades through centuries while making it relevant to this generation, begins in the formation of the spirit of Christ alive in each.¹⁹⁴ The members who did answer the survey were taught the importance of discipleship in the growth and sustainability of St. Paul's Smoke Church. The survey did show the difference in the idea of discipleship. The three (25%) who responded well to what discipleship is had experienced discipleship earlier on and were taught about it. The younger generation had not been taught about it, as there was no discipleship class in the past decade. Upon the reconsideration of the survey after the short biblical teaching on discipleship, three (25%) of those surveyed said they could now understand better what discipleship is, and it involved much more than they previously knew. They also stated they believed they had not been discipled as much as they now know and would like more. This was noted during the phone study and interview questions in the fall/winter season of 2020/2021. This was a complex and challenging season as the pandemic was holding firm, but the vaccine began its presentation in late November 2020.

The idea of the older generation ministering to the younger generation could not take place in the traditional or forethought manner due to the high risk of COVID-19 to the older generation. Perhaps after the pandemic, the spirit of God will come with a mighty wind, or *Ruach*, breathe of God, across this land and revive those living on earth to be alive in Christ.

¹⁹³ Kjesbo and Cha, "Family Ministry," 504.

¹⁹⁴ Holly Catterton Allen and Jason Brian Santos, "Intergenerational Ministry—A Forty-Year Perspective: 1980–2020," *Christian Education Journal* 17, no. 3 (2020): 519.

Intentionally increasing that breath, intergenerational ministry relationally blows a wind of active spiritual involvement in the lives of the younger generation.¹⁹⁵ Thankfully, every member of Smoke Church is more than a conqueror in Christ; each walk in the triumphant procession around Berks County spreading fragrant knowledge of Him everywhere (2 Cor. 2:14).

Results of this study show that the heart for God and for people in the Berks County area of Pennsylvania is overwhelmingly present in the members of the congregation at St. Paul's Smoke Church. The prayer of the saints has locked into the generations before and intentionally with those who come in after reciting the Lord's Prayer, in which Jesus taught in Matt. 6:9-13. Surely each Sunday service that continues at Smoke Church through this pandemic comes with the cry for deliverance from this very evil, as written in verse thirteen. The Bible reads of a mixed legacy with explicit reference towards the rewards and life of intergenerational ministry.¹⁹⁶ Throughout the New Testament, and more specifically in the Book of Timothy, Christians read of the spiritual legacy given to Timothy through Paul into his death. Even in this blessed union, there is severe conflict in the community, and through the crisis and steadfastness of faith a spiritual legacy is passed on in story-telling or confessions of faith as a witness, rituals, traditions, memories, and mostly reconciliation to Christ and one another.¹⁹⁷ The Lord is good, and His steadfast love endures forever to the worshippers at Smoke Church; His faithfulness is to all generations (Ps. 100:5).

¹⁹⁵ Allen and Santos, "Intergenerational Ministry," 518.

¹⁹⁶ Mona Tokarek Lafosse, "Inspiring Intergenerational Relationships: Aging and the New Testament from One Historian's Perspective," *Religions (Basel, Switzerland)* 13, no. 7 (2022): 8.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

Graphed boxed results of the survey show responses by percentages, which allows for ease in viewing and quick comprehension of values. The researcher understands that a quick look at values may be typical. Percentage values help to show marked differences and unanimity within survey results. The completed survey table allows a clear view of the entire survey within percentage values and gives the reader a specific understanding of each question and response. The first most extreme difference is found in question eight where all those surveyed responded “yes.” It was marked as an overwhelming yes by those surveyed who unanimously want to see the church survive and thrive. The views that offer the second most polling difference are found on discipleship. Question four shows that three-fourths of those polled understand what discipleship is while question six states that five-sixths of those same interviewees have not attended a discipleship program. Another distinction worth mentioning is that none of those polled were disappointed with membership size. Giving God the work of increase is a wise stand and this response to question two shows that St. Paul’s Smoke Church agrees. Table 4.3 displays the results for the entire survey.

Table 4.3. Complete Survey Results.

	Disappointed	A Little Disappointed	Satisfied	A Little Satisfied
Q1 Spiritual Food	33.3%	16.7%	33.3%	16.7%
Q2 Attendance Size	0%	33.3%	50%	16.7%

	Yes	No
Q3 With respect to the past decade, do you believe that the church disciples?	58.3%	41.7%
Q4 Do you know what discipleship is?	75%	25%
Q5 Are you satisfied with number of young (18-32 yrs.) adults who attend service here?	33.3%	67.7%
Q6 Are you currently involved in a discipleship program?	16.7%	83.3%
Q7 Do you have reasonable hope Smoke Church will survive in the next 25 years?	58.3%	41.7%
Q8 Would you like to see Smoke Church survive and thrive?	100%	0%

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The research project was one held at a time which the researcher could never imagine. The effects of the pandemic most definitely, and profoundly, affected intergenerational discipleship at St. Paul's Smoke Church in Windsor Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania. With keen vision for most of St. Paul's Smoke Church within the senior or elderly population, the side of caution and restraint was taken to activities or gatherings outside the home as the recommendation of the CDC and the PA Department of Health. Ministering to the younger by the older generation was not happening in the traditional sense during the pandemic. Throughout the globe, performances of liturgy, education, health procedures, commerce, social culture, and even more were changed within a general distrust of the human element. And so, in response, Christians are reminded that God's presence is found within the human body that is made in His Image. The same body, so susceptible to harm by a virus and capable to transmit that potential of harm, also carries the Spirit of God, whereby His power and authority can overcome.

The amount of in-person ministry at St. Paul's Smoke Church building was limited to Sunday service. Limits were always part of God's plan concerning finite humanity, and yet in the Western world there is often the expectation of the unlimiting of presence, power, and knowledge.¹⁹⁸ Christians are the created ones, relying on Jesus, to bring the miracle of time, the download of revelation, and the power to move the mountain. This mountain was circumvented by the researcher who relied on the telephone to conduct a survey and a short Bible study. Other

¹⁹⁸ Steven L. Porter et al., "Teach Me What I Do Not See: Lessons for the Church From a Global Pandemic," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 14, no. 1 (2021):, 15.

ministry did occur with the younger helping the older generation to secure online appointments for vaccination. The older generation did help in praying with and for the younger generation: family members, neighbors, and/or church members. Families across the generations have gathered in prayer together at the kitchen table, over Facetime, by phone, etc., causing conversations with professions of faith to ignite across generational lines.

The researcher did not expect the severe limitations of a pandemic to interrupt the details of planning and implementation in such an enormous way. None could have imagined a causal impetus such as the pandemic to bring a near-abrupt stop to the rituals practiced by Christians across the entire planet!¹⁹⁹ The plan was for much of the study to be implemented in person with conversation and study. The common misunderstanding is the perception of one generation's desires by another's. The younger generation thinks the older are too busy and do not care while the older generation thinks the younger have no interest and that they have little much to offer them.²⁰⁰ But the most unlikely event of a pandemic separated the convergence of older and younger generations the most in the physical body while those attitudes reflecting falsities were wisely overcome. The conversation continued over the phone as in prayer and speaking with members of the church. Many people were ill, and the researcher and the researcher's family were suffering from illness during this time also. Some had received a vaccination for COVID-19, sometime after the survey and toward the end of the study. At the time of this writing, the researcher has yet to receive vaccination as the guidelines do not include her age group. These

¹⁹⁹ Shannon Craigo-Snell and Todd E. Johnson, "Pandemics, Protests, and Performances: Embodying Our Faith in an Unexpected Season: Introduction," *Liturgy (Washington)* 35, no. 4 (2020): 1.

²⁰⁰ James Emery White, *After "I Believe": Everyday Practices for a Vibrant Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2021), 71.

facts are mentioned so the one reading may understand that professionally, with adherence to those in authority, in-person contact was at high risk for members of St. Paul's Smoke Church during the time of the study. Christians rely on the power and grace of God always. The government and other ruling authorities rely on facts and figures studied by their agencies. Predictable economic, personal, and household resources are a daily formulary in society, yet when a wrecking ball continually comes to wreak havoc on a society's well-worked systems, the people's nature is to panic while God sees Christians turning to Him.²⁰¹ Decisions were made with wisdom to control or mitigate the spread of infection. Christians respect the ruling authority and do what is right in understanding. The personal responsibility placed upon the public by the leaders was clear and precise. Every person needed six feet of separation, and masks were to be worn. Businesses and churches were closed except for Sunday service. If the church conducts other events, the church must abide by the laws and guidelines for businesses. At one point, that number was at 15% capacity. Orders were added to or adjusted with addendums and updates. The time was a virulent one with so many limitations. Still, God was there. In the book of Lamentations, at least five perspicuous voices are recognized lamenting the woes and sadness, yet God's voice is never noted.²⁰² Lamentations offers hope, a daring to stand, and a cry to God when something so huge, so wrong, so overwhelming has occurred, and there are no words to convey the utter pain and destruction of what is happening. God was there in Lamentations. And God was there throughout the pandemic, although people may not have heard His voice. God was there in the prayers of St. Paul's Smoke Church and in the Sunday service. God was there

²⁰¹ Cathy Ross, "Hope Is Tough: Reflections in a Time of COVID-19," *Practical Theology* 14, no. 1-2 (2021): 88.

²⁰² Ibid.

when two or more were gathered over-the-phone in prayer and conversation. God was there in Bible study between a small group of friends in faith. God was there and so were His children in the generations.

God was there when some of the people around became infected and lived through it. Recognizing the role of weakness in humanity, the pandemic restored a strong dependence upon God, where believers were led into a place of spiritual maturity.²⁰³ Some that the researcher knew were on respirators for six and seven weeks while others had fevers and other symptoms but were able to get through it at home. Intergenerational disciples showed up in prayer and checking in with one another by phone calls. Long-term COVID-19 continues to cause problems in many that the researcher knows. A telephone call meant a lot during this season of staying home, a telephone call with prayer and encouragement much more. Ministry is available to others. A telephone can make one available to others. One can run and pick up groceries or a prescription or offer to drive someone to an appointment. One can write notes of concern and encouragement for others with a Scripture reading tucked in. Ministry in the Lord's service goes on. Notes, encouragement, care, and prayer are all a part of the life of a disciple of Christ. Perhaps this is the part of ministry that matters most. The part where someone shows up with the voice of Jesus, loving, caring, and kind, offering to fill a need and restoring hope.

The Coronavirus interrupted the ministry plan of intergenerational ministry and although it was disruptive, ministry still existed, and results were found. Ministries, in general, were sensing a loss of freedom, naivety, community, physical health, and replacing it with a constant

²⁰³ Jason A. Miller et al., "The Personal Experiences of Pastoral Leaders During the COVID-19 *Christian Education Journal* 18, no. 3 (2021): 514.

awareness of rules and suffering.²⁰⁴ The consensus of the older and the younger generation was for safety. Over-the-phone ministry took place in conversation, prayer, and study along with directing answers and insight to problems experienced along the uncharted path of pandemic. The younger generation was helpful with computers and logins while the older generation was very knowledgeable about cleaning, sanitization, and the Lord. Intergenerational ministry existed in non-conventional ways such as the scheduling of shots online. Intergenerational ministry was found at St. Paul's Smoke Church in relationship rather than a program and that is successful ministry.

The younger generation seemed to not stay at home as much. Many of the younger generation's important events such as proms, graduations, club meetings, had been delayed or canceled during this time. Gatherings for weddings were limited. The researcher's family member had to delay the plans of their pre-dated wedding by a year solely on the fact of the Coronavirus. Although there was much concern and respect for the new rules and guidance in the pandemic, many of the younger generations felt a bulletproof sense of its serious symptoms. Article after article showed gatherings of younger adults that were faulted as super-spreader events.²⁰⁵ Trump rallies were being coined the same as well.²⁰⁶ Many of the people at St. Paul's Smoke Church were glad that the council held Sunday service with COVID-compliant rules. The

²⁰⁴ Miller et al., "The Personal Experiences, 511.

²⁰⁵ Lauren Mascarenhas and Maggie Fox, "Younger Adults Are Biggest Spreaders of Covid-19, Study Suggests," February 2, 2021, date accessed, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/younger-adults-are-biggest-spreaders-of-covid-19-study-suggests/ar-BB1dn0jm>.

²⁰⁶ Gene Lyons, "Trump Super-Spreader Events Are Immoral and Criminal," Chicago Sun-Times, October 28, 2020, date accessed, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/columnists/2020/10/28/21539209/trump-maga-rally-super-spreaders-typhoid-mary-gene-lyons>.

seating was separated into three rows, and all wore masks. Communion was still single portioned in pre-closed packaging. Who could ever think of limitations in a service? The Old and New Testaments write of banquets, manna, suppers, Holy Communion, fruits of the Holy Spirit and feedings of the many always available in the gatherings for the hungry and the blessed.²⁰⁷ Jesus, the living Bread, has always been available to the church while shared meals and feeding others, especially the widows and orphans, started with the early church.²⁰⁸ And it has always continued through the centuries, until now. The sign of peace was given as a wave to one another through neighboring rows of disconnect. In all the disconnection that the virus brought, connection through the One, Jesus Christ, remained even closer and stronger among the believers. Sadly, four church members passed on to be with the Lord during this study. Prayers go up to the Lord for the families. With all the confusion and conflicting reports concerning the virus, the only truth believers still knew was Jesus Christ and His Word. As Jesus said, “Heaven and earth may pass away but my words will remain forever” (Matt. 24:35, ESV).

The people of faith at St. Paul’s Smoke Church have much life and growth to look forward to. The promises of Christ include prospering in all things even as the soul prospers. Soul prospering happens in the process of discipleship. A discipleship program is recommended for St. Paul’s Smoke Church. The program could include activities in fellowship outside and inside the church building. Praying together in a weekly Bible study is encouraged to be part of the program. Special evenings of praise and worship could be chosen once or twice a month. The intergenerational study could include bake sales, sandwich sales, and Easter egg making, all of

²⁰⁷ Martyn Percy, *The Humble Church Becoming the Body of Christ* (London, UK: Hymns Ancient & Modern, 2021), 14.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 208.

which were a part of the church's history. Summer nights are nice for praise and worship around a campfire. The future of the church should move into growth within the church family in each soul and in attendance.

The Lord has not stopped doing miracles, catching fish, changing water into wine nor bringing rivers of life. He is still bringing the dead back to life and healing the sick. The world has shut down intermittently due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but Christ remains the same throughout the continuum of time. All things are held in Him now and believers are in Him. He is limitless, glorious, holy, all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful, and eternal. And He is wanting to show-up mightily at St. Paul's Smoke Church in glory. This one was born in Zion. Yes. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God of the generations. The awakening of His people through the presence of God, even when times present challenges, will afford the "renewal of devastated cities and generations" as written in Isaiah 61:4 (translation).²⁰⁹ He cares about the sparrow, and He cares about all the believers that attend Smoke Church now and those who will come. This was Jesus' prayer in the garden to the Father for all believers. Found in John 17, Jesus prays for those who will come because of their (His disciples') message of salvation. Thinking on this, perhaps the generations of worshippers of Christ throughout the passing centuries at St. Paul's Smoke Church have prayed for the present faithful of Smoke Church. Remember this prayer of Jesus for those who will come and pray for it now and for the future generations. He hears believers when they pray.

²⁰⁹ David Bradshaw, *Awaken the Dawn an Adventure in Hosting Jesus' Presence and Discovering Your Part in the Story* (Chicago, IL: Charisma House, 2021), 100.

There is encouragement to keep on praying and do not lose heart. These are the words of Jesus written in the first verse of Luke 18. Throughout this study during the COVID-19 pandemic, no other words rang truer. Prayer is the chain that kept believers together; praying to Jesus who makes them one. Space may have separated but here before the throne of God, in prayer, together Christians bowed. And He heard them. There is no doubt in mind that He heard their prayers. In the timing of God and in His holy will, the smoke of glory will rise again out of the church walls slowly seeping out to the community. That sweet aroma of incense will fill the towns around with the fragrance of Christ. A holy fire will be kept on the altar of the church through strong followers of Christ in discipleship with others.

The difference between the research proposal and the implemented research is discerned by the separation of intergenerational people in social distancing and physical attendance. Much of what was proposed in the forestudy was not able to be implemented to the planned degree because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its limitations. The Bible states that one makes plans in one's heart, but the Lord determines one's steps (Prov. 16:9). During all the research planning and moving into application, a pandemic with strict rules of no gatherings presents. Many of the joyful times of being together seemed to have just quickly passed over this researcher and the church. Moving into winter brought much concern and caution as the soon-to-be next president, Joe Biden²¹⁰ predicted a "dark winter." The new vaccine was released one week after the November 2020 presidential election.²¹¹ There was new hope. The warning came that most

²¹⁰ Quint Forgey, "Biden Warns of 'Dark Winter' in America," Politico, October 23, 2020, date accessed, <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/10/22/biden-dark-winter-america-431399>.

²¹¹ Alex Benveniste, "CEO of Pfizer Says Timing of the Vaccine Announcement Had Nothing to Do with Politics," msn.com, November 10, 2020, date accessed, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/ceo-of-pfizer-says-timing-of-the-vaccine-announcement-had-nothing-to-do-with-politics/ar-BB1aQqBM>.

Americans would not be vaccinated until well into 2021; months later.²¹² This has proven to be true. America, in the last week of April and into the month of May, moved so that many have been categorized as eligible to receive the vaccination. Even the vaccine was appropriated through generational value! The researcher is one of those who was moved into eligibility in the last gated frontier, as it is open to everyone.

So, the study could have been a perfect picture study of intergenerational discipleship taken right from the book of Matthew. People could have gone fishing at Leaser Lake in Lynn Township out on a boat with Jesus and hiked up the Hawk Mountain while reading the Sermon on the Mount while studying into chapter five. Instead of multiplying the fish and loaves, the older generation would have gladly made the yearly sandwich sale a great success with the delivery drivers of the younger generation. Maranatha could have been the new mantra for Easter at the church and the younger generation could have sung a rap beat to it. But the COVID-19 pandemic happened instead. Maybe the miracles are unseen for now. Maybe the spiritual is just about ready to break into reality with such a force to get Christians to the other side of this pandemic into life abundant. And the researcher asks the Lord “where are You?” The researcher read in the Matthew 24:13 that the one who endures to the end shall be saved. St. Paul’s Smoke Church has endured.

Enduring through this pandemic, one in discipleship, and most importantly to the next generation, is becoming more and more open. Within the closures and limitations, God’s grace

²¹² Alex Benveniste, “CEO of Pfizer Says Timing of the Vaccine Announcement Had Nothing to Do with Politics,” msn.com, November 10, 2020, date accessed, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/ceo-of-pfizer-says-timing-of-the-vaccine-announcement-had-nothing-to-do-with-politics/ar-BB1aQqBM>.

covered the inequity. The past year of hardship in a pandemic has created a longing in the heart of humankind for the love of God. Modeling the love of God is intergenerational ministry. It is found in family life, church life, and social life, each showing dependence on God through prayer and church life, love for each other, love for the church, and hating the world's evil.²¹³ There is now a tremendous yearning throughout the world to know Him, to rely on Him, and to live by His grace. In Windsor Township, Pennsylvania, and surrounding communities such as Hamburg, Shoemakersville, Lenhartsville, Edenburg, Kempton, Kutztown, Perry, and many more places throughout Berks County, people are waking up to the call of Christ Jesus. The many confusing answers, correct or incorrect, given in this past season of a pandemic may prove to be right or wrong but the only answer is the truth, the way, and the life found in Jesus Christ. Even as Generation Z prefers peer relational acceptance over differences in opinion or facts, a safe space of revelation and truth should be formed through discipleship.²¹⁴ Liberation occurs with grace and truth, found through Jesus in the Scriptures, and then moves into accepting the truths or facts of this world, with less importance on breaking the idyllic picture and more accent on seeing right. To a younger generation, it is the wisdom and servitude of the older that will help in the pioneering of this deep discovery. The treasure trove of the everlasting establishes when darkness has come to light.

This pandemic has slowed down much of vibrant life, while hyperextending global connection through the internet. Christians are beginning to know the importance and value of

²¹³ Juan Sanchez, *The Leadership Formula: Develop the next Generation of Leaders in the Church* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2020), 88.

²¹⁴ John D. Basie, *Know. Be. Live. ® A 360 Degree Approach to Discipleship in a Post-Christian Era* (New York, NY: Forefront Books, 2021), 32.

keeping local communities in vitality through the daily following of Jesus to the generations within the community. Christians are called to an exodus of leaving behind their worldviews and come into an agreement within their heart and mind with the promises of God.²¹⁵ Disciples, who must not only read His Word but spend time with Him practically in the local areas to further intergenerational ministry, will keep God in their midst. On the mountain of Olives in Israel, Jesus was there preaching the Gospel with His disciples and to many who would become disciples. Jesus was on the Sea of Galilee with the fisherman. He was at dinner with the tax collectors. He was at the temple with the scholars. He was in the garden praying. He was caring for the sick, lonely, and outcasts of the community. He dined with the rich and poor. He attended weddings, baptisms, and so many other places with His disciples. He said “let the little children come to me” because he wanted to spend time teaching the little children. This is the ultimate example of intergenerational ministry.

It was not that there was not discipleship at St. Paul’s Smoke Church. Many of the long-standing Christians attending Sunday service are unwavering believers. Disciples of Christ through the centuries of St. Paul’s Smoke Church have seen the goodness of God and His salvation through trials and tribulations. Many have been shepherds without a title, helping those who were weaker and encouraging them in the faith to further the Gospel of Christ. Be wary of leaders, those who lord it over the sheep thinking of them as mere cattle with authority and control.²¹⁶ The church is not a controlling entity, yet through the centuries of world change, St. Paul’s Smoke Church has stayed the course and survived. Although St. Paul’s Smoke Church

²¹⁵ Basie, *Know. Be. Live.* © A 360. 78.

