

**From:** Butler, Jay C. (CDC/DDID/OD)  
**To:** McQuiston, Jennifer H. (CDC/DDID/NCEZID/DHCPP)  
**Cc:** Fitter, David L. (CDC/DDPHSIS/CGH/GID); Eisenberg, Emily (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ID)  
**Subject:** Re: Faith-based guidance and COVID-19: A history  
**Date:** Sunday, May 24, 2020 7:46:38 AM

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Thank you, Jenni—I appreciate the additional information and so much hard work and midnight oil that went into developing a very good public health document under incredible time pressure, and in getting the original post up Friday with very little notice. I also appreciate everyone’s agile responsiveness in getting the WH version up ASAP last night, as we were directed to do. [REDACTED]

This is not good public health—I am very troubled on this Sunday morning that there will be people who will get sick and perhaps die because of what we were forced to do. Our team has done the good work, only to have it compromised.

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**From:** McQuiston, Jennifer H. (CDC/DDID/NCEZID/DHCPP) [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 24, 2020 7:14 AM  
**To:** Butler, Jay C. (CDC/DDID/OD)  
**Cc:** Fitter, David L. (CDC/DDPHSIS/CGH/GID); Eisenberg, Emily (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ID)  
**Subject:** RE: Faith-based guidance and COVID-19: A history

Thanks Jay. Appreciate your careful eyes on this, and recognizing that we have all been doing our best under crazy timelines. We truly were working hard to get out what was wanted and needed, and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Please be sure that Kyle knows we asked for and received a tracked changes version (provided again here), and that our reconciliation of revisions went from that. And that document [REDACTED]

My comments in red below.

CAPT Jennifer McQuiston, co-lead, Principal Deputy IM, CDC COVID-19 Response  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Butler, Jay C. (CDC/DDID/OD) [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 23, 2020 10:49 PM  
**To:** McQuiston, Jennifer H. (CDC/DDID/NCEZID/DHCPP) [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Fitter, David L. (CDC/DDPHSIS/CGH/GID) [REDACTED]; Eisenberg, Emily (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ID) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Faith-based guidance and COVID-19: A history

Thank you, Jenni. I have gone through the posted version and what was sent to us tonight as the cleared version, and I must admit, as someone who has been speaking with churches and pastors on this (and as someone who goes to church), I am not sure is see a public health reason to take down

and replace. I am not seeing some of what they described to me in the 6:45 call as being part of the posted guidance. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To my reading, most of the text matches verbatim. However, there are differences. Broadly, the differences that I see are:

- A couple of references to the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment in the WH version— [REDACTED]
- A recommendation to reduce lines and queues is not in the WH version. [REDACTED]
- All references to face coverings are missing in the WH version. [REDACTED]
- The posting had additional text on considering adding additional services to allow in-person worship with less crowding. [REDACTED]
- The posted version reads “consider suspending or at least decreasing use of a choir/musical ensemble...” [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] The posted version reads “Consistent with the community’s faith tradition, consider temporarily limiting the sharing of frequently touched objects that cannot be easily cleaned between persons, such as...shared cups, or other items received, passed or shared among congregates”. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- References to considering virtual events are absent from the WH version. [REDACTED]
- Reference to waiting 24 hours, if feasible, before cleaning are not in the WH version (although in many of our other documents on public buildings) [REDACTED]
- The bullet about these recommendations applying if the building is used for non-religious purposes is not present in the WH version. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- The brief section on the importance of continuing to provide spiritual and emotional care is not in the WH version. [REDACTED]

Thank you for providing the emails. Very helpful to me in understanding what happened. At least at this time, it seems that biggest challenge was that we were not allowed to follow our standard processes prior to posting, including sending all incorporated changes from other parts of HHS and OGC back up again, given that we were [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Yes, I think this is it exactly. We were working incredibly hard to respond to a rapid demand, and were trying to run multiple clearance streams in parallel, then provided no time to recheck or reshare across the clearance space. The version we had to post tonight does not have answers to a number of the questions that we have been asked by the faith community and lacks a number of recommendations for other settings to support reopening as safely as possible.

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**From:** McQuiston, Jennifer H. (CDC/DDID/NCEZID/DHCPP) [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Saturday, May 23, 2020 7:50 PM

**To:** Butler, Jay C. (CDC/DDID/OD) [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Faith-based guidance and COVID-19: A history

This is a note to outline what happened with the Faith-based guidance document for COVID-19.

1. CDC's original community mitigation guidance that was crafted in April, 2020 included guidance for churches and faith-based organizations. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] In May, [REDACTED] instructed CDC to publish that document in pieces with the faith-based guidance stripped out. On May 21, President Trump announced to the press that we would be publishing faith-based guidance. Quickly reverting to some of the original "stripped out" language as well as newer language in synch with CDC "Considerations" documents we had been crafting for various settings, we quickly crafted a new document and shared it up for White House clearance on May 21st.
2. *Because this happened so fast, CDC OGC and internal reviews continued in parallel to that process.* We received and incorporated additional revisions that had been requested from CDC OGC and internal SME and leadership review, including changing [REDACTED] per OGC request, adding the word [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] A history of those emails and decision processes are attached.
3. On May 22, the guidance came back as "cleared" via Kyle McGowan. We were instructed to hold on publishing until we were told otherwise. We requested and were provided a "tracked changes" version from the White House so we could add those changes to the master document we had already compiled with OGC and other changes. In the tracked version from the WH were a number of comments, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The CIAR TF, with PDIM approval, interpreted the "proposed" changes as optional.
4. President Trump announced that he was considering churches to be "essential businesses" at

a press conference at 2pm on 5/22. Scrambling to catch up, we posted the guidance around 3:15pm.

5. *\*Note, the timeline for this guidance was incredibly fast and did not permit usual clearance processes. Even after posting, we continued to receive revision requests from HHS, too late to incorporate. We made a bona fide effort to meet clearance request needs under the timeframe permitted.*

6. Around 6:45pm on 5/23, [REDACTED] and we were told to remove it and put up their approved version. At 7pm, I made the request of the web team.

CAPT Jennifer McQuiston, co-lead, Principal Deputy IM, CDC COVID-19 Response

[REDACTED]