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# Churches exempt from new COVID-19 restrictions, continue with precautions



Photo by: Mayo Davison



By: Mayo Davison

Posted at 8:35 PM, Nov 14, 2020 and last updated 8:53 PM, Nov 14, 2020

COLORADO SPRINGS — As a result of a Federal Court order in a case involving [two churches in the Denver area](#), El Paso County leaders say the capacity limit does not apply to houses of worship. However, social distancing requirements must still be met.

Local churches are responding differently to the new guidelines and restrictions. While some are implementing additional precautions and following the 25 percent capacity limit, others aren't making any new changes but emphasizing the importance of vitamins, exercise, and rest.

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Dr. Steve and Liz Holt of The Road @ Chapel Hills say they're not making any new changes with the move to [Safer at Home: Level 3](#).

"I believe strongly in letting people decide. I'm a liberty guy so some people wear masks and some people don't wear masks. We've really given people that freedom to choose if they want to be here," said Dr. Steve Holt, Senior Pastor and Founder of The Road @ Chapel Hills.

The church is operating at half capacity with in-person and virtual services. The couple says they've let their congregation decide how to worship.

"We've had the church open for six months, and we still have some people that haven't come. They're still streaming online, they don't feel comfortable being

anywhere near a crowd and that's okay," said Steve.

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"We still call them as much as they can and keep in touch," said Liz.

The couple says they believe strongly in building a healthy immune system. During the pandemic, they've emphasized the importance of building it up with vitamin C, D, and tonic water.

"At The Road @ Chapel Hills, we believe so strongly that we're supposed to be healthy. Mentally, spiritually, physically, and emotionally so we believe strongly in the immune system," said Steve. "So on a regular basis, right upfront, I bring up a doctor, I bring up someone who is an expert on the immune system. We talk a lot about the immune system and I think that's why we are so healthy."

Pat McGuire has been attending the church for over three years. When he tested positive for COVID-19, he says the church helped him recover.

"I got an outpouring of information. Liz sent me a whole list of Zinc and vitamin C and all that. I started taking all of that and recovered," said McGuire.

Pastor Michael Haley of The Cross Creek Church says while they want to exercise the right to gather, they also want to ensure the health and safety of

the community.

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"We are going to be taking extra guidelines, we've taken out over 100 chairs from last Sunday to this Sunday just so we have the opportunity to spread people out," said Haley. "Our kids' ministry has different toys for each service so that way during the week they can be sanitized," said Haley.

He says the church will continue with virtual and in-person services with only 25 percent capacity

"We spray every service and spread out the chairs. We're really encouraging our older congregants to stay home and people that don't like wearing a mask to stay home," said Haley. "Our middle school ministry that meets on Sunday nights, they're just meeting in community groups with their sixth-grade boys and sixth-grade girls so they're not all together. Same with our high school ministry."

He says while online is a good alternative, it's not the same as in-person services so they'll continue to gather but with the utmost caution.

"We want to exercise our freedoms to gather and assembly, but we also want to be good stewards of our community. We want to love our community well and

so we're going to take every precaution we can as we gather but we are going to continue to gather," said Haley.

He says they're also stepping up cleaning and sanitizing.

"We have a lot of doors on the side of our auditorium so we open all four doors and we ask people to exit out of the side. Kinda limits people coming and interacting. We've also spaced services out to give us time to spray the chairs and sanitize the different stations," said Haley.

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Both churches say they've seen more people attending since the pandemic began, and it's important to keep gathering to help spread God's message.

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