²¹⁶ Sanchez, *The Leadership Formula*, 115.

lost four beloved members of their family through this pandemic, there is much hope. A new baby was baptized recently in the church! New life is here. An increase is on the way in all areas of life and living. The pandemic has passed beyond a second year now, and believers have made it this far. Christians remember the promise in God's word of restoration and abundant life. Doing due diligence in an intergenerational church through a discipleship program to keep the generations is the command of the Great Commission, teaching others all things Jesus has taught believers to do.

All things that Jesus has taught believers to do, thinking on that and doing that would take an everlasting lifetime. The apostle John remarked that all the things Jesus had done, when written down, could not be stored in all the books of the world in John 21:25. Heaven is filled with generations as the discipleship with Christ is forever. Within intergenerational discipleship, life is abundant. The people of St. Paul's Smoke Church have much to look forward to building life on the one solid foundation in Christ. Time is of the essence. The people of St. Paul's will not wait for tomorrow to come to show love and kindness. Praying daily to the Father with requests for all needs and petitions and praying for one another is a definite necessary part of being a follower of Christ. Fellowship in the Spirit is through the bond of love. Love knows no bounds and it does not fail. The love of Jesus will see believers through.

See believers. See believers seeing each other and seeing the world through the lens of Christ. His vision shows a much more beautiful picture. Seeing each other had lessened during the late fall and winter into early spring months of 2020 and even much so into the second year, 2021, of the pandemic. Many churches employed the internet to broadcast virtually, and many Christians were attending online services. The traditional church has been modified by challenge

and the experience has differed.²¹⁷ The local church is so important. The local church gathers neighbors together to form a family of faith. The local church is home to the generations and allows for intergenerational ministry in the body of Christ. People are to laugh with one another, cry with one another, pray with one another, break bread with one another and share with one another.

Online services bring benefits but also pose questions of boundaries and validity to a Christian inspired by an influencer not proven by study and seminary.²¹⁸ It would be nice to see St. Paul's Smoke Church broadcast a Sunday service, as it would be trusted. Perhaps some of the senior members would be compelled to access the internet solely on the fact of curiosity and support of the novel broadcast transmission from its church. A few of the members, who were not in the weekly Sunday service, have shared that they are watching another local church online. It would be worth the try to "go live," and in doing so, one might find it would bring fellowship, especially to the marginalized. The potential goodness given by online service is found in the reimagining of the believer's witness of Christ with a new value to a social community of believers.²¹⁹ Younger adults could be employed to help with the broadcast efforts from the transmitting end and quite possibly to the receiving end. Seeing church could be as bright as Crystal Ultra in HD 4K, literally. This new view can bring the warmth of safety while still connecting online; either by zoom or watching through a platform. Zoom events are nice as

²¹⁷ Malcolm Grundy, "The Challenge of Digital Ecclesiology for a Sacramental Church," *Rural Theology* 20, no. 1 (February 2022): 32.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 35.

²¹⁹ Adebola Adegboyega et al., "Social Distance Impact on Church Gatherings: Socio-Behavioral Implications," *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 31, (2021): 227.

there is an option to allow others to say hello to each other at the beginning and at the end they may make remarks. Any mode that is utilized would serve the church well, especially during the pandemic and even thereafter, considering an individual's onset of illness. Drive-in services and various online social platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, etc., have been utilized and understandably or not, faith has strengthened during this time of crisis.²²⁰

St. Paul's Smoke Church should consider a weekly Bible study and time of prayer together. Any weekday could be chosen to broadcast into a Zoom Bible study and prayer time. There are also toll-free prayer lines available to utilize where a group could gather from the church on a designated weeknight and specific timeframe to share the Word of God and offer prayer. The gathering of the saints should continue with alternative means which support multiple connections. The time to seriously pray and ask God if more can and should be offered to the people of St. Paul's Smoke Church is a great one; this is especially true considering the elongation of the COVID-19 pandemic and possibly more restrictions. Being faithful to God and to His people are of utmost importance in this time of uncertainty. Believers remember God's promise that He shows Himself faithful to the faithful (Ps. 18:25).

Another huge step forward is for the church leadership to consider an online learning center available to the community. Through centuries the church has been a long-standing partner in education, social services, and the wellness of people through healthcare.²²¹ Within the chaos of an unexpected and inexperience to a novel disease, the collaboration presents well to the generations. The center would act as a safe place for local children to learn online when their

²²⁰ "Social Distance Impact on Church Gatherings", 228.

²²¹ Stephen M. Modell and Sharon L. Kardia, "Religion as a Health Promoter During the 2019/2020 COVID Outbreak: View from Detroit," *Journal of Religion and Health* 59, no. 5 (2020): 2249.

schools are only in virtual operation. Parents in the community who work could sign-up easily with a form of identification and location along with medical concerns. Lunches can be packed with snacks by the parents. For the startup, make it easy in providing the location of safety. The downstairs seems to be a large area and has gender-assigned bathrooms with stalls. It is easy to access the large parking lot and grassy side from the basement door, so if the weather permits, learning can take place outside. It may not be as easy during COVID-19, remembering the requirements of disinfection, safety, three feet distancing for students, and masks. The requirements should be checked with the Pennsylvania State Department of Health. Those who implement this should make sure to include prayer in the morning and afternoon to welcome the presence of God, as Jesus taught in Matthew 18:19-20. In doing this, the children learn to always pray and watch to see God answer. Also, a high-speed internet connection would be required for the learning center to broadcast service. Entry and exit can be made through the basement door alone and the side door used secondarily in the case of an emergency. The doors that separate the upstairs from the downstairs should always be closed. Doors can also be sealed with the winter wrap to prevent the flow of air from downstairs to upstairs. In this way, no virus or bacteria could travel from one area to another. Sunday service goers can be confident of the separation and proper daily disinfection and not feel worried or concerned about an unwanted risk. The doors that separate would be the one door above the side door entry, which connects to the hallway upstairs and the other door would be the one at the bottom by the bathrooms that lead to the upstairs. In considering this endeavor, the church would need a volunteer who is able to work well and responsibly with children, who has PA state police security clearance with children. Anything concerning the little ones is important to God and to humankind. God will see the good thing the Church has offered to the community, and He is just to reward. Community members

may never forget the time that St. Paul's Smoke Church helped them get through a difficult situation. The church serving as a door of hope while yet providing practical services is the two-sided coin of word and deed.²²²

Perhaps into the summer months when school is closed, and time is more flexible, younger members of the church can get together with a leader to walk Hawk Mountain or visit Leaser Lakes. Outdoor prayer service can be considered again. The once-a-week gathering of Bible study can take place outside also instead of over-the-phone or in coordination with over-the-phone. Zooms are nice because they can be utilized by phone alone or by the internet. Prayer meetings can be held outside in the summer. It would be so great to attend an outdoor campfire praise and worship at Smoke Church. This researcher anticipates that the summer of (year) will be ripe for more opportunities to minister and disciple. Many members and attendees will have received the vaccine by then or have already had the virus. The researcher's heart is filling with joy in this hope of summer for discipleship in ministry at St. Paul's Smoke Church. St. Paul in his many letters to the churches always had such love for each church. It is the prayer of this researcher that whoever leads at St. Paul's Smoke Church will always have a heart of steadfast love for the people and for God.

It is critical that God's people continue to praise and worship during this time to uplift others. The power of a song to God played on an instrument and sung by the saints is undeniable. Music can set the atmosphere for the kingdom of God to come as believers worship their Savior Jesus in melody. An incredibly special and powerful place is unique to each believer in worship. Worship itself shows a communal character found in the Trinity that includes the

²²² Modelle, *Religion as a Health...* 2249.

intergenerational sphere where Christ is the center; through Him, believers are interconnected to the love of the Father, and in Him, they are interdependent and stand in the power of the Holy Spirit.²²³ Worship also includes praying together and obeying the voice of God. One way to incorporate intergenerational discipleship in worship services is to allow the younger generation to take a turn to minister to the older generation with their chosen songs of praise and worship. If any of the younger generation would like to get involved in a praise and worship group, this would be a great idea to get the young adults involved in serving the Lord. Also, the older could make their prayers and requests known aloud to God with the younger generation. Prayerful worship reaches the heart of God with only a matter of two or more gathered in His name.

Making the old new again is a great way to bring a special connection between the older and younger generations. Telling the stories of their lives, witnessing the goodness of God even in their sufferings, and sharing the Saving Message are part of the power of the testimony to intergenerational discipleship that people can take part in.²²⁴ The older generation can tell of times or share stories when something was old, used, done, or said that the younger generation has no idea of. For example, a saying might have been used a lot during the senior members' days of youth, but it is not spoken anymore. Sharing the saying with the younger generation would be a way to make something that is old new again. To the younger generation, it is new but to the older generation it is old. Some in the older generation have lived through World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, and other hard times. Allow the older generation to share stories of how it was or what was done that is not employed now due to the onset of something such as

²²³ Namjoong Kim, "Exploring Intergenerational Worship of Interdependence in a Korean American Context," *Religions (Basel, Switzerland)* 13, no. 12 (2022): 6.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

technology. Many homemade foods that were unique to the area may not be cooked by the younger generation. A gathering to bake, cook, or make a sandwich, like St. Paul's Smoke Church did in the past, may soon be allowed again as the pandemic wanes. Bringing the stories of suffering, success, and salvation through the different ages or seasons of life with the sharing of a meal intergenerationally represents the model of Jesus and His friends around the table, where the personal story meets God's story.²²⁵

Perhaps the middle generation can share mentorship with the younger adults. Mentoring is intentional to seek to promote the characteristics of God through friendship, advice, encouragement, feedback, and direction.²²⁶ Career choices and workplaces could be discussed with a vision of the future. Young adults are still developing their identities, especially in the transition from adult qualification to actual or evidential adulthood. The great plans the Lord has for each person, as written in Jeremiah 29:11, is to prosper one for good and to bring them a future and a hope. Every career or working path within the instruction of God is honorable. Work brings independence and a skillset as noted in 1 Thess 4:11-12: "And to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one" (ESV). To hear stories from the middle generation about career choices and paths that led them to where they are now would be beneficial to the young adult group. When someone who is not a parent to the mentee mentors with God's grace, it creates a safe space for the mentee to develop their purpose and place in

²²⁵ Kim, "Exploring Intergenerational Worship," 9.

²²⁶ Geoffrey Samuel Brailey and Stephen Douglas Parker, "The Identity Imperative: Mentoring as a Tool for Christian Young Adult Identity Formation," *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 25, no. 2 (2020): 112.

Christ.²²⁷ Maybe a day, or more with a time, can be devoted to a special time of sharing between the middle generation and the younger generation about jobs, employment, and career paths while still remarking on the change in relationships and lifestyles. Insight from the middle generation could serve the younger well, and the pragmatic aspect is priceless in this virtual world. It is easy to be whomever one makes up or plays to be over an internet screen, but in the day-to-day workforce, it is real. Being able to relate and work with others is an asset that the middle generation could share by giving examples of on-the-job wisdom, emotional integrity, and successful outcomes. Godly characteristics such as accountability, honesty, responsibility, foresight, knowledge, wisdom, friendliness, and many more are employed on the jobsite and in the work. The Bible reminds believers that whatever they do, they are to work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men (Col. 3:23). The suggestion is to have a career-focused time either in a few meetings, on a certain day, or over the weekend. It is important for the young adult generation to hear and read what the Word of God says about work and career paths. The members of the church of the middle generation sharing their stories about work and things concerning it are priceless in the practical aspect and uniqueness of the story told out of love. Mentorship is a two-way street of interdependence between the older generation to the younger generation which offers spiritual, emotional, and tangible rewards for both the mentor and the mentee.²²⁸

Not every man or woman would do this, but lovers of Jesus humbly serve so beautifully!

Sunday school has always been a part of St. Paul's Smoke Church. The main idea of Sunday School is to allow benevolence a place for all young children to be taught of God,

²²⁷ Kate Harmon Siberine and Lisa Kimball, "Confirming Mentoring: Mutual Experiences of Incarnation," *Theology Today* (Ephrata, Pa.) 76, no. 1 (2019): 46.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

formed into religious life.²²⁹ The upstairs classrooms were used through the years serving two age groups: 2-5 and 6-12. The learning began right after the Sunday service and lasted about an hour each Sunday during the academic year. Children have not been able to enjoy learning about God in Sunday school at St. Paul's Smoke Church since the pastor retired and the COVID-19 pandemic began. Sunday school is an essential and traditional part of childhood at St. Paul's Smoke Church. It would be wonderful to see them return to Sunday School sometime soon. The researcher would like to add that the ages of 13-17 should be cared for spiritually as well. In the past, this age group was placed with adults. The teenage years of a Christian are so important in keeping on the right path in life abundant. Perhaps the church could open another classroom for this age group of children to speak and learn about the love of God, address issues affecting their generation, and make plans or visions into adulthood.

The church grounds and buildings are kept well. The researcher would like to commend those who are committed to the care of the building and grounds. The sanctuary of the church is so beautiful, clean, and in order. Another great job is done by those who serve God by helping to make this possible.

Longing is a divine experience, setting believers on a trajectory of faith in the person, place, or time of God.²³⁰ Winter is past, and springtime is in bloom. Springtime is the season when new life begins, and summer continues into rich and vibrant colors in the life of flowers, animals, trees, and more making the landscape beautiful. The Lord spoke of seedtime and

²²⁹ K. Elise Leal, "'All Our Children May Be Taught of God': Sunday Schools and the Roles of Childhood and Youth in Creating Evangelical Benevolence," *Church History* 87, no. 4 (2018): 1089.

²³⁰ John David Trentham, "Further Up, Further In: Catechetical Reflections for Springtime," *Christian Education Journal* 19, no. 1 (2022): 6.

harvest multiple times throughout the Bible. The seeds have been planted in good faith for the generations at St. Paul's Smoke Church. In God's *Kairos* time, an abundance of the harvest will come.

Loving one another is key to the kingdom of God. For God is love and He who does not love but hates another does not know God (1 John 4:20). The last and biggest recommendation this researcher could give to St. Paul's Smoke Church is to continue in love. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5:2, ESV). The true mark of a Christian is love and the core of their faith.²³¹ Do not forget the great love shown to every Christian by Jesus Christ, the Lord, and Savior. The cross was set before Him, and joy filled his heart because He knew Christians would have the right to come to heaven with Him, through His tremendous love. His love is amazing and unfailing. Whatever the people do as a church, they should remember to love one another deeply (Rom. 12:10). There is something sweetly special about a church that loves one another. Believers know God is truly present. St. Paul tells Christians to let love be genuine, hate evil, and to hold fast to goodness in Romans 12:9. He goes on to tell the church about showing honor to God and one another. He then further says that if one wants to outdo each other, outdo one another in showing honor. Serve the Lord with the fervency of the spirit. Rejoice in the Blessed Hope that Christians have and be patient in the tribulation. Always pray. Then he tells the church to contribute to the needs of the saints and show hospitality towards each other. Remember to

²³¹ Rebecca Cacho and Fides del Castillo, "God's Benevolent Love in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic: Articulations and Experiences of Select Filipino Youth," *Religions* (Basel, Switzerland) 13, no. 2 (2022): 3.

bless. Bless and do not curse. Always leave the vengeance with God. Overcome evil by doing good. And keep on loving always.

In discipleship, believers come to Christ, and they find rest and abundant life. Washing the inside of the cup first is the transformation of forming a heart in the heart of Christ. Issler Klaus writes it as “form your heart, not just your behavior.”²³² The behavior part is the outside of the cup. The outside of the cup can look nice within a nice cabinet, with pretty colors, stacked dishes, and lots of saucers. But the inside of the cup, that’s the part where genuine love is found. Forgiving others is part of the heart transformation of Christ. Relational beings are held together in the bonds of love. How beautiful! Something so small as a different color on the outside of the cup would not stop and could not stop the care and the love of the acceptance in Christ across the generations.

The difference between Christians and the Pharisees should be love. The knowledge of all the books and the wisdom of all the sages mean nothing without love. Discipleship comes down to this one thing: love. The pettiness of the pharisee and its lethality must be confronted so as not to become a heart filled with bitterness and be righteously mean.²³³ As the psalmist writes, “Search my heart oh God and heal my mind, remove any wicked thing in me, bring me into the way everlasting,” (Ps. 139:24, translation). The psalmist continues, “God create in me a clean heart (pure), and renew a right and steadfast spirit within me,” (Ps. 51:10, translation). By the grace of the Son, Jesus Christ, through the love of the Father, believers have been forgiven their failings and come to know God. Through the love shown on the cross towards humanity, grace is

²³² Issler Klaus, *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 15.

²³³ Ibid.

given to each who comes to Christ. Forever, Christians are now united with Him with a relationship to the Father in heaven and live through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a generational manifestation on earth in God's time. The people of St. Paul's Smoke Church will not sound like a gong, but they will be known for their love. Each member is now a child of God, through His amazing love. The prayer of this researcher for the members now, and those to come, at St. Paul's Smoke Church is that their hearts be filled with such great love. Within each heart of overflowing love, may every encounter be flavored with the excess of the same love of God. This love so priceless, so pure, and holy; it will stand all the tests of time. This love is filled with energy and is resistless, drawing each person one encounters to the source of love, God.²³⁴ This is the love that does not sound dead like a clanging gong, but is alive in Him. The Divine Presence has entered Christians' lives not solely in the heavenly realm but in the spaces and places of the earth right where they are. Intergenerational disciples are alive in Christ. Jesus is alive! When the smoke fills the temple, from the glory of God, and from His power, St. Paul's Smoke Church will be in the harvest where the wheat is fine, and the wine is sweet! The simplicity of the bread and wine in the supper with the Lord is that it is so readily available to all and can be found in all places, peoples, and things.²³⁵ And in knowing this, the heart's cry is, "Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

Additional research is recommended about intergenerational ministry with subtopics caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Noting the results and differences therein, on the effects of limiting churches through governmental laws, would be beneficial to see and understand what

²³⁴ William O. Daniel and Prince G. Singh, *Inhabited by Grace: The Way of Incarnate Love* (New York, NY: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2019), 24.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

happened to churches during this critical period. It would also prove worthy to realize the necessity, if any, for the church to be better prepared to handle future limitations and perhaps pre-emptively prevent re-occurrence. Some churches have sadly not survived this far into the COVID-19 pandemic, while some remain struggling. A pandemic of this magnitude should be studied in cooperative authoritative bodies for successful and unsuccessful responses by the church. Alternatives to traditional discipleship should be considered, and recommendations to incorporate non-traditional ways into active measures may prevent unnecessary disconnection. Another subtopic to study in the ministry context is loneliness, isolation, and despair during the pandemic, especially concerning the oldest and younger generations. Growing up and learning is not what it used to be as children are automatically entered into a digital age of information and having access to everything online.²³⁶ The world is so connected, and yet alone. In the pandemic, internet usage became a necessity; it was once an indulgence. School closings and virtual learning happened. Daily interactions of friends and peers went from many to nil, a huge change into an empty space. Family members and friends didn't visit senior adults. Community events were canceled. Ministering into these areas negatively affected can emit a positive change. Examples show the church providing a safe center for students to learn or seniors to access the internet for Facetime connectivity or online learning. Examining factors that have caused and/or crossed with ways that prevented loneliness, isolation, and despair would be extremely helpful moving forward in active preparedness to empower the church in the outreach of ministry to believers locally and those worldwide. Hybrid learning, hybrid church, hybrid work, so many areas of life are tremendously affected by acute change from an outside life-threatening force:

²³⁶ Brailey and Parker, "The Identity Imperative," 114.

each new platform finding immediate benefits and perhaps long-standing detriments. It is in these very fragile times of life that ministry necessitated accentuating a positive just as precious as the pearl of the great price found in Matt. 13:45-46. Ministry that knows no bounds through Jesus always finds the way. Forever, now the church has been blown away in this latest re-incarnation of Christ while rediscovering the meaning of Emmanuel, “God with us,” in a new, forced measure.²³⁷ Yes, Jesus visited the sick, the imprisoned, the lonely, and the hurting and He does so in a pandemic too. The church did show up to the neighbor in giving kits of refreshing aid to those in quarantine or lockdown.²³⁸ The local church did drop food off, and give care packages including disinfecting wipes, water, and acetaminophen, along with special requests at the door of those in need. During this new Pentecost, the church in all its wisdom can research more effective ways of ministering through a pandemic and actively seek legislative measures to ensure the continuum of operation and availability. Together the church must recognize its responsibility for the future to be relevant and effect change for good in every situation: pandemic, war, injustice, disaster, etc.²³⁹

Many are the ways of intergenerational discipleship: the seeking, the doing, the being, the preparing, and the planning. Discipleship knows one way, one truth, and one life of Jesus Christ, especially through and by the generations. Many may have been satisfied in their personal relationship with Christ and online worship during this ill-fated time. However, believers are in

²³⁷ Malcolm. “The Challenge of Digital,” 35.

²³⁸ Mary Grace Jamin, “The Incarnation of Christ's Love through the Church,” *The Ecumenical Review* 74, no. 3 (2022): 460.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 461.

