

When Can the Congregations Gather Again for Worship?

 psd-lcms.org/post/when-can-the-congregations-gather-again-for-worship

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This is an important and frequently asked question. We are all anxious to restart and frustrated that it is taking so long. Many are hoping that District/Synod will simply provide the magic bullet that grants permission to reopen churches even without the support of local authorities.

With three states and three governors in the PSD, there are three unique plans underway to reopen the states. The Arizona governor's ruling allowed (from the beginning) for more activity by churches than either Nevada or California. Some counties and cities in California, Nevada, and Arizona, which have only minimal COVID impact will simply open more quickly. The urban areas will take longer. We all understand the challenge.

The answer is simple and consistent with what we have said from the beginning:

What do YOUR local civil authorities say you can or cannot do? Please follow it.

Our position (LCMS and PSD) is that this is not an Acts 5:29 issue ("We must obey God rather than man."). It is a 4th Commandment and Romans 13 reality to honor and obey those who are in authority over us. It positions us to take a Philippians 2:1-4 attitude by which the church puts the needs of others first, serving the greater community by delaying worship gatherings to ensure health and safety, rather than to push our agenda to gather for worship before it is safe.

Please know that you are in my prayers as your congregation makes decisions for your context.

President Gibson