

# Key Questions to Prepare for a New Season of Ministry



RELAUNCH**CHURCH**





**3** | INTRODUCTION

**6** | RELAUNCH **CULTURE**

**9** | RELAUNCH **LEADERSHIP**

**12** | RELAUNCH **MINISTRY**

**14** | RELAUNCH **FACILITIES**

**17** | LOOKING TO A HOPEFUL FUTURE



**THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC** has stretched every church to find new ways to fulfill its mission to be the Body of Christ. The church never was the building. It is and always has been people who make up the church. In this era of church building closures to promote social distancing, congregations are learning anew what it means to be the Church. Reports of churches providing front-line assistance to support medical relief, food distribution, and other social services, the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the many ways the church still is one of society's greatest assets.

In a Wall Street Journal article titled, "**A Coronavirus Great Awakening?**," author Robert Nicholson writes, "Could a plague of biblical proportions be America's best hope for religious revival? As the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II approaches, there is reason to think so."

More so than ever in our lifetimes, the Church may have an unprecedented opportunity to reach people with the gospel message of salvation and hope. In the short-term, most churches are pivoting and learning how to use every digital tool available to continue to spread the gospel and help people find an anchor in this storm.

Week by week, churches have become more adept at worshiping online and conducting small groups and children's ministry via social media and video platforms. As the urgency of trying to figure out all the ways to shepherd our congregations virtually starts to stabilize, pastors are shifting their attention to new concerns—namely, how can we prepare for the eventual day when we're able to return to our church buildings.

There will be a day when churches are allowed to reopen their doors to the public. Every leader and your congregants look forward to this day! But the pandemic is changing us as a society. Returning to church will likely be more of a transitional process versus a single opening day, and it's likely not to be church-as-usual. The Coronavirus has changed many things. Some things will remain the same—the unchanging Truth of the Gospel, of course. But much will be different—and should change—because of what we're experiencing and learning as a result of this crisis.

Though we know that church never stopped just because we left our buildings, it will be helpful to consider lessons learned during this crisis. Churches have a unique window of opportunity to reflect on who they are as a congregation and what changes they may want to make as they prepare to relaunch church once this COVID crisis has subsided.

## A FRAMEWORK FOR REFLECTION— 4 PILLARS OF ALIGNMENT

Aspen's mission is to **create space for ministry impact**. The words “creating space” speak to our primary focus on designing built space that effectively connects people to God and others. “Creating space” also denotes our broader understanding of the myriad places where ministry occurs—in sanctuaries and auditoriums, children's ministry areas, classrooms, food pantries, lobbies, and increasingly online, on social media, and outside church walls in the communities and homes where churches have been meeting.

Our mission is also centered on “ministry impact.” After serving churches for nearly three decades, we have observed common traits that innovative, effective churches share. In fact, we've developed a framework that we use to guide churches in order to achieve maximum ministry impact, and we call it Alignment.

Alignment is the intersection of four key aspects of church life: **culture, leadership, ministry, and facilities**. When churches are in alignment in these four areas, they're able to operate with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

As a team, and in light of the COVID-19 crisis, we are asking new questions about culture, leadership, ministry, and facilities. We know that ministry space—people’s perceptions of it, churches’ use of it, and the community connections to it—will change. We know proactive church leaders are asking questions too.

In this resource, we’ll guide you through a series of Alignment questions to ask under each of these pillars. Based on what your church has learned during this pandemic, what changes might you need to make to prepare to relaunch church for a new season of ministry?



**CULTURE** is the first pillar of Alignment. Before we guide a church into decisions about their facility, we first take them through a process of discerning culture. The following questions are designed to help you consider aspects of culture that may affect decisions you make about your church following the COVID-19 crisis.

1. In what ways do we think COVID-19 has—or will—change culture . . .

a. within the US?

b. within our local community?

c. within our congregation?



2. Post-COVID-19, how will our church promote community and in-person connection after a season of social distancing and digital interactions?



3. What parts of the local community have we overlooked (or had a blind spot to) that the COVID situation made us see, and to whom we could now find a way to serve?



4. What community partnerships (businesses, organizations, other churches/ministries, non-profits, community leaders, other community service providers) are we developing now, or should we be developing, that will be the springboard to our new ministry opportunities to the culture post-COVID-19?