Christ now and remember the true significance of Jesus loving the body. Christians' calling in emulation of His love for one another is to practically show up to fill a need, lift one up, and bless another. Just as believers are to see Christ now face-to-face, they find His image in the face of a friend, neighbor, grandparent, pastor, and child. In this life abundant and everlasting are the connecting cords of love from one generation to another and another and another. The onset of the domestic church communing in the body and blood of Christ together and prayer at the family table is a great way to do intergenerational ministry. It should not be seen as a threat to the church but rather an extension of the fuller assembly of the saints in the Church, especially during times of desperate measures.²⁴⁰ Intergenerational discipleship lives on in the love of Christ and family. It is found in traditional and some non-traditional ways. Intergenerational discipleship happens when a grandparent, while holding their grandchild, softly whispers a prayer of blessing in faith. It happens when the father or mother wakes up early on Sunday morning to take the children to church. It happens when one neighbor calls to check in on another with the idea of helping. It is the pastor who visits the sick and prays. Love such as this found in discipleship between generations knows no bounds. It is the reason that St. Paul's Smoke Church has survived many centuries through pandemics, depressions/recessions, and governmental changes. Intergenerational discipleship ministry knows the love of God. Intergenerational discipleship is founded upon the days of Christ Jesus and is still alive today. Risen and alive indeed!

²⁴⁰ Bryan Cones, "The Assembly Beyond 'the Brink of Chaos': Signs of Hope among Those Re-Gathered in Christ's Name," *Liturgy (Washington)* 37, no. 2 (2022): 20.

St. Paul's Smoke Church is one that has unbelievable staying power despite storms, stressors, interruptions, and difficulties. Even within many challenges, faith is resilient to come through.²⁴¹ The members of the church are very kind and exceptionally warm. There is a need for a discipleship program that has been missing for the past few years, even the past decade. However, the Lord in all His wisdom has come through in a surreal time of extreme challenge when the church and gatherings were limited. Intergenerational ministry was well alive in the prayers of a younger grandchild praying for their grandparent to be well and protected from the virus. The older generation was praying for the younger to be wise and self-disciplined in the virtues during this tempestuous time. The middle generation cared and prayed for both the younger and the older generations, connecting the two through a parental role: both as the parent and under the parent. The Sunday church service always incorporated prayer together for the ill and homebound. The heart of God lives on in intergenerational ministry, in family, and in the church. In 2 Chron. 20, the people sought the Lord in prayer and fasting when facing a tremendous fear of disaster by the sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine. Judah stood before the Lord in His house and so did the generations of the saints at St. Paul's Smoke Church and beyond. The church set its face to the Lord, powerless by itself, but stood in the Lord and trusted in His salvation. As the writer of 2 Chronicles noted, "Meanwhile all Judah, stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives and their children," (2 Chron. 20:13, ESV). Intergenerational ministry happened way back then and continues today through pandemic and limitations.

²⁴¹ Daniel Howard-Snyder and Daniel J. Mckaughan, "Faith and Resilience," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 91, no. 3 (2022): 241.

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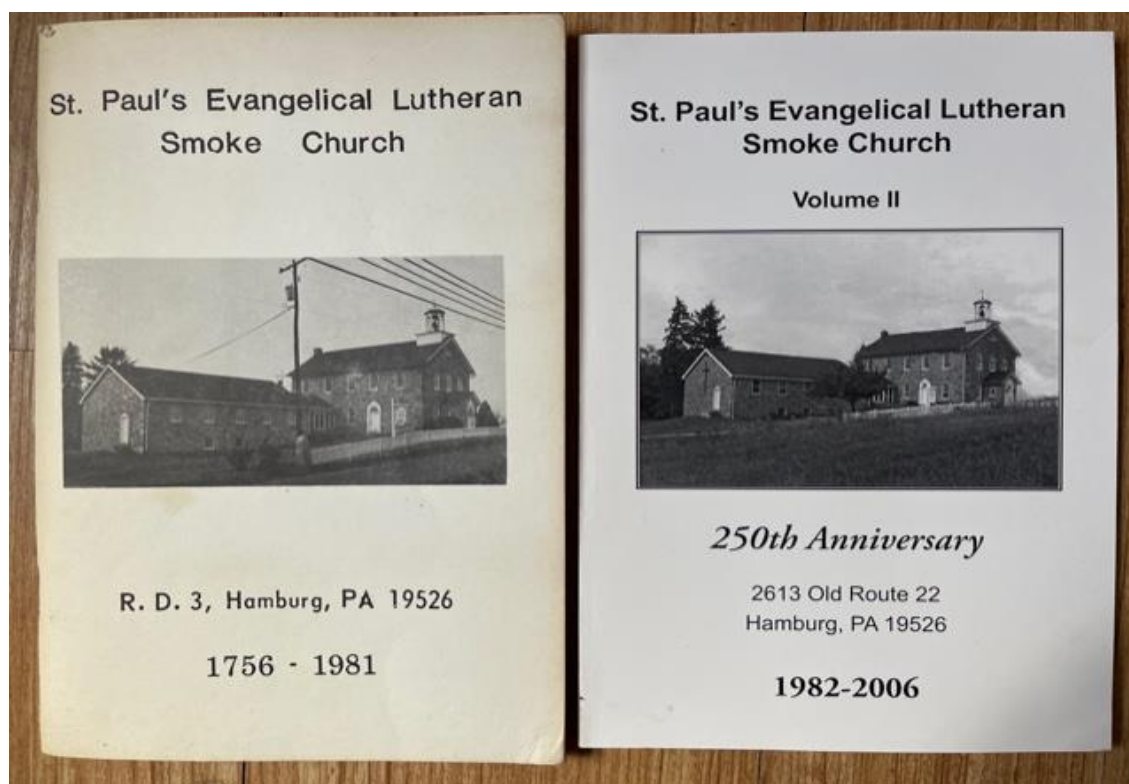
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Appendix A

St. Paul's 250th Anniversary Selected Pages



BAPTISMS RECORDED AT ST. PAUL'S CHURCH			
Name	Born	Baptized	Parents
Gorg Goedner	7/2/1766	7/2/1766	
Johann Henrich	11/6/1768	9/28/1769	Henrich & Doridea Rausch,
Andreas		11/6/1769	Adam & Catharine Wacker, Sponsors Andreas Rosch & Maria Erdmanin, both single.
Johann Gorg	4/26/1771	5/6/1771	Henrich & Doridea Rausch.
Johannes	1/23/1776	1776	John George Rausch
Johann Georg		5/10/1756	George Beier
Johann Jacob	8/28/1766		Michael & Catharine Lindenmuth
Maria Magdalena	3/26/1777		Gorg Adam & Christina Zettlemayer
Johann Jost	1/3/1767	11/30/1767	Johannes & Barbara Hebner
		87	

ST. PAUL'S SMOKE CHURCH CONFIRMATION CLASS RECORDS

The in after each name indicates that the girl was unmarried.

1767 by Rev. Peter Mischler

Anna Maria Gortner
Katharine Rausch
Maria Rausch
George Paust

1785 by Rev. Frederick Miller

George Peter Scheyle
Henrich Rausch
George Rausch
Abraham Leckenton
Peter Hollenbach
Maria Sara Traerin
Margaretha Taerin
Maria Magdaline Traerin
Catharina Schafferin
Catharina Elizabeth Shelyisin

Hester Scheylisin
Susanna Bolenterin
Christiana Vogtin
Elisabeth Hartingerin
Anna Rosina Gleesin
Elisabeth Barbara Treer
Maria Magdalena Hartingerin
Maria Christin Hartingerin
Maria Glesin

1787 by Rev. Frederick Miller

Jacob Stump
George Seltzer
George Hollenbach
Johannes Ernst
Conrad Miller

Jonathan Zweitzig
Maria Hollenbachin
Magdalena Millerin
Katharina Stumpin
George Miller

1786

Johann Mathias Treer
Johann Friederich Albrecht
Johan George Lindenmuth
Johannes Albrecht
Jacob Vogt
Johann Henrich Lindenmuth
Paulus Prickel

John Miller
Elisabeth Margaretha Heimbachin
Maria Katharina Treerin
Maria Sara Treerin
Magdalena Kettnerin
Barbara Kettnerin
Elizabeth Zweitzig

1788, March 23, Rev. F. Miller

George Hartinger
Johannes Hiell
Job Daniel Hiell
Valentin Schwench
Andreas Hummel
Jacob Hummel
Martin Rausch
George Hartinger
Barbara Layin
Maryd Sylvilia Layin

Catharina Godschallin
Christina Schwenckin
Maria Bacherin
Katharing Hollenbachin
Maria Bacherin
Katharina Hollenbachin
Maria Dunckelbergerin
Sibilia Durckin
Magdalena Schneiderin
Catharina Raupin
Susanna Blattin

Appendix B

Berks County Population by Subdivision

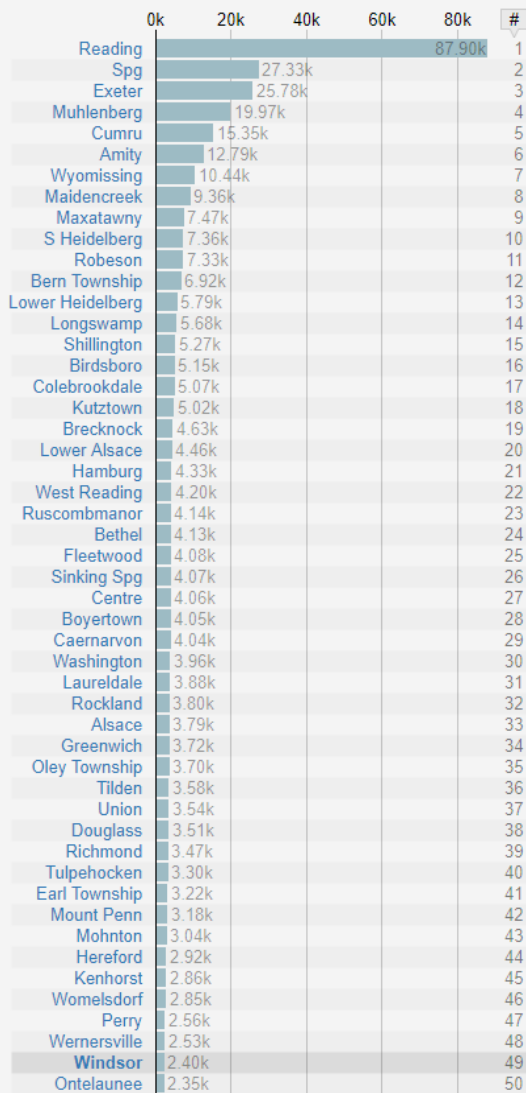
Population by County Subdivision in the Reading Area

There are 74 county subdivisions in the Reading Area. This section compares the Windsor Township to the 50 most populous county subdivisions in the Reading Area. The least populous of the compared county subdivisions has a population of 2,350.

Total Population by County Subdivision

#3

Scope: population of the Windsor Township and selected other county subdivisions in the Reading Area



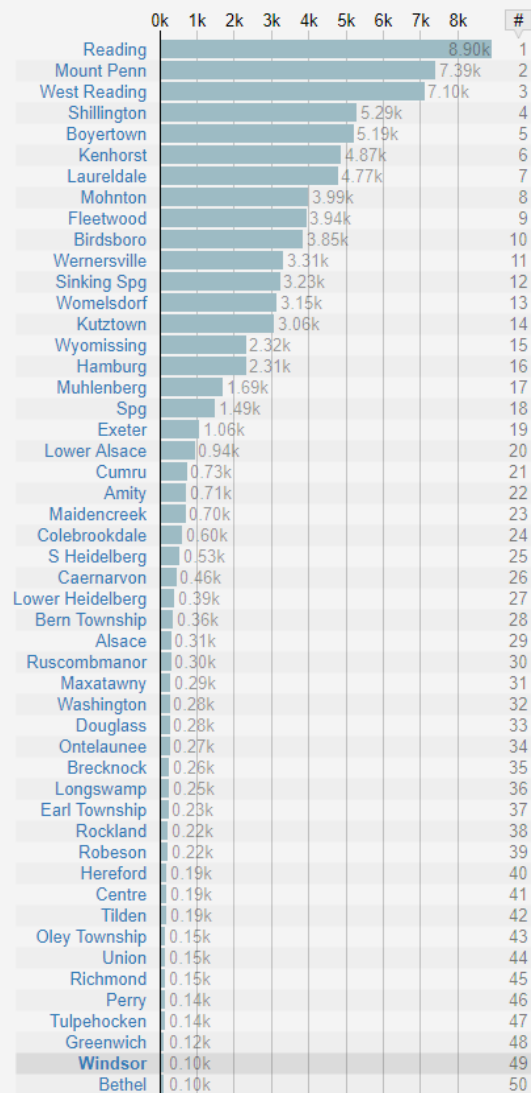
rank of county subdivision out of 50 by population

Population Density by County Subdivision

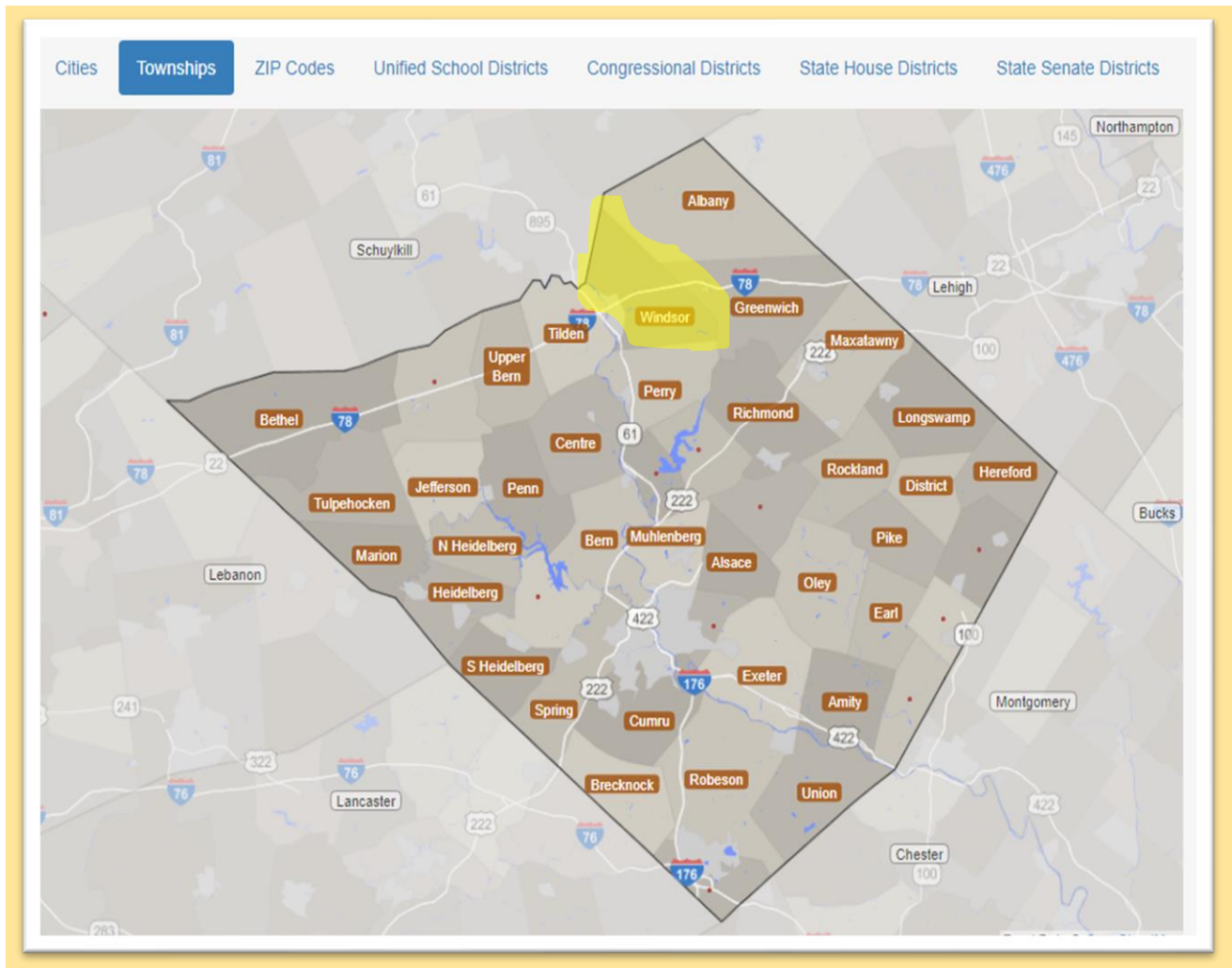
#4

People per square mile (excluding waters).

Scope: population of the Windsor Township and selected other county subdivisions in the Reading Area



rank of county subdivision out of 50 by population density



Windsor Township in Berks County, PA

Appendix C

Pennsylvania Department of Health Interim Guidance on Visitation in Nursing Facilities



The Department of Human Services, Office of Long-Term Living is asking that all Personal Care Homes and Assisted Living Residences adopt and implement the guidance below.

March 12, 2020

Interim Guidance on Visitation in Nursing Facilities During COVID-19

The Department of Health has received questions from nursing home facilities, associations, and constituents regarding best practices in nursing homes related to COVID-19 visitation policies. As of March 12, 2020, there are 22 presumptive positive cases and 2 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in

Pennsylvania, and there are no known cases in nursing homes. Yet, Pennsylvania has watched COVID-19 spread rapidly in nursing facilities in Washington State and is concerned about the wellbeing of older Pennsylvanians in nursing facilities. To that end, the Department is currently advising the following:

- If a nursing facility is located in an area where there are known cases of COVID-19, the Department recommends **a no visitor policy** in nursing facilities except in instances of end of-life events that require visitation from immediate family members, friends, and religious leaders.
 - This is **immediately applicable to homes in Montgomery County and any bordering counties**.
 - In events such as those above, visitors should be screened in advance of coming into the facility through measures such as taking temperatures, asking visitors to use personal protective equipment, if available, using hand sanitizer before entering and upon exiting a resident's room, etc.
- If a nursing facility is not located in a county or area where there are known cases of COVID-19 but **assesses a no visitor policy to be in the best interest of residents, the Department supports that step at this time.**

Nursing facility staff and administrators should use screening protocols per their Emergency Preparedness and Infection Control Plan, too, and any health care providers who have signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection should not report to work. Please consult CMS, CDC, and PA DOH websites for further information. Please refer to the Department's website for the most up-to-date information, or send questions to the Resource Account at RA-DHCoronavirus@pa.gov, or call us at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-8777243258).

Appendix D

Considerations for Communities of Faith

Considerations for Communities of Faith

Communities of Faith

Updated Feb. 19, 2021

Languages

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COVID-19 Cases are Extremely High. Avoid Events and Gatherings

COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are extremely high across the United States. To decrease your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19, CDC recommends that you do not gather with people who do not live with you at this time. **Attending events and gatherings increases your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Stay home to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.**

CDC offers the following general considerations to help communities of faith discern how best to practice their beliefs while keeping their staff and congregations safe. Millions of Americans embrace worship as an essential part of life. For many faith traditions, gathering together for worship is at the heart of what it means to be a community of faith. But as Americans are now aware, gatherings present a risk for increasing spread of COVID-19 during this Public Health Emergency. CDC offers these suggestions for faith communities to consider and accept, reject, or modify, consistent with their own faith traditions, in the course of preparing to reconvene for in-person gatherings while still working to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

This guidance is not intended to infringe on rights protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or any other federal law, including the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA). The federal government may not prescribe standards for interactions of faith communities in houses of worship, and in accordance with the First Amendment, no faith community should be asked to adopt any mitigation strategies that are more stringent than the mitigation strategies asked of similarly situated entities or activities.

In addition, we note that while many types of gatherings are important for civic and economic well-being, religious worship has particularly profound significance to communities and individuals, including as a right protected by the First Amendment. State and local authorities are reminded to take this vital right into account when establishing their own re-opening plans.

Scaling Up Operations

- Establish and maintain communication with local and State authorities to determine current mitigation levels in your community.
- Provide protections for staff and congregants at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Offer options for staff at higher risk for severe illness (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) that limit their exposure risk. Offer options for congregants at higher risk of severe illness that limit their exposure risk (e.g., remote participation in services).
- Consistent with applicable federal and State laws and regulations, put in place policies that protect the privacy and confidentiality of people at higher risk for severe illness regarding underlying medical conditions.
- Encourage any organizations that share or use the facilities to also follow these considerations as applicable.
- If your community provides social services in the facility as part of its mission, consult CDC's information for schools and businesses and workplaces, as relevant, for helpful information.

Safety Actions

Continue to take these steps to reduce your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19:

- Correctly and consistently wear a mask that completely covers your nose and mouth
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others who do not live with you
- Avoid crowds
- Avoid poorly ventilated indoor spaces
- Stay home when you are sick
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol)
- Get vaccinated when the vaccine is available to you
- Get tested if you have signs or symptoms of COVID-19, or if you think you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19

Even if you and others (including children) do not feel sick and do not have any symptoms, **you can still spread COVID-19 to family, friends, and community.**

Do NOT be around others if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, if you are sick, or if you have tested positive for COVID-19.

Promote healthy hygiene practices

- Encourage staff and congregants to maintain good hand hygiene, washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Ensure you have accessible sinks and enough supplies for people to clean their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes. Supplies include soap, water, a way to dry hands (e.g., paper towels, hand dryer), tissues, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for

those who can safely use hand sanitizer), and no-touch/foot pedal trash cans (preferably covered).

- Encourage staff and congregants to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of their elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed.
- Whenever soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can be used.
- Consider posting signs on how to stop the spreadpdf icon of COVID-19 and how to promote everyday protective measurespdf icon, such as washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and properly wearing a maskimage icon.

