

The Nass Report



Wisconsin State Government and the 11th Senate District

April 9, 2020

Governor Forced to Confirm Churches and Religious Entities are Essential

Local Public Health Officials and Law Enforcement May Not Make Up Own Rules

After days of confusion caused by inappropriate interpretations coming from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, county health departments and local law enforcement, Governor Evers was forced to confirm that his Safer At Home Order does in fact classify churches and religious entities as essential services and organizations.

From Governor Evers' statement (April 9, 2020) confirming what churches and religious entities are permitted to do under the public health order:

Under the governor's order, churches and religious entities are considered essential.

Any gathering must include fewer than 10 people at a time if it occurs in a room or confined space. Thus, churches and religious entities wishing to conduct services while still complying with the governor's order may, for example, conduct services via:

- Parking lots with congregants staying in cars, avoiding person-to-person contact;
- Streaming online; and
- Having small gatherings (fewer than 10 people in each room) with multiple services.

It is also legal for citizens to travel to church services and gatherings at religious entities that comply with provisions listed above.

Finally, local public health departments and law enforcement are prohibited from developing their own rules or interpretations of the state orders.

Sen. Steve Nass
State Capitol, Room 10 South
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707
Toll-Free (800) 578-1457 or (608) 266-2635

Sen.Nass@legis.wi.gov | [Website](#) | |