



A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Frank J. Beard

Resident Bishop, Illinois Area,
The United Methodist Church

Announcement to IGRC - Jan. 12, 2021

Bishop Frank J. Beard and members of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference Extended Cabinet are announcing today the lifting of suspension of in-person worship in churches and moving back to regional mitigation based upon four metrics:

- Test positivity rate of less than 12 percent, based upon a 7-day rolling average
- Hospital bed availability of more than 20 percent in Intensive Care Units, based upon a 3-day rolling average
- Hospital medical and surgical bed availability of more than 20 percent, based upon a 3-day rolling average
- A decrease in Covid-19 patients in the hospital, based upon a 7-day rolling average



As a result, based upon today's metrics in these four areas, Regions 2, 3 and 7 will move from Tier 3 mitigations to Tier 2 effective immediately. Regions 4, 5 and 6 remain in Tier 3 mitigations until the metrics meet guidelines outlined in the IGRC *Pressing On document* found at:

<https://www.igrc.org/coronavirus>

For those moving to Tier 2:

- For regular worship gatherings, churches are strongly recommended but not required to limit their gatherings to 25 people or 25% of the room capacity, whichever is smaller
- For all other gatherings, including funerals and weddings, gatherings should be limited to 10 people or less
- Church buildings can open with staff working the offices
- In all situations, masks are required without a doctor's certification that the person is exempt and social distancing of 6 feet or more should be observed.

For those remaining in Tier 3:

- For the good of the congregation and community, churches are very strongly recommended not to hold in-person worship gatherings indoors or outdoors
- Churches may gather for Drive In worship services in groups of any size with proper distancing (See guidelines in this document for details)
- Church buildings should close, and staff should work from home, except for essential and minimum basic operations that need to be conducted in the building

Information on the four metrics per region may be obtained by visiting: <https://dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics> Because the metrics are fluid, it is possible that a region that moves from one level of mitigation, may return to that stricter mitigations if regions begin showing figures that no longer meet the metrics. These metrics are updated daily and it is advised to check them regularly for the latest information.

Bishop Beard announced Nov. 17 the suspension of all in-person worship through Dec. 13, in an effort to mitigate a pandemic surge. On Dec. 9, Bishop Beard extended the suspension indefinitely.

Current metrics by region as of Tuesday, Jan. 12 are as follows:

Region 2 – Moves to Tier 2 mitigation

- 11 consecutive days of positivity rates below 12 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 11 consecutive days of ICU beds availability of greater than 20 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 11 consecutive days of medical/surgical bed availability of greater than 20 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 9 days of Covid-19 patient decreases – MEETS GUIDELINE

Region 3 – Moves to Tier 2 mitigation

- 11 consecutive days of positivity rates below 12 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 4 consecutive days of ICU beds availability of greater than 20 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 11 consecutive days of medical/surgical bed availability of greater than 20 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 9 days of Covid-19 patient decreases – MEETS GUIDELINE

Region 4 – Remains in Tier 3 mitigation

- 1 days of positivity rates below 12 percent – DOES NOT MEET GUIDELINE
- 5 consecutive days of ICU bed availability under 20 percent – DOES NOT MEET GUIDELINE
- 11 consecutive days of medical/surgical bed availability under 20 percent – DOES NOT MEET GUIDELINE
- 4 days of Covid-19 patient decreases – DOES NOT MEET GUIDELINE

Region 5 – Remains in Tier 3 mitigation

- 8 consecutive days of positivity rates below 12 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 1 day of ICU bed availability under 20 percent – DOES NOT MEET GUIDELINE
- 11 consecutive days of medical/surgical bed availability greater than 20 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 6 days of Covid-19 patient decreases – DOES NOT MEET GUIDELINE

Region 6 – Remains in Tier 3 mitigation

- 11 consecutive days of positivity rates below 12 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 11 consecutive days of ICU bed availability greater than 20 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 1 day of medical/surgical bed availability greater than 20 percent – DOES NOT MEET GUIDELINE
- 7 days of Covid-19 patient increases – DOES NOT MEET GUIDELINE

Region 7 – Moves to Tier 2 mitigation

- 11 consecutive days of positivity rates below 12 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 11 consecutive days of ICU bed availability greater than 20 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 11 consecutive days of medical/surgical bed availability greater than 20 percent – MEETS GUIDELINE
- 8 consecutive days of Covid-19 patient decreases – MEETS GUIDELINE

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