Masks

- Encourage use of masks among staff and congregants. Masks are most essential when social distancing is difficult. Note: Masks should not be placed on children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, and anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Masks offer some protection to the wearer and are also meant to protect those around the wearer, in case they are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects in between uses.
- Develop a schedule of increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Avoid use of items that are not easily cleaned, sanitized, or disinfected.
- Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep them away from children.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, etc. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety risk to children using the facility.
- If your faith community offers multiple services, consider scheduling services far enough apart to allow time for cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces between services. Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.

Promote social distancing

- Take steps to limit the size of gatherings in accordance with the guidance and directives of state and local authorities and subject to the protections of the First Amendment and any other applicable federal law.

- Promote social distancing at services and other gatherings, ensuring that clergy, staff, choir, volunteers and attendees at the services follow social distancing, as circumstances and faith traditions allow, to lessen their risk.
- Consider holding services and gatherings in a large, well-ventilated area or outdoors, as circumstances and faith traditions allow.
- Consider appropriate mitigation measures, including taking steps to limit the size of gatherings maintaining social distancing, at other gatherings such as funerals, weddings, religious education classes, youth events, support groups and any other programming, where consistent with the faith tradition.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or walkways and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating “one-way routes” in hallways).

Take steps to minimize community sharing of worship materials and other items

- Consistent with the community’s faith tradition, consider temporarily limiting the sharing of frequently touched objects, such as worship aids, prayer rugs, prayer books, hymnals, religious texts and other bulletins, books, or other items passed or shared among congregants, and encouraging congregants to bring their own such items, if possible, or photocopying or projecting prayers, songs, and texts using electronic means.
- Modify the methods used to receive financial contributions. Consider a stationary collection box, the main, or electronic methods of collection regular financial contributions instead of shared collection trays or baskets.
- Consider whether physical contact (e.g., shaking hands, hugging, or kissing) can be limited among members of the faith community.
- If food is offered at any event, consider pre-packaged options, and avoid buffet or family-style meals if possible.

Nursery/Childcare

- If a nursery or childcare will be provided during services and events, refer to CDC’s information on preventing the spread of COVID-19 in childcare settings and adapt as needed for your setting.
- If holding summer day camps, refer to CDC’s information on youth and summer camps and adapt as needed.

Staffing and Training

- Train all clergy and staff in the above safety actions. Consider conducting the training virtually, or, if in-person, ensure that social distancing is maintained.

Monitoring and Preparing

Check for signs and symptoms

- Encourage staff or congregants who are sick or who have had close contact with a person with COVID-19 to stay home. Share CDC's criteria for staying home with staff and congregants so that they know how to care for themselves and others. Consider posting signs at entrances with this information.

Plan for when a staff member or congregant becomes sick

- Identify an area to separate anyone who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 during hours of operation, and ensure that children are not left without adult supervision.
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who becomes sick at the facility to their home or a healthcare facility.
- Notify local health officials if a person diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the facility and communicate with staff and congregants about potential exposure while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)^{external icon} or other applicable laws and in accordance with religious practices.
- Advise those with exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.
- Close off areas used by the sick person and do not use the area until after cleaning and disinfection. Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep disinfectant products away from children.
- Advise staff and congregants with symptoms of COVID-19 or who have tested positive for COVID-19 not to return to the facility until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation.

Maintain healthy operations

- Implement flexible sick leave and related flexible policies and practices for staff (e.g., allow work from home, if feasible), and provide requested reasonable accommodation absent undue hardship to individuals with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)^{external icon} or other applicable laws and in accordance with religious practices.
- Monitor absenteeism and create a roster of trained back-up staff.
- Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Staff, clergy, volunteers, and congregants should know who this person is and how to contact them if they become sick or are around others diagnosed with COVID-19. This person should also be aware of state or local regulatory agency policies related to group gatherings.
- As volunteers often perform important duties (e.g., greeters, ushers, childcare), consider similar monitoring, planning, and training for them. Consider that volunteer and staffing may need to increase to implement cleaning and safety protocols and to accommodate additional services with reduced attendance.
- Communicate clearly with staff and congregants about actions being taken to protect their health.

Signs and Messages

- Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., entrances, restrooms, gathering halls/community rooms/gyms) that promote everyday protective measurespdf icon and describe how to stop the spreadpdf icon of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a maskimage icon).
- Include messages (for example, videos) about behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and congregants (such as in emails and on community websites and social media accounts).
- Find freely available CDC print and digital resources on CDC’s communications resources main page.

Closing

- Check state and localexternal icon health department notices daily about transmission in the community and adjust operations.
- In the event a person diagnosed with COVID-19 is determined to have been in the building and poses a risk to the community, it is strongly suggested to dismiss attendees, then properly clean and disinfect the area and the building where the individual was present before resuming activities.

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homeCommunity, Work & School

Appendix E

Mitigation, Enforcement, and Immunity Protections Order by Governor Wolf



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA FOR MITIGATION, ENFORCEMENT, AND IMMUNITY PROTECTIONS

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared the novel coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19") a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a national emergency in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 7301(a) of the Emergency Management Services Code, 35 Pa. C.S. § 7301(a), I am charged with the responsibility to address dangers facing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ("Commonwealth") that result from disasters; and

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2020, pursuant to section 7301(c) of the Emergency Management Services Code, 35 Pa. C.S. § 7301(c), I proclaimed the existence of a disaster emergency throughout the Commonwealth as a result of COVID-19, and further extended the disaster emergency by Amendment on June 3, 2020, and August 31, 2020; and

WHEREAS, in executing the extraordinary responsibility outlined above, I am authorized during a disaster emergency to issue, amend and rescind executive orders, proclamations and regulations and those directives shall have the force and effect of law pursuant to 35 Pa. C.S. § 7301(b); and

WHEREAS, in addition to my authority, the Secretary of Health may order general control measures, including, but not limited to, closure, isolation, and quarantine; and

WHEREAS, this authority is granted to the Secretary of Health pursuant to Pennsylvania law. See section 5 of the Disease Prevention and Control Law, 35 P.S. § 521.5; sections 2102(a) and 2106 of the Administrative Code of 1929, 71 P.S. §§ 532(a), and 536; and the Department of Health's regulations at 28 Pa. Code §§ 27.60-27.68 (relating to disease control measures; isolation; quarantine; movement of persons subject to isolation or quarantine; and release from isolation and quarantine). Particularly, the Department of Health has the authority to take any disease control measure appropriate to protect the public from the spread of infectious disease. See 35 P.S. § 521.5; 71 P.S. §§ 532(a), and 1403(a); 28 Pa. Code § 27.60; and

WHEREAS, following an initial curtailing of COVID-19 spread due to the Commonwealth's mitigation efforts, a second wave of COVID-19 cases began in the summer months; and

WHEREAS, despite all efforts taken to date, the pandemic continues to spread, and taking action to prevent that spread while continuing to allow for necessary resumption of economic and social activity requires the Commonwealth to take steps to minimize the danger to Pennsylvanians as a result of participating in that activity; and

WHEREAS, further immediate action is required to mitigate the imminent spread of the disease, and associated health hazards presented by COVID-19, and to enforce the protections necessary to support the response of the Commonwealth to the threat of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, as of November 21, 2020, the Commonwealth had 302,564 positive cases of COVID-19 in all sixty-seven counties and 9,801 deaths from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth is now recording daily COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in greater numbers than at any other time during this pandemic; and

WHEREAS, in addition to my general powers, during a disaster emergency I am authorized specifically to:

- suspend any regulatory statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of Commonwealth business, or the orders, rules or regulations of any Commonwealth agency if strict compliance with the provisions of any statute, order, rule or regulation would in any way prevent, hinder or delay necessary action in coping with the emergency;
- utilize all resources of the Commonwealth and each political subdivision as reasonably necessary;
- transfer the direction, personnel, or functions of Commonwealth agencies or units thereof for performing or facilitating emergency services;
- direct and compel the evacuation of all or part of the population from any stricken or threatened area;
- control ingress and egress to and from a disaster area and the movement of persons within the area and the occupancy of premises therein. 35 Pa. C.S. § 7301(f).

WHEREAS, pursuant to 35 Pa. C.S. § 7704(a), neither the Commonwealth nor any political subdivision thereof nor other agencies nor, except in cases of willful misconduct, the agents, employees or representatives of any of them engaged in any emergency services activities, nor, except in cases of willful misconduct or gross negligence, any individual or other person under contract with them to provide equipment or work on a cost basis to be used in disaster relief, nor, except in cases of willful misconduct or gross negligence, any person, firm, corporation or an agent or employee of any of them engaged in disaster services activities, while complying with or attempting to comply with this part of the Emergency Management Services Code or any rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to the provisions of this part of the Emergency Management Services Code, shall be liable for the death of or any injury to persons; and

WHEREAS, the emergent need for enforcement measures adopted by my Administration herein require calling upon classification of individuals enumerated herein to perform acts that they would not perform in the ordinary course of business and it is in the public interest to afford such classifications of individuals protection against liability for good faith actions taken in their efforts; and

WHEREAS, due to the nature of this disaster, the classification of individuals enumerated herein are providing the citizens of the Commonwealth with essential emergency services activities and disaster services activities as contemplated by 35 Pa. C.S. § 7704(a) when enforcing the orders of the Governor and the Secretary of Health in retail or restaurant establishments.

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me and the executive branch by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I do hereby ORDER and PROCLAIM as follows:

Section 1. General Requirements for Businesses Maintaining In-Person Operations, other than Health Care Providers

A. Teleworking

Unless impossible, all businesses must conduct their operations remotely, through individual teleworking of their employees in the jurisdiction or jurisdictions in which they do businesses. Where telework is impossible, employees may conduct in-person business operations, provided that the business fully complies with this Order, and all existing and future applicable guidance issued by the Wolf Administration, the Department of Health, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

B. Cleaning and Mitigation Protocols

A business maintaining in-person operations, other than Health Care providers, shall do the following:

i. Cleaning:

- a.* In addition to maintaining pre-existing cleaning protocols established in the business, as specified in paragraph b, clean and disinfect high-touch areas routinely in accordance with CDC guidelines, in spaces that are accessible to customers, tenants, employees, or other individuals;
- b.* Maintain pre-existing cleaning protocols established by the business for all other areas of the building;
- c.* Based on the building size and number of employees and customers, alter hours of business so that the business has sufficient time to clean or to restock or both;
- d.* Close off areas visited by a person who is a case of COVID-19. Open outside doors and windows and use ventilation fans to increase air circulation in the area. Wait a minimum of 24 hours, or as long as practical, before beginning cleaning and disinfection. Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, including but not limited to employee break rooms, conference or training rooms and dining facilities, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines used by the ill person, focusing especially on frequently touched areas;
- e.* Where carts and handbaskets are available for customers' use, assign an employee to wipe down carts and handbaskets before they become available to each customer entering the premises.
- f.* In businesses with checkout counters and registers, take appropriate steps to stagger register and counter use so that those areas may be cleaned appropriately, at least once every hour, without causing customers to gather in large groups and to be unable to practice physical distancing.

ii. Mitigation Measures:

- a.* Implement temperature screening before employees enter the business, prior to start of each shift or, for employees who do not work shifts, before the employee starts work, and send employees home that have an elevated temperature or fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Require employees to practice physical distancing while waiting to have temperatures screened by placing marks at six-foot distances.
- b.* Stagger work start and stop times for employees when practicable to prevent gatherings of large groups entering or leaving the premises at the same time.
- c.* Provide a sufficient amount of space for employees to have breaks and meals while maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet, arranging seating to have

employees facing forward and not across from each other in eating and break settings.

- d.* Stagger employee break times to reduce the number of employees on break at any given time so that appropriate physical distancing of at least six feet may be maintained.
 - e.* Limit persons in employee common areas (such as locker or break rooms, dining facilities, training or conference rooms) at any one time to the number of employees that can maintain a physical distance of six feet.
 - f.* Conduct meetings and trainings or other gatherings of employees and management virtually (i.e., by phone or through the internet). If a meeting must be held in person, limit the meeting to the number of individuals permitted to be present under Section 9 (Specific Requirements For Events And Gatherings Other Than In-Person Retail Businesses or Businesses In The Retail Food Services Industry).
 - g.* Provide employees access to regular handwashing with soap, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes, including scheduling handwashing breaks as necessary, and ensure that common areas (including but not limited to break rooms, locker rooms, dining facilities, rest rooms, conference or training or conference rooms) are cleaned on a regular basis, including between any shifts.
 - h.* Provide and require that employees wear face coverings during their time at the business, except to the extent the employee is using break time to eat or drink, in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#), dated November 17, 2020, including any subsequent amendments. Employers may issue facemasks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
 - i.* Have a sufficient number of employees to perform all measures listed effectively and in a manner that ensures the safety of the public and employees.
 - j.* Have a sufficient number of personnel to control access, maintain order, and enforce physical distancing of at least six feet.
 - k.* Prohibit non-essential visitors from entering the premises of the business.
 - l.* Make all employees aware of these required procedures by communicating them, either orally or in writing, in their native or preferred language, as well as in English or by a methodology that allows them to understand.
- iii.* Contact Tracing:
- a.* Identify employees and customers, to the extent possible, who were in close contact (within about six feet for about 15 minutes) with a person with

COVID-19 from the period 48 hours before symptom onset (or 48 hours prior to test date if asymptomatic) to the time at which the patient isolated and, upon request, provide those names and contact information to the Pennsylvania Department of Health or a local health department.

- b.* Promptly notify employees who were close contacts of any known exposure to COVID-19 at the business premises, consistent with applicable confidentiality laws.

iv. Employee Isolation or Quarantine:

- a.* If an employee becomes sick during the workday, the individual must be sent home immediately. An employee who has symptoms of COVID19 before reporting to work should notify the employee's supervisor and remain home.
- b.* An employee who is a close contact of a person who is diagnosed with or tests positive for COVID-19, as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Health or local health department in accordance with CDC guidance, may not continue to work at an inperson business, and must quarantine in accordance with the direction of the Pennsylvania Department of Health or the local health department.
- c.* If an employee is diagnosed with or tests positive for COVID-19, the employee may no longer work at an in-person business, even if asymptomatic, and must isolate in accordance with the direction of the Pennsylvania Department of Health or a local health department.

Section 2. General Requirements for Businesses Serving the Public in a Physical Space, including Inside or Outside of a Building

In addition to complying with the remainder of this Order, businesses that serve the public within a physical space, either indoors or outside, shall do the following:

- A.* Require employees and customers to maintain a physical distance of six feet at check-out and counter lines.
- B.* Place signage at the entrance to and throughout the business mandating universal face coverings and physical distancing for all individuals, including employees, entering the business.
- C.* Provide markings or other signage showing where six-foot distances are, to help all individuals entering the business, including employees, maintain physical distancing.
- D.* Post, at every entrance, a maximum capacity limit to ensure that a minimum of six-feet physical distance can be maintained throughout the location. This maximum capacity limit shall be clearly identified and displayed.

- E.** Arrange store aisles to be directionally one-way, if required to achieve appropriate physical distancing.
- F.** Place hand sanitizer stations at high-contact locations.
- G.** Designate a COVID-19 compliance officer who is responsible for ensuring compliance with this Order and all other mitigation orders incorporated therein.
- H.** Install plexiglass shields at registers and check-out areas to shield employees and customers or take other measures to ensure physical distancing of customers from check-out personnel, or close lines and counters to maintain a physical distance of six feet between customers.
- I.** Provide for outside or curbside pick-up or delivery options, when feasible, by instituting online ordering or other such means.
- J.** Designate a specific time for high-risk and elderly persons to use the business at least once every week if there is a continuing in-person customer-facing component.
- K.** Require individuals entering the business to wear face coverings, in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#), dated November 17, 2020, including any subsequent amendments, unless the individual qualifies for an exception in that Order, and deny entry to individuals not wearing face coverings or alternatives to face coverings, unless the business is providing medication, medical supplies, or food, in which case the business must provide alternative methods of pick-up or delivery of such goods.

Section 3. Additional Capacity Limitations for Businesses

All in-person businesses serving the public within a building or defined area may operate at up to 75% of the maximum capacity stated on the applicable certificate of occupancy at any given time unless specifically subject to other requirements outlined below.

Section 4. Additional Requirements for Entertainment Industry

All in-person retail businesses serving the public within a building or defined area in the entertainment industry (museums, amusements, etc.) may operate at up to 50% of the maximum capacity stated on the applicable certificate of occupancy at any given time unless hosting an event or gathering subject to section 9. For purposes of this section, in-person retail businesses do not include those businesses covered by Sections 7 and 8.

Section 5. Additional Requirements for Gyms and Fitness Facilities

All gyms and fitness facilities are permitted to continue indoor operations at up to 50% occupancy, but must prioritize outdoor physical fitness activities. Outdoor and indoor activities must follow face covering requirements as provided by the Secretary of Health's Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings, dated November 17, 2020, including any subsequent amendments, and must provide for physical distancing requirements of persons being at least six feet apart, as well as being limited by Section 9 (Specific Requirements For Events And Gatherings Other Than In-Person Retail Businesses or Businesses In The Retail Food Services Industry).

Section 6. Additional Requirements for Personal Care Services

Personal care services, including spas, saunas, tattoo parlors, massage therapists, hair and nail salons and barbershops, may operate at up to 50% occupancy and by appointment only.

Section 7. Additional Requirements for Businesses in the Retail Food Services Industry, Including Bars, Restaurants, and Private Catered Events

A. Bars

All bars are prohibited from conducting operations unless they offer sit-down, dine-in meals or take-out sales of alcoholic beverages. Alcohol only can be served for on-premises consumption when in the same transaction as a meal. All service must be at a table or booth; bar service is prohibited. All sale or dispensing of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption must cease at 11:00 p.m. and no patron may possess alcoholic beverages within the establishment after midnight.

Take-out sales of alcohol for the purposes of off-site consumption are permitted subject to any limitations or restrictions imposed by Pennsylvania law. For purposes of this Order, occupancy requirements shall be the following:

- i.* Limited to 25% of stated fire code maximum occupancy for indoor dining.
- ii.* A discrete indoor event or gathering within a bar must comply with the limits in Section 9 (Specific Requirements For Events And Gatherings Other Than In-Person Retail Businesses or Businesses In The Retail Food Services Industry).

B. Restaurants & Private Catered Events

- i.* The Guidance for Businesses in the Restaurant Industry Permitted to Operate During the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency to Ensure the Safety and Health of Employees and the Public, dated May 27, 2020, as updated October 9, 2020, along with any future updates (the "Guidance"), is incorporated herein by reference, with the exception of occupancy requirements. For purposes of this Order, occupancy requirements shall be the following:

- a.* Limited to 25% of stated fire code maximum occupancy for indoor dining.
 - b.* Discrete indoor event or gathering must comply with the limits outlined in Section 9 (Specific Requirements For Events And Gatherings Other Than In-Person Retail Businesses or Businesses In The Retail Food Services Industry).
- ii.* All businesses in the retail food services industry, including restaurants, wineries, breweries, private clubs and bars, are permitted to provide take-out and delivery sales of food, as well as dine-in service in both indoor and outdoor seating areas so long as they strictly adhere to the requirements of the Guidance, as required by this Order, including the following:
 - a.* Non-bar seating in outdoor areas (i.e., tables or counter seats that do not line up to a bar or food service area) may be used for customer seating.
 - b.* Customers being served must be seated at a table.
 - c.* The maximum occupancy limit includes staff.
- iii.* Physical distancing, face covering, and other mitigation measures must be employed to protect workers and patrons.
- iv.* Alcohol only can be served for on-premises consumption when in the same transaction as a meal. All sale or dispensing of alcoholic beverages for onsite consumption must cease no later than 10:00 p.m. and no patron may possess alcoholic beverages within the establishment after midnight.
- v.* Take-out sales of alcohol for the purposes of off-site consumption are permitted subject to any limitations or restrictions imposed by Pennsylvania law.

C. Self-Certification

Notwithstanding the maximum occupancy requirements specified in Sections 7.A. (related to Bars) and 7.B. (related to Restaurants & Private Catered Events), an eligible establishment may increase non-event capacity limitations to

50% of stated fire code maximum occupancy for indoor dining if the establishment enrolls in and complies with the Open & Certified Pennsylvania program administered by the Department of Community and Economic

Development. Discrete events within open and certified establishments remain

subject to Section 9 (Specific Requirements For Events And Gatherings Other Than In-Person Retail Businesses or Businesses In The Retail Food Services Industry).

Section 8. Requirements for Nightclubs

All nightclubs as defined by the Clean Indoor Air Act, 35 P.S. § 637.2, are prohibited from conducting operations.

Section 9. Requirements For Events And Gatherings

- A.** Venues hosting events or gatherings must determine their established occupancy limit as defined by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Life Safety Code and then apply the attendee calculator to determine how many attendees are permitted to attend the event or gathering.

i. Maximum Occupancy Calculator for indoor events:

Maximum Occupancy	Allowable Indoor Rate
0-2,000 people	10% of Maximum Occupancy
2,001 - 10,000 people	5% of Maximum Occupancy
Over 10,000 people	No events over 500 people

ii. Maximum Occupancy Calculator for outdoor events:

Maximum Occupancy	Allowable Outdoor Rate
0-2,000 people	15% of Maximum Occupancy
2,001 - 10,000 people	10% of Maximum Occupancy
Over 10,000 people	5% of Maximum Occupancy up to 2,500 people

- B.** When no fire code capacity is published or available for outdoor events or gatherings venues, establish occupancy as 67 people per 1000 square feet and then apply the maximum occupancy calculator. Venues may also contact their local building code officials if they are unaware of their occupancy limit.
- C.** For the purposes of this Order, “event and gathering” is defined as: A temporary grouping of individuals for defined purposes, that takes place over a limited timeframe, such as hours or days. For example, events and gatherings include fairs, festivals, concerts, or shows and groupings that occur within larger, more permanent businesses, such as shows or performances within amusement parks, individual showings of movies on a single screen/auditorium within a multiplex, business meetings or conferences, or each party or reception within a multi-room venue.
- D.** The maximum occupancy limit includes staff.
- E.** Venues must require attendees to comply with 6-foot physical distancing requirements, to wear masks or face coverings in compliance with the Secretary of Health’s Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings dated November 17, 2020, including any subsequent amendments, and implement best practices such as timed entry, multiple

entry and exit points, multiple restrooms and hygiene stations. Venues and event planners may refer to the CDC Events and Gatherings Readiness and Planning Tool for additional information regarding best practices.

Section 10. Visitations to Prisons and Hospitals

Visitation to prisons and hospitals is subject to the determination of the individual facilities which may limit visitation as necessary based on risk of COVID-19. Visitors who interact with residents and patients must be diligent regarding hygiene, face coverings and physical distancing.

Section 11. Exemptions

A. Religious Gatherings

- i.* Churches, synagogues, temples, mosques and other places of congregate worship are specifically excluded from the limitations established in Section 9 of this Order during religious services. These institutions are strongly encouraged to enforce physical distancing and other mitigation measures at their gatherings.
- ii.* Conventions, retreats, and other gatherings that may be sponsored or held by these religious entities that are not the actual worship service are required to comply with this Order.
- iii.* Attendees at churches, synagogues, temples, mosques and other places of congregate worship are required to wear face coverings in compliance with the Secretary of Health's Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings, dated November 17, 2020, including any subsequent amendments.

- B.* This Order does not apply to health care workers exposed to COVID-19. In the event of an exposure, the guidelines in PA-HAN-510 or its successor must be followed.

Section 12. Effect on Previous Orders of the Governor

A. To the extent they are not already superseded, the following Orders are rescinded and superseded by this Order:

- i.* Order of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Regarding the Closure of All Businesses that are not Life Sustaining dated March 19, 2020, as amended.
- ii.* Order of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for Individuals to Stay at Home dated April 1, 2020, as amended.
- iii.* Order of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for Limited Opening of Businesses, Lifting of Stay at Home Requirements, and Continued Aggressive Mitigation Efforts dated May 7, 2020.
- iv.* Order of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the Continued Reopening of the Commonwealth dated May 27, 2020.

v. Order of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Directing Targeted Mitigation Measures, dated July 15, 2020, as amended.

Section 13. Enforcement

Along with enforcement mechanisms available against any other person who violates of this Order, the following enforcement mechanisms are available against retail establishments and restaurants:

- A.** For purposes of this Section and Section 13, the following definitions apply:
 - i. Retail Establishment: An establishment that sells goods or services to the public or is open to the public.
 - ii. Restaurant: An establishment where food or drink is served to or provided for the public, with or without charge.
- B.** All retail establishments and restaurants found in noncompliance with this Order during the course of an investigation or inspection shall receive an initial warning letter. Upon receipt of the warning letter, the retail establishment or restaurant shall engage in rigorous cleaning, and imposition of other mitigation measures as necessary to ensure compliance with this Order.
- C.** Upon a subsequent visit, if a second violation is found, then the retail establishment or restaurant shall immediately correct the violation and may receive a citation and/or fine. The retail establishment or restaurant shall be directed to close for a period of up to 24 hours beginning the day of notice of the second violation. During the closure period, the retail establishment or restaurant shall engage in rigorous cleaning and reimpose all mitigation measures as necessary to ensure compliance with this Order.
- D.** Upon a subsequent violation, the retail establishment or restaurant shall be directed to close for a period of at least 24 hours beginning immediately upon the finding of the violation, together with additional fines and penalties and referral for criminal prosecution for obstructing the administration of law or other governmental function, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, 18 Pa. C.S. § 5101.
- E.** Prior to re-opening, the retail establishment or restaurant shall correct all cited violations. The retail establishment or restaurant shall be permitted to reopen prior to a revisit so long as they have effectively corrected all violations. Failure to correct all cited violations will result in enhanced penalties upon revisit.

Section 14. Limited Immunity Related to Universal Face Coverings

I hereby declare that the following classifications of individuals and entities are engaged in essential emergency services activities and disaster services activities when enforcing the Secretary of Health's Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings, effective November 18, 2020, including any subsequent amendments, and, therefore, pursuant to 35 Pa. C.S. § 7301 I hereby

declare that the following classifications of individuals and entities are engaged in essential emergency services activities and disaster services activities when enforcing the November 17, 2020 Updated Order of the Secretary of Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings, including any subsequent amendments, and, therefore, pursuant to 35 Pa. C.S. § 7704(a) of the Emergency Management Services Code, are entitled to immunity from civil liability only as related to enforcement of the Secretary of Health's Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings, effective November 18, 2020, including any subsequent amendments, except in cases of willful misconduct, gross negligence, recklessness or bad faith:

- Business (including not-for-profit) and restaurant owners and employees
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania employees and authorized agents
- Personnel of local health departments
- State and local law enforcement personnel
- Personnel of other authorized government agencies

This Order does not entitle the enumerated classification of individuals to any other rights, privileges, status, benefits or emoluments other than those that might be otherwise applicable by operation of agency law. This Order shall not apply to liability of employers with respect to their employees.

The immunity protection is without regard for whether such individuals receive remuneration. Finally, aforementioned classifications of individuals shall be immune from civil liability and shall not be liable for the death of or any injury to a person or for loss of or damage to property as a result of enforcing the Secretary of Health's Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings, effective November 18, 2020, including any subsequent amendments, in retail establishments and restaurants, except in cases of willful misconduct, gross negligence, recklessness or bad faith, to the fullest extent permitted by law. This grant of immunity shall not extend to the aforementioned classification of individuals rendering non-COVID-19 enforcement emergency services.

Section 15. Effective Date and Duration

This Order shall take effect at 12:01 a.m. on November 27, 2020, and shall remain in effect until further notice.



Tom Wolf
TOM WOLF
Governor

GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the city of Harrisburg, on this twenty-third day of November two thousand twenty, the year of the commonwealth the two hundred and forty-fifth.

Appendix F

Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings

The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a contagious disease that is spreading rapidly from person to person in the world, the United States, and this Commonwealth. COVID-19 can be transmitted from any person who is infected, even if they have no symptoms. Additionally, exposure is possible by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching one's mouth, nose, or eyes. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. Older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions are at a higher risk for serious illness. Illness in children and young adults has become more common as the face of the pandemic continues to change. After a brief respite in the summer months, case counts and the number of hospitalizations have been rising throughout the Commonwealth, surrounding states, and the world. As of November 16, 2020, there have been 269,613 cases and 9,325 deaths in this Commonwealth caused by the still present and ongoing pandemic. The Commonwealth and the nation are seeing the highest number of reported cases since the pandemic was declared in January.

Earlier in the pandemic, I issued an Order directing life-sustaining businesses to institute mitigation measures to protect the safety of employees and customers: *Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Directing Public Health Safety Measures for Businesses Permitted to Maintain In-person Operations*, dated April 15, 2020. The Department of Health (Department) has also issued guidance to health care providers in the form of Health Alerts (HANs) regarding isolation and quarantine, intended to allow for the continuation of lifesustaining health care services in the midst of the pandemic. With the measured reopening of the Commonwealth, the *Order of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Regarding the Closure of All Businesses That Are Not Life Sustaining*, dated March 19, 2020, *as amended*, and my *Order Regarding the Closure of all Businesses That Are Not Life Sustaining*, dated March 19, 2020, *as amended*, have been suspended.

Despite the mitigation efforts that were implemented in the spring and successfully saved lives, the pandemic continues to spread, and taking action to prevent that spread while continuing to allow for necessary resumption of economic and social activity requires the Commonwealth to take steps to ensure that participation in those activities contributes as little danger as possible to the people of the Commonwealth.

COVID-19 is a threat to the public's health, for which the Secretary of Health may order general control measures, including, but not limited to, closure, isolation, and quarantine. This authority is granted to the Secretary of Health pursuant to Pennsylvania law. See section 5 of the Disease Prevention and Control Law, 35 P.S. § 521.5; sections 2102(a) and 2106 of the Administrative Code of 1929, 71 P.S. §§ 532(a), and 536; and the Department of Health's regulations at 28 Pa. Code §§ 27.60-27.68 (relating to disease control measures; isolation; quarantine; movement of persons subject to isolation or quarantine; and release from isolation and quarantine). Particularly, the Department of Health has the authority to take any disease control measure appropriate to protect the public from the spread of infectious disease. See 35 P.S. § 521.5; 71 P.S. §§ 532(a), and 1403(a); 28 Pa. Code § 27.60.

Under circumstances where social distancing, mask wearing, isolation, and quarantine are the first line of defense against the disease's spread, and where large and small gatherings are spreading disease,²⁴² the experiences of the Commonwealth (and its and the country's health experts), and recommendations of the CDC regarding travel and gatherings with persons not habitually together lead me to issue this new Order with new disease control measures regarding universal face coverings. Given the method by which the virus spreads, universal face coverings, even when not clinical-level masks, have been an effective mitigation strategy to prevent and control the spread of disease. *See* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html#recent-studies>. Experience demonstrates that when used in public settings, face coverings reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth. This Order is a critical measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while minimizing the impact on physical and economic well-being.

Accordingly, on this day, November 17, 2020, in order to prevent and control the spread of disease, I hereby order:

Section 1: Definitions

“Alternative to a face covering” may include a plastic face shield that covers the nose and mouth, extends below the chin and to the ears, and leaves no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised there is currently not enough evidence to determine how much protection a face shield provides to individuals around the person wearing the face shield, because of gaps where respiratory droplets may escape. The CDC does state, however, that face shields may still be an option in situations where wearing a cloth face covering is not otherwise feasible.

“Face covering” means covering of the nose and mouth with material that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. A “face covering” can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen. A “face covering” may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or be improvised from household items, including, but not limited to, scarfs, bandanas, t-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels. While procedural and surgical masks intended for health care

²⁴² Christie Aschwanden, “How ‘Superspreading’ Events Drive Most COVID-19 Spread,” *Scientific American*, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-superspreading-events-drive-most-covid-19-spread/> (June 23, 2020); Carl Zimmer, “One Meeting in Boston Seeded Tens of Thousands of Infections, Study Finds,” *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/26/health/covid-19-superspreaders-boston.html> (Aug. 26, 2020); Jacqueline Howard, *et al.*, “Covid-19 superspreading event in Boston may have led to 20,000 cases, researcher says,” *CNN*, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/25/health/covid-19-superspreading-boston-study/index.html> (Aug. 25, 2020); Travis Anderson, “7 coronavirus-related deaths now connected to Maine wedding,” *The Boston Globe*, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/09/15/nation/coronavirus-death-toll-linked-maine-wedding-grows-five/>; Lea Hamner, *et al.*, “High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice—Skagit County, Washington, March 2020,” *CDC*, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm> (May 15, 2020); *Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/a-funeral-sparked-a-covid-19-outbreak--and-led-to-many-more-funerals/2020/04/03/546fa0cc-74e611ea-87da-77a8136c1a6d_story.html (April 4, 2020); Laxminarayan, *et al.*, “Epidemiology and transmission dynamics of COVID-19 in two Indian states,” *Science*, <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/09/29/science.abd7672> (September 30, 2020).

providers and first responders, such as N95 respirators, meet those requirements, these specialized masks should be reserved for appropriate occupational and health care personnel.

“Physical distancing” means the practice of staying at least six feet away from others. Social distancing is the term that was used earlier in the pandemic as many people stayed home to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Now, the term physical distancing is used to stress the importance of maintaining physical space when in public areas.

“School entity” means a public K-12 school, a brick and mortar and cyber charter school, a private or parochial school, a career and technical center (CTCs), and an intermediate unit (IU); educational programming for students in non-educational placements in residential settings (e.g., boarding schools), residential facilities, detention centers, and hospital settings; a PA Pre-K Counts program, Head Start Program and Preschool Early Intervention program; a Private Academic Nursery School and locally funded prekindergarten activities; and a post-secondary institution.

“Sustained physical distance” means the practice of staying at least six feet away from others to avoid becoming a close contact. On October 21, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its definition of close contact to “someone who was within six feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.” The guidance goes on to note that there are additional factors to consider when defining “close contact.” DOH recommends using 15 consecutive minutes of exposure at a distance of six feet or less as an operational definition for “close contact.” However, there are circumstances when someone should be considered a close contact of a case after being within six feet for fewer than 15 consecutive minutes. Additional factors that should be considered when assessing close contacts include but are not limited to: close proximity to an infected person, infected person exhibiting symptoms, and environmental conditions like crowds or inadequate ventilation.

“Working alone” means when a person is isolated from interaction with other people with little or no expectation of in-person interruption. Examples include:

- A lone worker inside the enclosed cab of a crane or construction equipment.
- A person by themselves inside an office with four walls and a door.
- A lone worker inside a cubicle with 3 walls and a door or entryway, with walls high enough to block the breathing zone of all people walking by, and the worker’s activity will not require anyone to come inside of the worker’s workspace.
- An employee who is alone in an agricultural field or other open area with no anticipated contact with others.

Section 2: Face Coverings Required

Except as provided in Section 3, every individual, age two and older, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania shall wear a face covering when:

- A. Indoors or in an enclosed space, where another person or persons who are not members of the individual’s household are present in the same space, irrespective of physical distance.
- B. Outdoors with others who are not members of a person’s household and unable to maintain sustained physical distance.

- C. As permitted in my Order Directing Mitigation Measures, dated July 15, 2020, as amended, for participation in an indoor or outdoor event, gathering, or group setting where another person or persons, who are not members of the individual's household are present.
- D. Participating in indoor physical activity in a gym, fitness center or group fitness classes, where another person or persons who are not members of the individual's household are present in the same space, irrespective of physical distance.
- E. Waiting in a public area for, riding on, driving or operating public transportation or paratransit or while in a taxi, private car service or ride-sharing vehicle, irrespective of physical distance.
- F. Obtaining services for themselves or another person or a pet from the health care sector in settings including, but not limited to, a hospital, pharmacy, medical clinic, laboratory, physician or dental office, veterinary clinic, or blood bank.
- G. When working in any space where food is prepared, packaged for sale, or prepared for distribution to others.
- I. Certain facilities—including hospitals, shelters, long-term care facilities, residential treatment facilities, and correctional facilities—may also require visitors and residents, patients, or inmates to wear face coverings even when in a living unit.

Section 3: Exceptions to Covering Requirement

The following are exceptions to the face covering requirements in Section 2. All alternatives to wearing a face covering, including the use of a face shield, should be exhausted before an individual is excepted from this Order.

- A. If wearing a face covering while working would create an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- B. If wearing a face covering would either cause a medical condition, or exacerbate an existing one, including respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition or a disability.
- C. When necessary to confirm the individual's identity.
- D. While obtaining a service that requires the temporary removal of the face covering, such as dental services.
- E. When working alone and isolated from interaction with other people with little or no expectation of in-person interaction.
- F. If an individual is communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired or has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.

Section 4. Business and School Entity Obligations A. A

business or a school entity must:

1. Require that all people, including their employees, customers, teachers, students and visitors, wear a face covering and take reasonable steps to enforce the requirement.
2. Mitigate or eliminate employee, teacher, student, visitor, and customer exposure to people who cannot wear or refuse to wear a face covering.

3. Post prominent signs that are visible to all people—including employees, teachers, students, customers, and visitors—stating that face coverings are required by the Order of the Secretary of Health.
4. Provide reasonable accommodations to people, including their employees, teachers, students, customers, and visitors, who state they have a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that makes it unreasonable for the person to maintain a face covering.
 - a. Businesses may decline service to individuals who are not wearing a face covering or claiming to have a condition preventing them from wearing a face covering or an alternative to a face covering, so long as they attempt to provide a reasonable accommodation.
 - b. Accommodations could include an alternative to a face covering, such as use of a face shield or providing service options that do not require a customer to enter the business. This may include offering curbside pick-up, delivery, or other innovative solutions.

C. A business or a school entity should not:

1. Enforce face covering requirements when it is unsafe to do so.
2. Restrain, assault, use force, or physically remove employees, teachers, students, customers or other individuals who refuse to comply with this Order when it would not otherwise be legal to do so.
3. Violate other laws, including state and federal anti-discrimination laws.

Section 5. Effect on other Orders of the Secretary of Health

My Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings, dated July 15, 2020, is hereby rescinded and superseded by this Order.

My Order Directing Mitigation Measures, dated July 15, 2020, as amended, is hereby further amended as follows:

Section 3(E): Venues must require attendees to comply with 6-foot physical distancing requirements, to wear masks or face coverings in compliance with my *Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings*, dated November 17, 2020 and implement other mitigation practices such as timed entry, multiple entry and exit points, multiple restrooms and hygiene stations. Venues and event planners can review the CDC Events and Gatherings Readiness and Planning Tool for additional information regarding mitigation practices.

The remainder of the Order Directing Mitigation Measures of July 15, 2020 as amended, remains unchanged.

Section 6. Effective Date and Enforcement Date

This Order is effective on and enforcement will begin on November 18, 2020, 12:01 a.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Q22 MD'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the letters 'Q', '2', and '2' being prominent. The 'MD' is written in a smaller, more upright script at the end of the signature.

Rachel L. Levine, MD

Secretary

Appendix G

1918 Pandemic Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

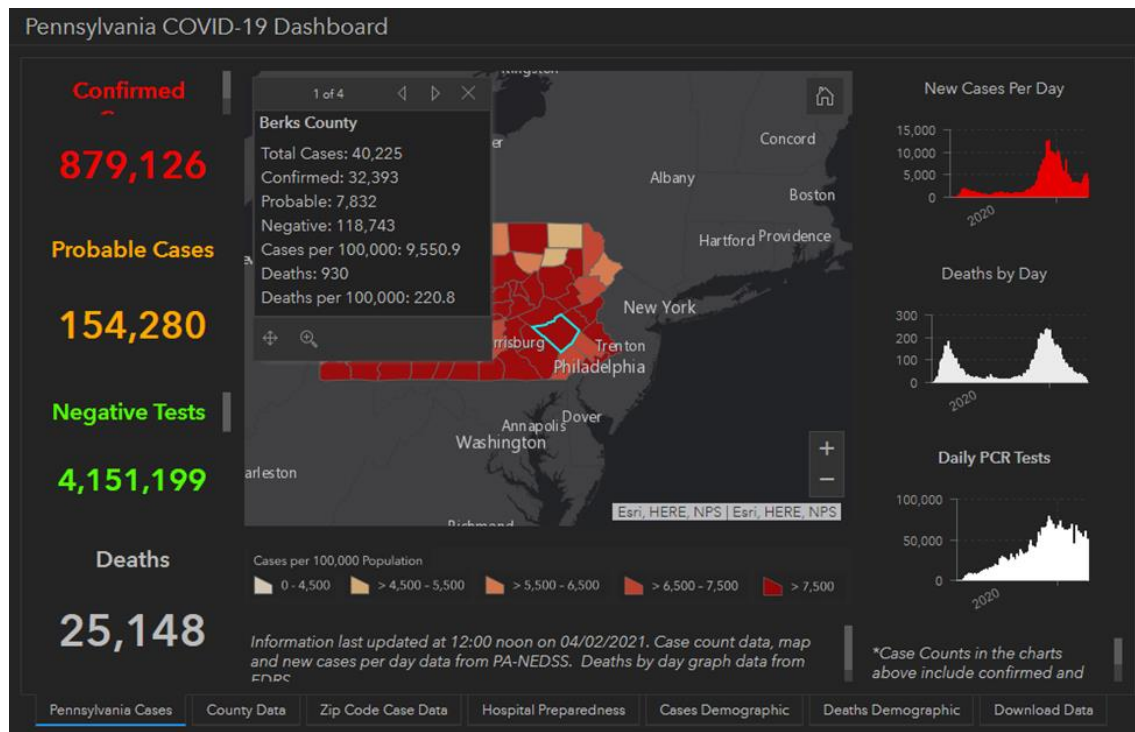
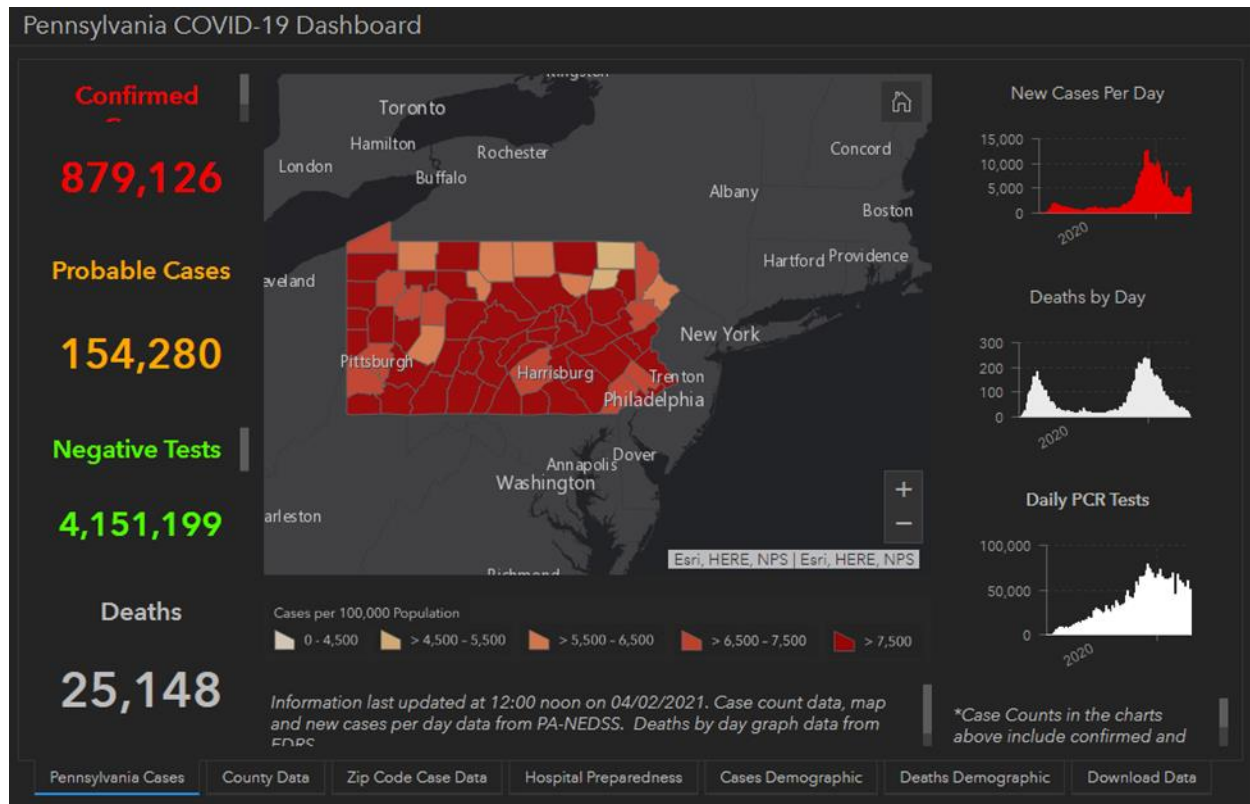
1918 Pandemic (H1N1 virus)

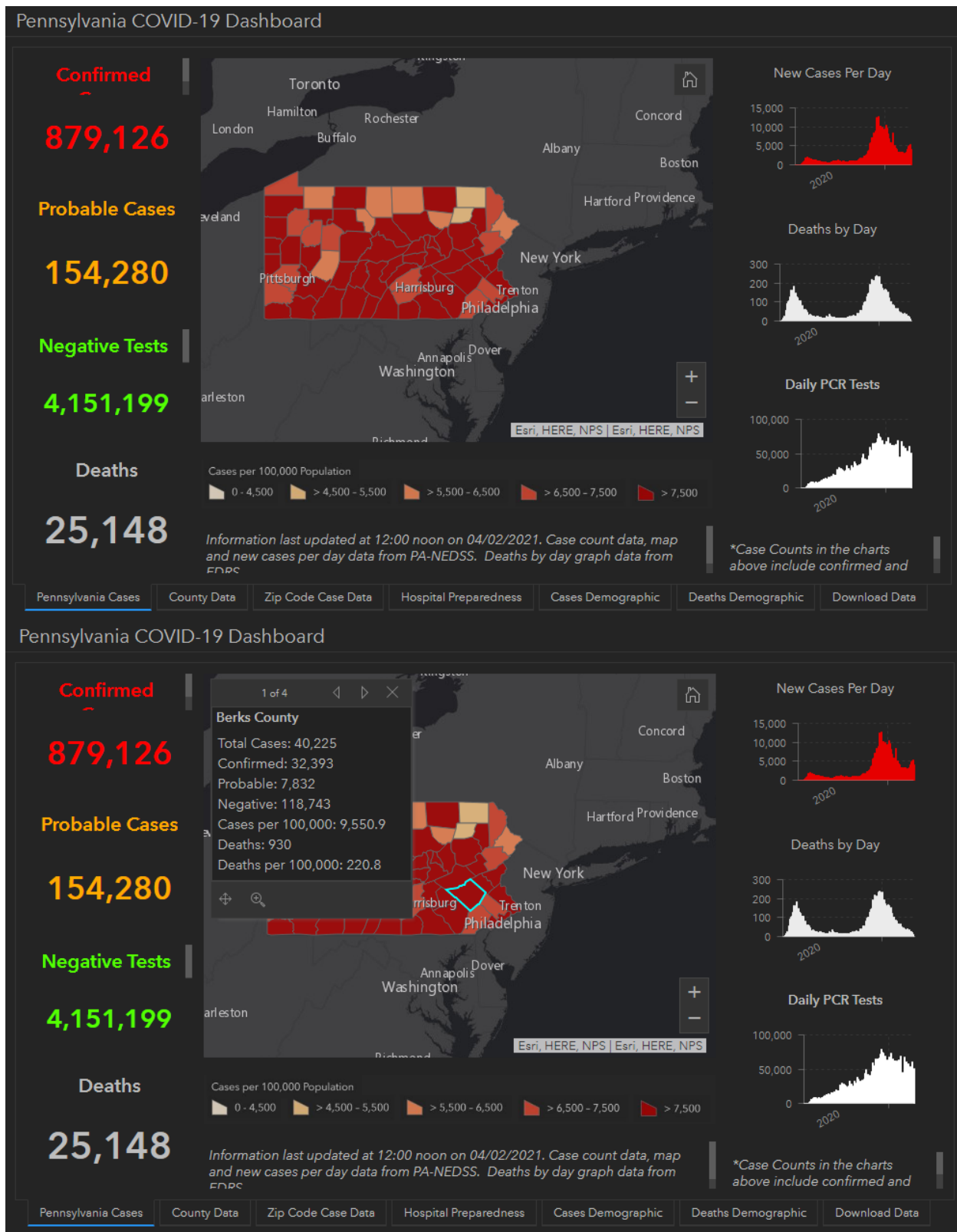


The 1918 influenza pandemic was the most severe pandemic in recent history. It was caused by an H1N1 virus with genes of avian origin. Although there is not universal consensus regarding where the virus originated, it spread worldwide during 1918-1919. In the United States, it was first identified in military personnel in spring 1918. It is estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population became infected with this virus. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States.

Appendix H

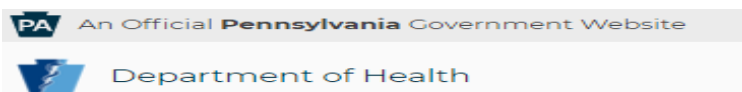
Pennsylvania COVID-19 Dashboard





Appendix I

Pennsylvania Department of Health 2020/2021 Influenza Data



[Health](#) > [All Health Topics](#) > [Diseases & Conditions](#) > [Flu](#) > 2020-21 Flu

2020/2021 Influenza Season Data

The Pennsylvania Department of Health monitors influenza activity throughout the year but ramps up surveillance activities in the fall and winter. The official influenza surveillance season starts with the 40th week of the year (typically around the beginning of October) and ends on the 20th week of the following year (in May). For the 2020-2021 season, the influenza surveillance season will begin on Sept. 27, 2020, and will run through May 22, 2021. Updated influenza activity data will be posted on this web page every Tuesday throughout the influenza surveillance season. These updates will provide a summary on:

1. When and where influenza activity is occurring;
2. Current trends in influenza as compared to previous seasons; and
3. What types and subtypes of influenza viruses are currently circulating.

It is important to note that the influenza case counts presented on this page are restricted to only those cases that have had a positive laboratory test for flu (by rapid test, DFA, PCR or culture) reported to the PADOH. These case counts represent only a fraction of the actual burden of illness due to influenza occurring in the commonwealth at any given time. This is because most persons with influenza do not go to the doctor or are not tested or reported. Influenza spread and severity varies widely from season to season. It is estimated that five to 20 percent (600,000 to 2,400,000) of Pennsylvanians get the flu each year, and 120 to 2,000 die from complications of influenza.

Week 16 (Ending 4/24/2021)

Confirmed Influenza Laboratory Tests Received by PA DOH Surveillance

Table 1. Influenza Cases (positive by rapid test, PCR, or culture) Reported in Pennsylvania, 9/27/2020 to 4/24/2021 (n=3,458) - Cases by County and Influenza Type

This table will be updated when numbers per county increase to a level that protects the confidentiality of the patients' health information.

Pennsylvania Weekly Influenza Report Summary:

- Flu activity remains lower than usual for this time of year across the Commonwealth and nationally.
- Influenza A and B are identified by laboratory testing.
- A total of 3,458 laboratory-confirmed influenza cases have been reported season to date, this is 96% decrease from cumulative count of cases during the same week of the 2019-2020 flu season. Confirmed reports were received from 67 Counties of the 67 Counties.
- Percent of outpatient visits associated with Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) has been low and is still below the state epidemic threshold however, the activity has increased slightly over the past few weeks.
- A total of 44 influenza associated hospitalizations and 20 deaths have been reported in Pa during the current flu season.

County	Influenza Type			TOTAL
	A	B	U	
County Not Reported				
ADAMS				
ALLEGHENY				
ARMSTRONG				
BEAVER				
BEDFORD				
BERKS				
BLAIR				
BRADFORD				
BUCKS				
BUTLER				

CAMBRIA				
CAMERON				
CARBON				
CENTRE				
CHESTER				
CLARION				
CLEARFIELD				
CLINTON				
COLUMBIA				
CRAWFORD				
CUMBERLAND				
DAUPHIN				
DELAWARE				
ELK				
ERIE				
FAYETTE				
FOREST				
FRANKLIN				
FULTON				
GREENE				
HUNTINGDON				

INDIANA				
JEFFERSON				
JUNIATA				
LACKAWANNA				
LANCASTER				
LAWRENCE				
LEBANON				
LEHIGH				
LUZERNE				
LYCOMING				
MCKEAN				
MERCER				
MIFFLIN				
MONROE				
MONTGOMERY				
MONTOUR				
NORTHAMPTON				
NORTHUMBERLAND				
PERRY				
PHILADELPHIA				
PIKE				

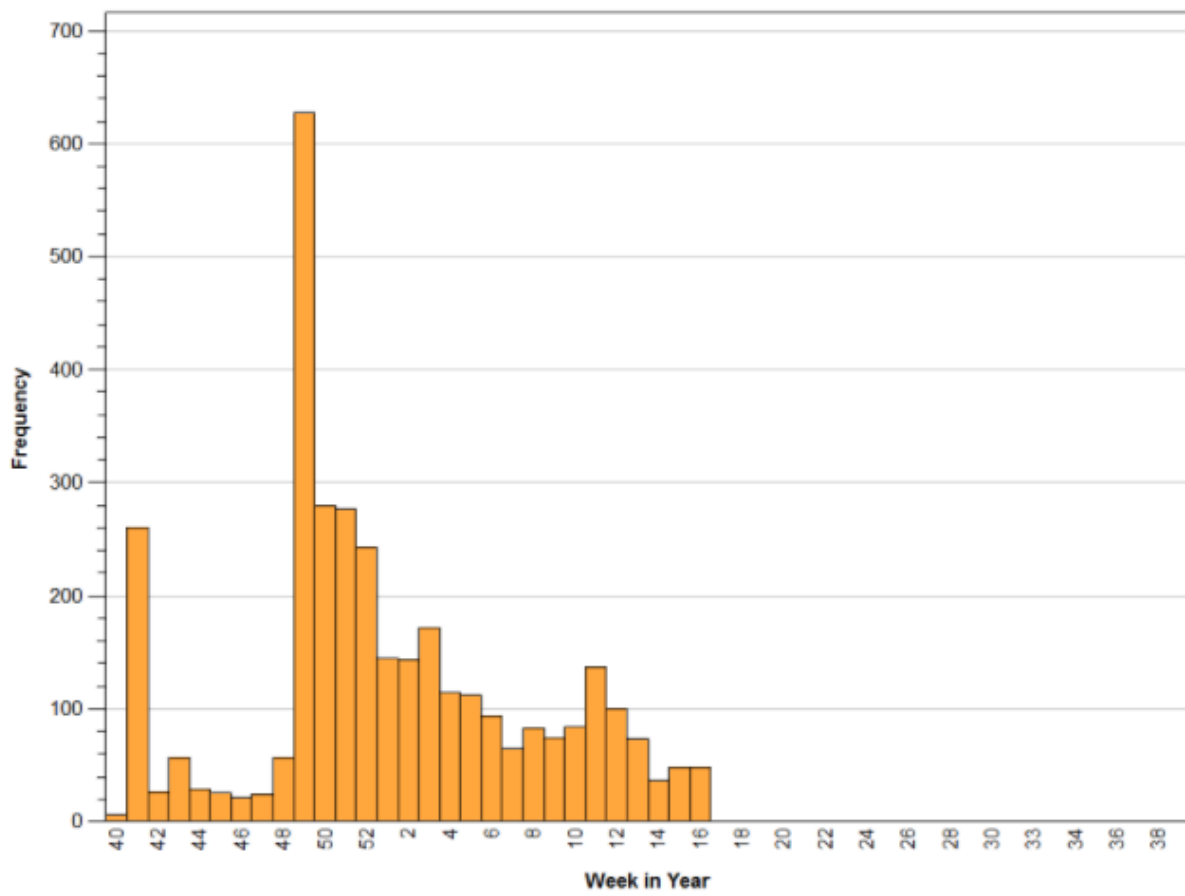
POTTER				
SCHUYLKILL				
SNYDER				
SOMERSET				
SULLIVAN				
SUSQUEHANNA				
TIOGA				
UNION				
VENANGO				
WARREN				
WASHINGTON				
WAYNE				
WESTMORELAND				
WYOMING				
YORK				
All				

(*) Numbers smaller than 5 have been replaced with an asterisk

(¥) Influenza counts are provisional and may change as more information is received

(**) Test results may identify influenza Type A, influenza Type B, or influenza without specifying Type A or B. Some tests only give a positive or negative result and can-not identify influenza type.

Figure 1. Number of Pa. Influenza Cases by Week of First Report



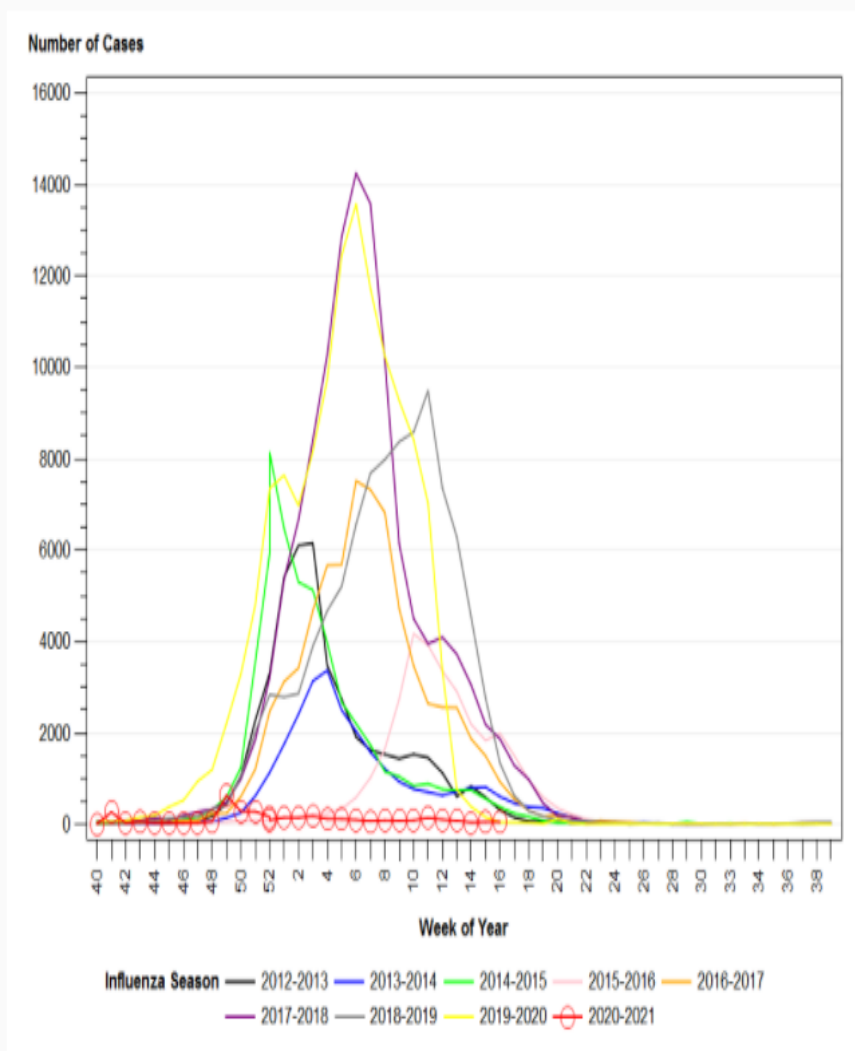


Figure 3: Season-to-date Influenza Sub-Typing Results From State Public Health Lab

The chart will be created when enough data are collected.

Table 2: Season-To-Date Influenza-Associated Deaths by Age

Age	Influenza-associated Death
0-18	0
19-49	2
50-64	5
65 +	13
All	20

Syndromic Surveillance

The Pennsylvania Department of Health's syndromic surveillance system receives data on visits to emergency departments (EDs) from most hospitals in the state. The system looks at the reason for visiting the ED and determines if ED visits were likely due to influenza-like illness (ILI). The graph displays ED visits due to ILI as a percentage of total ED visits. This provides yet another way for the Department of Health to monitor influenza and ILI in the state.

Figure 4: season-to-date Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Emergency Visits

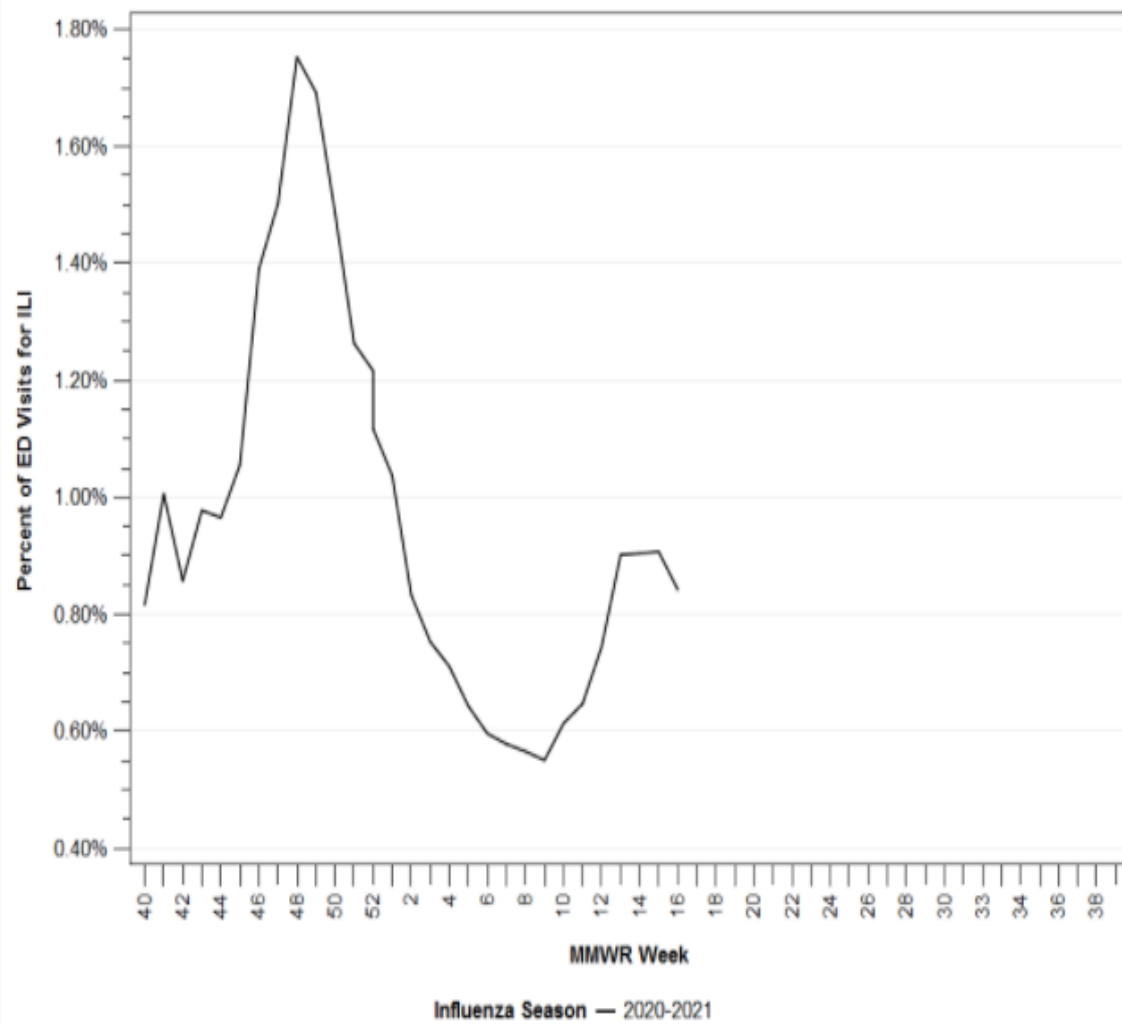


Figure 5: season-to-date Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Emergency Visits by community health districts

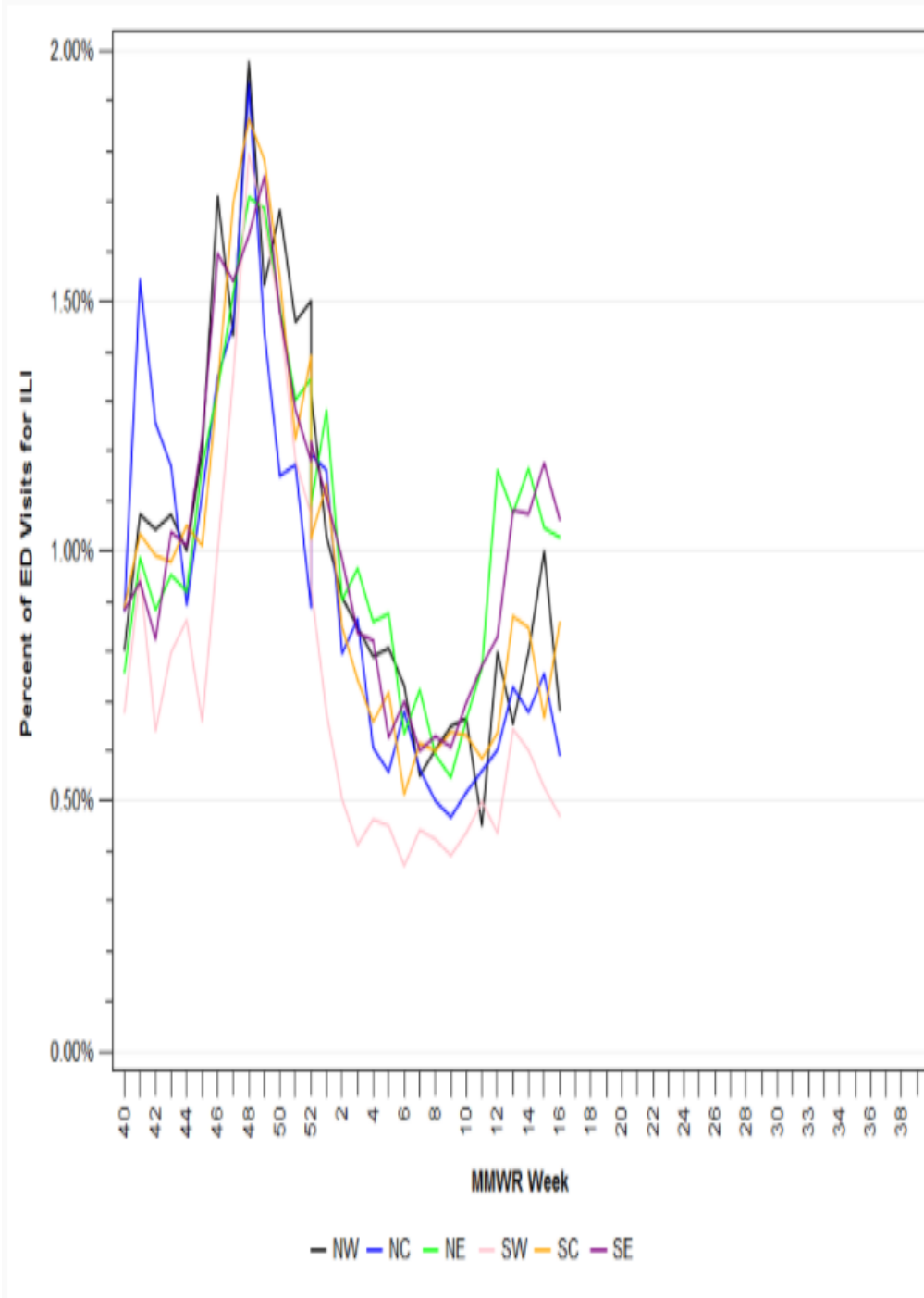
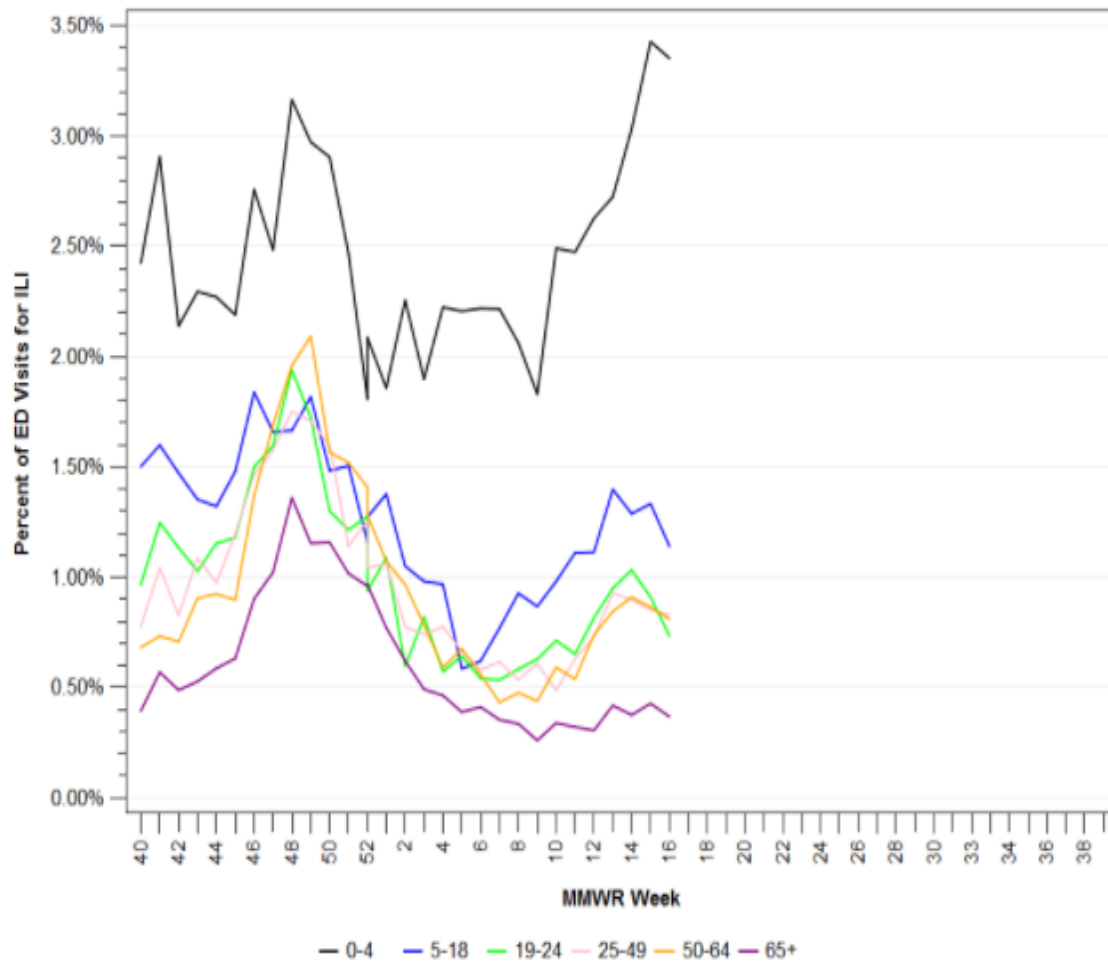


Figure 6: season-to-date Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Emergency Visits by age groups

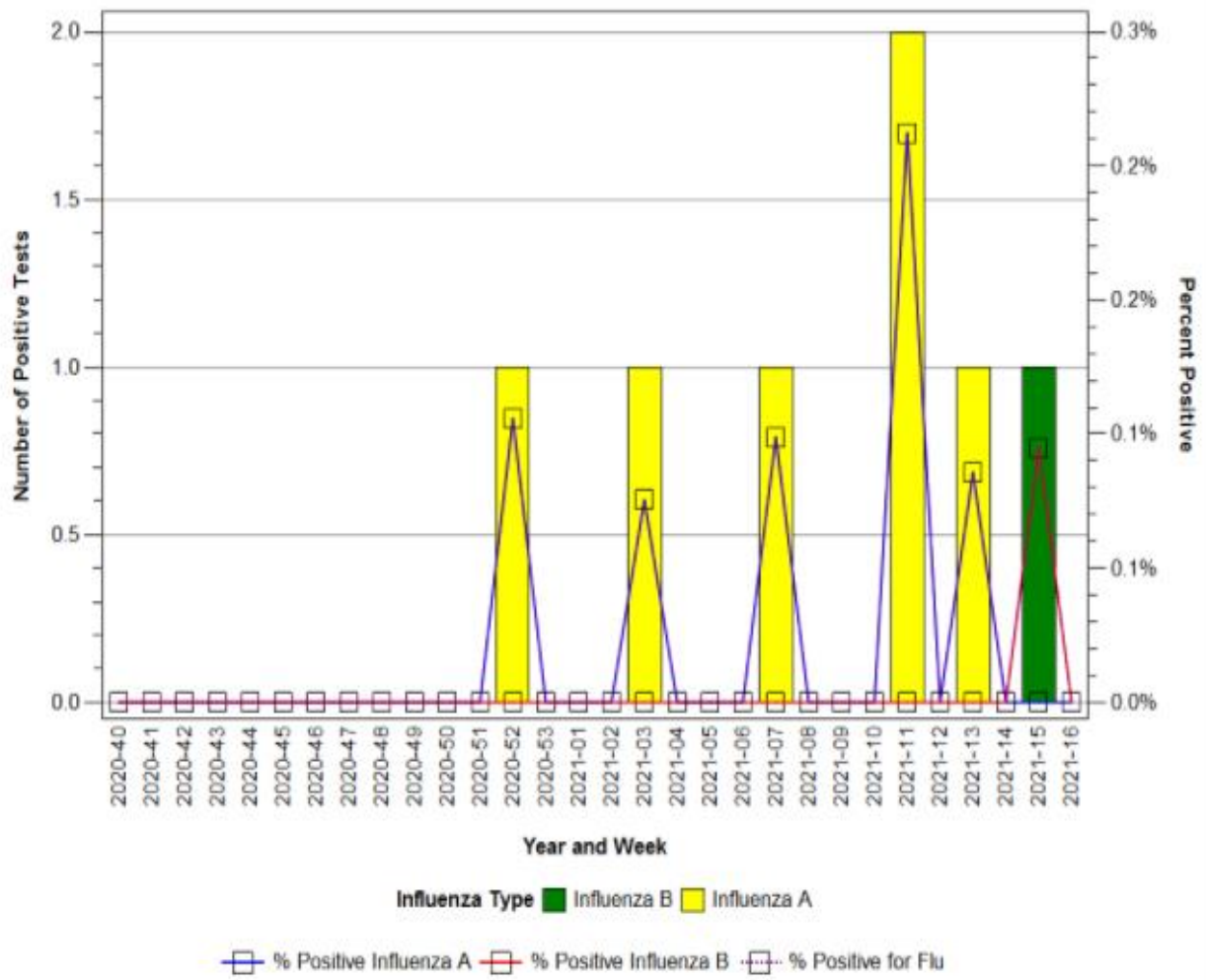


World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory & Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) Collaborating Laboratories

Thirteen clinical virology laboratories in Pa. are WHO and/or NREVSS collaborating laboratories for influenza surveillance.

These labs report weekly the number of respiratory specimens tested and the number positive for influenza types A and B to CDC. Some labs also report the influenza A subtype (H1 or H3) and influenza B lineage (Victoria or Yamagata). Because denominator data is provided, the weekly percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza is calculated.

**Figure 7: Influenza Test Results Reported to the National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS)
Select Pennsylvania Laboratories, Season to date**



Appendix J

Guidance for Organizing Large Events and Gatherings



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

COVID-19

[Cases & Data](#)
[Work & School](#)
[Healthcare Workers](#)
[Health Depts](#)
[Science](#)
[More](#)

Guidance for Organizing Large Events and Gatherings

Updated Apr. 27, 2021

[Languages](#) ▾

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Summary of Recent Changes

Updates as of April 27, 2021

Key Points

- Avoid large events and gatherings, when possible.
- Consider the level of risk when deciding to host an event.
- Promote healthy behaviors and maintain healthy environments to reduce risk when large events and gatherings are held.
- Be prepared if someone gets sick during or after the event.

COVID-19 Cases are Extremely High. Avoid Events and Gatherings.

COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths [are extremely high across the United States](#). To decrease your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19, CDC recommends that you [do not visit with people who do not live with you](#) at this time. **Attending events and gatherings increases your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Stay home to [protect yourself and others](#) from COVID-19.**

Risk Factors to Consider

Several factors can contribute to the likelihood of attendees getting and spreading COVID-19 at large events. In combination, the following factors will create higher or lower amounts of risk:

- **Number of COVID-19 cases in your community**—High or increasing levels of COVID-19 cases in the event location or the locations the attendees are coming from increase the risk of infection and spread among attendees. Relevant data can often be found on the local [health department](#) website or on CDC's [COVID Data Tracker County View](#).
- **Exposure during travel**—Airports, airplanes, bus stations, buses, train stations, trains, public transport, gas stations, and rest stops are all places where physical distancing may be challenging and ventilation may be poor.
- **Setting of the event**—Indoor events, especially in places with poor ventilation, pose more risk than outdoor events.
- **Length of the event**—Events that last longer pose more risk than shorter events. Being within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more (over a 24-hour period) greatly increases the risk of becoming infected and requires [quarantine](#).
- **Number and crowding of people at the event** – Events with more people increase the likelihood of being exposed. The size of the event should be determined based on whether attendees from different households can stay at least [6 feet \(2 arm lengths\)](#). Physical distancing at events can reduce transmission risk—for example, blocking off seats or modifying room layouts.
- **Behavior of attendees during an event**— Events where people engage in behaviors such as interacting with others from outside their own household, singing, shouting, not maintaining physical distancing, or not wearing masks consistently and correctly, can increase risk.


Gatherings

CDC continues to recommend avoiding large events and gatherings. Currently, CDC does not provide numbers to define small and large events.

Large gatherings bring together many people from multiple households in a private or public space. Large gatherings are often planned events with a large number of guests and invitations. They sometimes involve lodging, event staff, security, tickets, and long-distance travel. [CDC's large events guidance](#) might apply to events such as conferences, trade shows, sporting events, festivals, concerts, or large weddings and parties.

Small gatherings are informal in nature and may occur with family and friends you regularly socialize with, often at someone's residence. They typically do not involve long distance travel. [Small gathering guidance](#) might be more appropriate for social gatherings that are more intimate with close friends and family, such as small holiday parties, family dinners, and small special celebrations.

CDC offers the following guidance to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Event planners should work with [state and local health officials](#) to implement this guidance, adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community. This guidance is meant to supplement—**not replace**—any state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which gatherings must comply.


After reviewing this guidance, large event planners, operators, and administrators can use [CDC's Events and Gatherings Readiness and Planning Tool](#)  [360 KB, 10 pages] to determine their level of readiness to implement mitigation and safety measures. Organizers should continue to assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone or cancel large events and gatherings, or significantly reduce the number of attendees for events. If organizers are unable to put safety measures in place during large events and gatherings, they may choose instead to host a virtual event.

Promoting Healthy Behaviors that Reduce Spread

Event planners should consider implementing strategies to encourage behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 among staff and attendees.

- **Stay Home when Appropriate**
 - Educate event staff and attendees about when they should [stay home](#).
 - Advise [event staff and attendees to stay home](#) if they have tested positive for COVID-19, are waiting for COVID-19 test results, have COVID-19 [symptoms](#), or if they have had [close contact](#) with a person who has tested positive for or who has symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Develop policies that strongly encourage event staff who are sick to stay at home without fear of reprisal, and ensure staff are aware of these policies.
 - Consider developing flexible refund policies for attendees for events that involve a participation fee. See additional information about Communication, Leave (Time off) Policies, Back-up Staffing, and more in sections below.
 - CDC criteria can help inform staff about when it is okay to end isolation or quarantine:
 - [If they have been sick with COVID-19](#)
 - [If they tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms](#)
 - [If they have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19](#)
 - CDC recommends conducting health checks such as temperature screening and other symptom checking of staff and attendees in a way that is safe and respectful, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. It is important to keep in mind that temperature screening and screening of symptoms alone may not prevent someone from attending the event who has COVID-19.
- **Physical (Social) Distancing**
 - Adjust the size of an event based on the ability of attendees from different households to stay [6 feet \(2 arm lengths\) apart](#).
 - Remind attendees upon arrival to stay at least 6 feet away from people who don't live with them.
 - Discourage attendees and staff from greeting others with physical contact (for example, handshakes). Include this reminder on signs about physical distancing.
 - Find additional information below about how to modify layouts and maintain healthy environments.


- **Masks**

- Require that staff and attendees wear [well-fitting masks](#) that fit completely over their nose and mouth. Make a plan beforehand for how compliance will be monitored and ensured.
- Encourage attendees ahead of the event to bring and use [masks](#) at the event. Consider having masks on-hand to provide to staff and attendees who do not bring their own.
- Advise staff and attendees that [masks](#) should **not** be placed on babies or children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The following categories of people are exempt from the requirement to wear a mask:
 - A child under the age of 2 years.
 - A person with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, for reasons related to the disability.
 - A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the workplace [risk assessment](#) .


- **Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

- Require staff and attendees to [wash their hands](#) frequently (for example, before, during, and after taking tickets, or after touching garbage) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence.
- If soap and water are not readily available, staff and attendees can use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub their hands until dry.
- Encourage guests to avoid singing or shouting, especially indoors. If possible, keep music levels down so people don't have to shout or speak loudly to be heard.

- **Adequate Supplies**

- Ensure that you have adequate supplies to support [healthy hygiene](#)  [290 KB, 2 pages] Supplies include soap, water, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, a way to dry hands (e.g., paper towels, hand dryer), tissues, disinfectant wipes, masks (as feasible), and no-touch trash cans.



- **Signs and Messages**

- Post [signs](#) in highly visible locations (for example, at entrances, in restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to [stop the spread](#)  [468 KB, 1 page] of germs by [properly wearing a mask](#), [physical distancing](#), and [washing hands](#).
- Broadcast regular [announcements](#) on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on public address systems.
- Include messages (for example, [videos](#)) about behaviors that prevent spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff, vendors, and attendees (such as on the invitation, on the event website, and through event [social media accounts](#)).
- Consider developing signs and messages in multiple languages and formats (for example, large print, braille, American Sign Language) for people who have limited vision or are blind or people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - Learn more about reaching people of diverse languages and cultures by visiting: [Know Your Audience](#).
- Find freely available CDC print and digital resources about COVID-19 on [CDC's communications resources](#) main page.


Maintaining Healthy Environments

Event planners should consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy environments.

- **Cleaning and Disinfection**

- Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces within the venue before the event, at least daily, and as much as possible—for example, door handles, sink handles, grab bars, hand railings, and cash registers.
 - When choosing disinfectants, use products from [EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19](#) .
- Clean shared objects frequently, based on level of use—for example, payment terminals, tables, countertops, bars, and condiment holders.
- Consider closing areas such as drinking fountains that cannot be adequately cleaned during an event.
- Plan for and enact these cleaning routines when renting event space and ensure that other groups who may use your facilities follow these routines.
- Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#)  to avoid harm to staff and other people. Always read and follow label instructions for each product, and store products securely away from children.
- Cleaning and disinfection products should not be used near children. Staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent attendees or themselves from inhaling toxic vapors.
- Use disposable gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash.
 - After using disposable gloves, throw them out in a lined trash can.
 - Do not disinfect or reuse the gloves.
 - [Wash hands](#) after removing gloves.

- **Restrooms**

- Consider limiting the number of people who occupy the restroom at one time to allow for physical distancing.
- Ensure that people standing in line can maintain a 6-foot distance from one another. It may be helpful to post signs or markers to help attendees maintain the appropriate physical distance of at least 6 feet.
- Ensure that open restrooms are:
 - Operational with functional toilets.
 - [Cleaned and disinfected](#) regularly, particularly high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, stall doors, doorknobs, countertops, diaper changing tables, and light switches.
 - Clean and disinfect restrooms more often after times of heavy use with products from [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) .
 - Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep products away from children.
 - Adequately stocked with supplies for handwashing, including soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), a way to dry hands (e.g., paper towels, hand dryer), tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
 - If you are providing portable toilets, also provide portable handwashing stations and ensure that they remain stocked throughout the duration of the event. If possible, provide hand sanitizer stations that are touch-free.

- **Ventilation**

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to staff or attendees (for example, risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms).
- If portable ventilation equipment like fans are used, take steps to minimize air from them blowing from one person directly at another person to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses.
- If setting up outdoor seating under a pop-up, open air tent, ensure guests are still seated at least 6 feet apart. Enclosed 4-wall tents will have less air circulation than open air tents. If outdoor temperature or weather forces you to put up the tent sidewalls, consider leaving one or more sides open or rolling up the bottom 12 inches of each sidewall to enhance ventilation while still providing a wind break.
- For additional information on increasing ventilation, visit CDC guidance on [Ventilation in Buildings](#) or [Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#).

- **Water Systems**

- To minimize the risk of [Legionnaires' disease](#) and other diseases associated with water, [take steps](#) to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, sink faucets, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown. Consider providing bottled water or encouraging staff and attendees to bring their own.

- **Modified Layouts**

- Prioritize outdoor activities, such as drive-in concerts.
- Offer online attendance options in addition to in-person attendance to help reduce the number of in-person attendees.
- Limit in-person attendance or seating capacity to allow for [physical distancing](#), or host smaller events in larger spaces.
- Use multiple entrances and exits and discourage crowded waiting areas.
- Change the seating layout or availability of seating so that people can remain at least 6 feet apart.
- If you are providing portable toilets, consider increasing the number provided and increase the spacing between them to reduce the likelihood of long lines in which it will be difficult to engage in physical distancing.
- Eliminate lines or queues. If that is not possible, encourage people to stay at least 6 feet apart by providing [signs](#) or other visual cues such as tape or chalk marks.

- **Physical Barriers and Guides**

- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that people remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (for example, guides for creating one-way routes).
- Establish pedestrian traffic flow plans to reduce bottlenecks and ensure the ability to maintain physical distancing at the event.
- Consider using multiple, single-direction entrances and exits and discourage crowded areas where it may be difficult to maintain appropriate distance. Utilize separate event entry and exit points if feasible.
- Consider making walkways one-way or clearly divided for bi-directional movement. Provide appropriate directional signs and markers, such as those that are freestanding or on the ground, to indicate the appropriate direction of pedestrian movement.
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, in areas where it is difficult for people to remain at least 6 feet apart. Barriers can be useful at cash registers and other areas where maintaining a distance of 6 feet is difficult.

- **Communal Spaces**

- Stagger use of shared indoor spaces such as dining halls, game rooms, and lounges as much as possible and [clean and disinfect](#) them between uses.
- Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks and beds, especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.
- For more information on communal spaces in event housing (for example, laundry rooms, shared bathrooms, and recreation areas) follow [CDC's guidance for Shared or Congregate Housing](#).

- **Food Service**

- Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that handling food or eating is associated with directly spreading COVID-19. However, people sharing utensils and congregating around food service areas can pose a risk. Limit food or beverage service in areas in which people are more likely to congregate as that may encourage unmasked interactions.
- If the event includes food service, refer to CDC's COVID-19 considerations for [restaurants and bars](#).
- Use touchless payment options as much as possible, if available.
- Ask customers and staff to exchange cash or card payments by placing them on a receipt tray or on the counter rather than by hand to avoid direct hand-to-hand contact.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces such as pens, counters, or hard surfaces between use and encourage patrons to use their own pens.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that people remain at least 6 feet apart when waiting in line to order or pick up.
- If a cafeteria or group dining room is used, serve individually plated meals or grab-and-go options, and hold activities in separate areas.
- Use disposable food service items including utensils and dishes. If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.
- People should [wash their hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.
- Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars, and drink stations. Consider having pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee.

- **Shared Objects**


- Discourage people from sharing items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect.
- Limit any sharing of food, tools, equipment, or supplies by staff members.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible; otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of staff members or attendees at a time, and [clean and disinfect](#) them between use.

Maintaining Healthy Operations

Event organizers and staff may consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy operations.

- **Regulatory Awareness**
 - Be aware of local or state regulatory agency policies related to group gatherings to determine if events can be held.
- **Protections for Event Staff and Attendees who are at Higher Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19**
 - Offer options for staff at [higher risk for severe illness](#) (including older adults and people of any age with underlying medical conditions) that limit their exposure risk. For example, offer telework and modified job responsibilities for staff, such as setting up for the event rather than working at the registration desk.
 - Replace in-person meetings with video- or tele-conference calls whenever possible.
 - Offer options for attendees at [higher risk for severe illness](#) to limit their exposure risk (for example, virtual attendance).
 - Consider limiting event attendance to staff and attendees who live in the local area (for example, community, city, town, or county) to reduce the risk of spreading the virus from areas with higher levels of COVID-19. If attendance is open to staff and guests from other communities, cities, town or counties, provide attendees with information about local [COVID-19 levels](#) so they can make an informed decision about participation. Encourage staff and attendees to check for any [travel restrictions](#) before traveling to the event.
 - Put policies in place to protect the privacy of people at [higher risk for severe illness](#) regarding their underlying medical conditions.
- **Limited, Staggered, or Rotated Shifts and Attendance Times**
 - Consider ways to significantly reduce the number of attendees.
 - Use flexible worksites (for example, telework) and flexible work hours (for example, staggered shifts) to help establish policies and practices for physical distancing of 6 feet between staff and attendees.
 - Stagger attendance times or offer expanded hours of operation with limited attendance at a given time to minimize the number of attendees at the venue.
- **Travel & Transit**
 - Encourage attendees traveling from another location to follow [CDC guidance for Travel During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).
 - Make attendees traveling by air from a foreign country aware of [CDC's requirement](#) to show a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before boarding a flight to the United States.
 - Encourage attendees to follow all state, territorial, tribal, and local requirements and [recommendations related to travel](#).

- Encourage the use of transportation options that minimize close contact with others (for example, walking or biking, driving or riding by car—alone or with household members only). Consider offering the following support:
 - Ask all to visit CDC guidance on how to [Protect Yourself When Using Transportation](#), including public transit.
 - Ensure all staff and attendees are aware of CDC's [requirement for masks](#) on public transportation traveling into, within, and out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs.
 - Allow staff to shift their hours so they can commute during less busy times.
 - Ask staff and attendees to [wash their hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as soon as possible after their trip.
- If transport vehicles like buses are used by the event staff, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff—for example, washing hands often, wearing masks, and maintaining physical distance of bus riders.
 - To clean and disinfect event buses, vans, or other vehicles see guidance for [bus transit operators](#) and [drivers for hire](#), and adapt as needed.
- Reconfigure parking lots to limit congregation points and ensure proper separation of vehicles (for example, closing every other parking space).
- **Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact**
 - Designate an administrator or office to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All staff and attendees should have information about who this person or office is and how to contact them.
- **Communication Systems**
 - Put systems in place to:
 - Encourage staff, attendees, and vendors to self-report to event officials or a COVID-19 point of contact if they:
 - Have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19
 - Have tested positive for COVID-19
 - Were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
 - Advise attendees and vendors prior to the event or gathering that they should not attend if they have tested positive for COVID-19, are waiting for COVID-19 test results, are showing COVID-19 [symptoms](#), or if they have had [close contact](#) with a person who has tested positive for or who has symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Communicate with vendors to ensure they are aware of COVID-19 safety protocols being followed at the event.
 - Notify staff, attendees, and the public of cancellations and restrictions in place to limit people's exposure to COVID-19 (for example, limited hours of operation, or expanded hours with limited attendance at a given time).
 - Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to event staff and attendees. Tailor information so that it is easily understood by various audiences and is available in alternative languages and accessible formats (for example, braille or larger print).

- Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to event staff and attendees. Tailor information so that it is easily understood by various audiences and is available in alternative languages and accessible formats (for example, braille or larger print).
 - Learn more about how to communicate with people of diverse languages and cultures by visiting: [Know Your Audience](#). You also can learn more about communicating to staff in a crisis at: [Crisis Communications Plan](#) 
- **Leave (Time Off) Policies**
 - Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices that are not punitive and enable staff to stay home when they are sick, have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, are [caring for someone who is sick](#), or who must stay home with children if schools or child care centers are closed.
 - Examine and revise policies for leave, telework, and compensation as needed.
 - Ensure that any relevant policies are communicated to staff.
- **Back-Up Staffing Plan**
 - Cross-train staff and create a roster of trained back-up staff in the event of absenteeism.
 - Develop policies for return-to-work and event facilities after a staff person has COVID-19. CDC's [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#) and [quarantine](#) can inform these policies.
- **Staff Training**
 - Train staff on all safety protocols. Consider using CDC's [Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#) as a guide.
 - Conduct training virtually to ensure that [physical distancing](#) is maintained during training.
 - If training needs to be done in person, maintain physical distancing. Virtual training is clearly better for infection control when feasible.
- **Recognize Signs and Symptoms**
 - If feasible, conduct daily health checks (for example, temperature screening and [symptom checking](#)) of staff and attendees safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
 - Event administrators may consider using examples of screening methods in CDC's [General Business FAQs](#) as a guide.
- **Sharing Facilities**
 - Encourage any organizations that share or use the same venue to also follow this guidance and limit shared use, if possible.
- **Support Coping and Resilience**
 - Promote the ability of staff to eat healthy foods, exercise, get enough sleep, find time to unwind, and [cope with stress](#).
 - Encourage staff to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.
 - Consider posting signs for the national distress hotline:
 - 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746;
 - The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224; and
 - The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

- **Lessons Learned After the Event**

- Meet with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team for your venue to discuss and note lessons learned.
- Determine ways to improve planning and implementation processes if the event will happen again.
- Update your plans regularly according to the state and local situation and orders.

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In Case Someone Gets Sick

Event planners should consider several strategies to implement in case someone gets sick.


- **Advise Sick People of Home Isolation Criteria**

- Communicate to sick staff members that they should not return to work until they have met CDC's [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).

- **Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick**

- Immediately separate staff and attendees with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) (for example, fever, cough, shortness of breath) at the event. People who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow CDC guidance on [how to isolate](#).
- People who have had [close contact](#) with a person who has [symptoms](#) should be separated, sent home, and advised to follow CDC's guidance (see "Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts" below). People who have been exposed to someone with known or suspected COVID-19 should follow CDC guidance on [When to Quarantine](#).
- Work with venue administrators, local officials, and healthcare providers to identify an isolation area to separate anyone who has COVID-like symptoms. Event healthcare providers should use [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people. See: [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#).
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone sick or identified as a close contact to their home or hotel room or to a healthcare facility. If you are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, call first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19. Other transportation should be by private vehicle. Public transportation should not be used.



- **Clean and Disinfect**

- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#) them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable).
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure [safe and correct](#) use and storage of [cleaning](#)  and disinfection products, including storing them securely away from children.

- **Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts**

- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, event planners should notify [local health officials](#) of any case of COVID-19.
- Advise those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and [quarantine](#), self-monitor for symptoms, and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.
- Consider keeping a list of attendees and their contact information for potential future [contact tracing](#) needs.

What to do if anyone becomes sick after hosting or attending a gathering or event


- If a staff member or an attendee develops [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#), such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, follow [steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#) and the [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](#). Collaboration with the [local health department](#) is important to facilitate [case investigation and contact tracing](#) for event attendees. Also, immediately contact and notify the people they were in close contact with, the event organizers, and the [local health department](#).
- If a staff member or an attendee is waiting for COVID-19 test results, [follow these important steps](#)  [223 KB, 2 pages] to help stop the spread of COVID-19.
- If you are a staff member or an attendee who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, a [public health worker may contact you](#) to check on your health and ask you who you have been in contact with and where you've spent your time. Your information will be confidential. Learn more about [what to expect with contact tracing](#)  [1.8 MB, 2 pages].

Contact Tracing

[Contact tracing](#) is key to slowing the spread of COVID-19 and helps protect the community by:

- Letting people know they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and should monitor their health for signs and [symptoms](#) of COVID-19.
- Helping people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 get tested.
- Asking people to [self-isolate](#) if they have COVID-19 or develop symptoms of COVID-19 or to [self-quarantine](#) if they are a close contact.

Event organizers should collaborate with their local health department to facilitate case investigation and contact tracing for event attendees, as indicated. Learn more about contact tracing and what to expect at [CDC's Contact Tracing website](#).

After reviewing the guidance listed on this page, event planners and administrators can use [CDC's Events and Gatherings Readiness and Planning Tool](#)  [555 KB, 9 Pages] to protect staff, volunteers, and attendees.

Appendix K

Post-COVID Conditions



Post-COVID Conditions

Updated Apr. 8, 2021 Languages ▼ Print

Although most people with COVID-19 get better within weeks to months of illness, some do not. CDC and experts around the world are working to learn more about short- and long-term health effects associated with COVID-19, who gets them, and why. CDC uses the term **post-COVID conditions** to describe health issues that persist **more than four weeks** after first being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

Experts do not know why or how often some people experience post-COVID conditions. Other infectious diseases can also cause longer-term symptoms for a variety of reasons. Some post-COVID conditions are likely to be similar to those seen in other infectious diseases, but others may be more specific to COVID-19. Some post-COVID conditions involve symptoms similar to those caused by other health problems. Scientists are actively investigating the causes of post-COVID conditions.

Types of Post-COVID Conditions

Long COVID

Long COVID is a range of symptoms that can last weeks or months after first being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 or can appear weeks after infection. Long COVID can happen to anyone who has had COVID-19, even if the illness was mild, or they had no symptoms. People with long COVID report experiencing different combinations of the following symptoms:

- Tiredness or fatigue
- Difficulty thinking or concentrating (sometimes referred to as “brain fog”)
- Headache
- Loss of smell or taste
- Dizziness on standing
- Fast-beating or pounding heart (also known as heart palpitations)
- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Cough
- Joint or muscle pain
- Depression or anxiety
- Fever
- Symptoms that get worse after physical or mental activities

Multiorgan Effects of COVID-19

Multiorgan effects can affect most, if not all, body systems including heart, lung, kidney, skin, and brain functions. Multiorgan effects can also include conditions that occur after COVID-19, like [multisystem inflammatory syndrome \(MIS\)](#) and autoimmune conditions. MIS is a condition where different body parts can become swollen. Autoimmune conditions happen when your immune system attacks healthy cells in your body by mistake, causing painful swelling in the affected parts of the body.

It is unknown how long multiorgan system effects might last and whether the effects could lead to chronic health conditions.

Effects of COVID-19 Treatment or Hospitalization

Post-COVID conditions also can include the longer-term effects of COVID-19 treatment or hospitalization. Some of these longer-term effects are similar to those related to hospitalization for other respiratory infections or other conditions.

Effects of COVID-19 treatment and hospitalization can also include post-intensive care syndrome (PICS), which refers to health effects that remain after a critical illness. These effects can include severe weakness and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD involves long-term reactions to a very stressful event.

Treatment

There are ways to help manage post-COVID conditions, and many patients with these symptoms are getting better with time. If you think you have a post-COVID condition, talk to your healthcare provider about options for managing or treating your symptoms and resources for support. Post-COVID care clinics are opening at medical centers across the United States to address patient needs.

The best way to prevent these long-term complications is to [prevent COVID-19](#)

Important Ways to Slow the Spread of COVID-19

- Wear [a mask that covers your nose and mouth](#) to help protect yourself and others.
- [Stay 6 feet apart from others](#) who don't live with you.
- Get a [COVID-19 vaccine](#) when it is available to you.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces.
- [Wash your hands often](#) with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

COVID-19 and Vaccination

CDC recommends that people be vaccinated regardless of whether they already had COVID-19. Learn more about [vaccination](#).


Although media articles have reported that some people with long COVID say their symptoms improved after being vaccinated, studies are needed to determine the effects of vaccination on post-COVID conditions.

What CDC is Doing

CDC continues to work to identify how common these longer-term effects are, who is most likely to get them, and whether symptoms eventually resolve. Multi-year studies are underway to further investigate post-COVID conditions. These studies will help us better understand post-COVID conditions and understand how to treat patients with these longer-term effects.

Appendix L

Visitor Restrictions at all Temple Health Hospital Campuses and Outpatient Offices




Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Latest Information for Patients and Visitors
(La más reciente información para pacientes y visitantes)

[READ NOW \(LEA AHORA\)](#)

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[KATZ SCHOOL OF MEDICINE](#)
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[RESEARCH](#)

Home > Information About Coronavirus (COVID-19) > Visitor Restrictions at All Temple Health Hospitals...

RESIZE TEXT A A

Visitor Restrictions at All Temple Health Hospital Campuses and Outpatient Offices

In response to the ongoing outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19), flu season, and to help keep our patients, their loved ones and our workforce safe, please review our latest visitor policy information. These restrictions apply to all Temple University Hospital campuses (including Main, Jeanes, Episcopal and Northeastern), Fox Chase Cancer Center, and all Temple and Fox Chase physician office locations.

- There will be NO inpatient visitation unless authorized by Administration. (See reasons for exception below.)
- There will be NO in-person visitation for COVID-positive patients.
- There will be NO visitors permitted in the Emergency Department treatment areas.
- There will be NO visitors permitted to accompany patients to outpatient appointments unless approved by Administration. This includes the Outpatient Fetal Center.
- Screening for COVID-19 of all visitors will occur at points of entry.
- We are not able to accept deliveries of flowers, balloons, gift-baskets clothing, food, beverages and other household items.

Visitation Exceptions (if an exception is made, only 1 person may visit):

- Cognitive or language impairment
- Pediatric patients
- Discharge teaching — must have prior approval from the clinical team
- Palliative care consultation
- End of life

Visitation for Maternity/Nursery Areas and Outpatient Fetal Center Appointments

- Visitation for Women's and Infants Division** — Infant Intensive Care Nursery (IICN), 3 West and Well Baby Nursery — is limited to 9:00 AM to 6:30 PM and 7:30 PM to 10:00 PM daily.
- IICN and Well Baby Nursery visitation is limited to mother and 1 other designated person (parent or support person) who may visit one at a time once per day.
- Only 1 visitor may be at the bedside at a time.** The 1 other designated person may wait on the 1st Floor in the hospital lobby or in their vehicle.
 - Both the mother and 1 other designated person may visit on the same day, but they must visit at different times.
 - Visitation remains to 1 visit per day per person.
- Utilization of FaceTime/Video Chat** — Due to the current visitation restrictions, we understand the use of technology to allow those close to you to see your baby.
 - You may utilize FaceTime/Video Chat when visiting your infant. However, calls must be kept to 5 minutes total.
 - Keeping the calls to 5 minutes or less will allow us to continue providing a calm and healing environment for your baby and the other babies in the unit.
 - Please discuss with your baby's nurse prior to initiating a call to ensure adequate privacy for you and your infant, as well as the other infants and families in the unit.
- There will be NO visitation allowed to Outpatient Fetal Center appointments.

We will continue to monitor this situation. The need for visitor restrictions will be re-evaluated regularly.

Please call 215-707-2273 if you have any questions about the visitation policy.

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Appendix M

Tower Health Visitor Guidelines



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Visitor Guidelines

Tower Health is committed to protecting the safety of our patients, staff, and community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Effective February 17, 2021, visitors will be allowed in Reading Hospital facilities **only under the circumstances** described below.

General Guidelines

- The patient's care team will decide on a case-by-case basis whether the visitor is clinically appropriate, including when the visitor is a family member supporting the patient by providing care. In the event there is a conflict about whether a visitor may enter, clinical judgment will prevail.
- All approved visitors will be screened in accordance with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH). Screening will occur at all location entry points.
- Your health, safety, and comfort are our top priorities. These restrictions will be continuously evaluated as the COVID-19 situation evolves and are subject to change based on guidance from the CDC and PA DOH.
- To facilitate the visitation process, we are asking all visitors to return their visitors badge at any lobby upon departure.

Inpatient Visitation

Adult inpatient units:

- One visitor for the entire duration of a patient's stay.
- Two visitors for end-of-life patients.
- Two visitors for COVID-19 positive patients at the end-of-life.
- Visitors for COVID-19 positive patients who are not end-of-life are permitted only by exception based on clinical judgment.
- Patients with disabilities (including those who are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19) may have one designated support person or guardian stay with them during hospital visiting hours, and one visitor may remain overnight if the hospital can accommodate them.

NICU, inpatient pediatric units, emergency departments, and physician practices:

- Parents and guardians of pediatric and NICU patients are permitted.
- Identified times for NICU visitation may be implemented, and the number of parents visiting NICU at same time may be limited based on the number of patients and capacity to assure social distancing and protection of patients, staff, and visitors.

Maternity units:

- One designated support person is permitted.
- Doulas are considered part of the care team and are permitted.

Emergency departments and psychiatric emergency departments:

- One visitor per patient in the emergency department ONLY when the patient is a minor (under 18), the patient has a disability, or the visitor is the patient's communicator and in specific cases of interpreter need.

Reading Hospital Rehabilitation at Wyomissing:

- No visitors, except those deemed medically necessary, will be permitted.
- No children under the age of 18 or pets will be permitted.

Religious Services:

Patients who are not suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 may receive religious services from clergy of their choice at any reasonable time if it can be provided without disruption to care.

Ambulatory Care Setting Visitation

Surgical and outpatient procedure departments:

- One support person may accompany patient for outpatient and same-day surgery or procedure.
- If the patient is to be admitted after surgery, the support person will be permitted to visit for the duration of the patient's stay.

Physician practices, urgent care practices, and ambulatory surgery locations:



- One designated support person is permitted.
- No switching of support persons is permitted during the visit.
- Support persons must remain in the waiting area unless: the patient is a minor (under 18), the patient has a disability, or the visitor is the patient's communicator and in specific cases of interpreter need.

In an abundance of caution, we have also taken the following precautionary measures:

- *All activities that invite community members to any Tower Health facility for events or educational programs are cancelled until further notice.*
- *Volunteer services will be restricted to only those that are clinically required.*
- *Permitted vendors will be restricted to only the clinically necessary, including those working on active projects, repairs, technology, or equipment.*
- *Delivery of food, flowers, or other items from outside sources will be restricted*

The health, safety, and comfort of our employees and patients remain our top priorities. This policy will be continuously evaluated as the COVID-19 situation evolves and is subject to change based on guidance from the CDC and PA DOH.

IRB Approval



Elle Rulavage

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New Submission

Study Details

Submissions

Approved

IRB-FY20-21-433

Next Generation Ministry

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Approval Date:	Expiration Date:	Organization:	Active Submissions:
12-15-2020	N/A	School of Divinity Dept	N/A
Admin Check-In Date:	Closed Date:	Current Policy	Sponsors:
N/A	N/A	Post-2018 Rule	N/A

Key Contacts

Attachments

Team Member	Role	Number	Email
Elle Rulavage	Principal Investigator	4345822000	erulavage@liberty.edu
Elle Rulavage	Primary Contact	4345822000	erulavage@liberty.edu
Paul Simpson	Co-Principal Investigator		pmsimpson@liberty.edu
Paul Simpson	Co-Principal Investigator		pmsimpson@liberty.edu

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

December 15, 2020

Elle Rulavage
Paul Simpson

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY20-21-433 Next Generation Ministry

Dear Elle Rulavage and Paul Simpson,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

(2) Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office