5. How do we think giving will be affected after the pandemic?



6. If our church were to be gone tomorrow, what is the number one thing our community would miss the most about us?







**LEADERSHIP** is the second pillar of Alignment. The effectiveness and ability of a church to grow hinges on the health of its leaders. The questions in this section will help you take stock of your church's leadership.

1. Is our church staffing suitable for our next season of ministry?



2. Do any new leadership roles emerge as a result of envisioning new ministry opportunities following COVID-19 (e.g. Outreach Pastor, Community Pastor, Online Pastor, etc)?



3. After a season of staff working remotely, are there changes we should make to our organizational structure or admin space?



4. In what ways does COVID-19 highlight the importance of and need for volunteer leaders, especially as it relates to mobilizing those in the church to connect, encourage and care for people outside the walls of our building and the walls of our ministries?



5. How do we celebrate the good things people are doing as well as train, equip, and encourage people to continue positive leadership activities when we come back to the building?



6. What was revealed in our staff during the COVID crisis? . . .

a. Did people rally as a team for what needed to happen?

b. What holes/gaps did we see that need addressing?

c. Communication issues or staff dynamics?

d. What new strengths emerged in our team?



7. In light of current events, is there anything we would change moving forward in terms of how we evaluate effectiveness? What now are the three major metrics we should be tracking?





**MINISTRY** is the third aspect of Alignment. As you consider your church's various ministry programs with fresh eyes, what will you start, stop and continue in this next chapter for your church?

1. If we could start from scratch with our church calendar, what would we add or take away from our ministry programming?



2. What is the number one thing our church does really well? What is the most important thing to improve?



3. Should we make any changes in how we spend church funds?



4. What new ways of doing ministry that we adopted during the pandemic should carry over into the future of our church?



5. How will we engage/reengage with our financially supported missions, both local and global, following COVID-19?



6. As people are introduced to our church via our online presence during COVID-19, how are we engaging with them now and what's the plan for when we meet them face-to-face?





**FACILITIES** is the final and fourth pillar of Alignment. Do you have the right kind of ministry space to fulfill your unique mission and vision as a church?

1. In what ways has COVID-19 caused us to reconsider how we use our facilities? Can they be used for greater ministry impact?



2. Can our church serve as a 7-day-a-week facility instead of just a Sunday morning building?



3. How will social distancing practices change the way people gather and interact within our building? For instance, will we continue to pass a plate for the offering or promote online giving? How will we share communion?



4. How can our facility be better utilized by the community during times of crisis? What changes to the building would help facilitate community use?



5. After a time away, how are we seeing our facility with fresh eyes?

a. Are any spaces within the building outdated or ineffective for the ways our church uses them?

b. Is our building accommodating to guests and newcomers?

c. What sacred cows have we been holding onto that we can now let go of?



6. If we are considering remodeling, renovating or adding space (or even a new site), how can we translate that vision into the funds needed to make these changes?



7. If money were no object and we knew we could not fail because God was with us, what would we now see as the greatest need for changes to our ministry space?





# LOOKING TO A HOPEFUL FUTURE



**AS YOU ANSWER THE LIST OF QUESTIONS** in this resource, you may feel overwhelmed at all the things you could do to revamp your church. Two final questions may help you move forward:

Picture the future. Imagine three years from now—you overhear people talking about your church in a restaurant. What are one or two things that you would like to hear being shared?



What are one or two areas where you can “do something” without feeling the pressure to “do everything”?



As church leader **Ed Stetzer said**, “The church has left the building, and that may be the gift God gives us in the midst of this crisis.” When your church is free to relaunch after COVID-19 has subsided, what form will we take? Will it be ministry as usual (spoiler: that model wasn’t working very well for most churches), or will you use this opportunity to reset as a Body and seek God’s wisdom in how you might better reach people with the Gospel and saving power of Jesus Christ?

Aspen Group stands ready to help you wrestle through these questions. Please **connect with us** to explore how you can prepare for what’s next in ministry.

We’re here to help.

Connect with one of our ministry space specialists to explore how you can prepare for what’s next in ministry.

RELAUNCH CHURCH





# ASPEN GROUP

## Midwest Offices

9645 Lincoln-Way Lane, Suite 201  
Frankfort, IL 60423

90 Executive Drive, Suite C  
Carmel, IN 46032

## Southeast Offices

8 Salt Kettle Ct.  
Saint Helena Island, SC 29920

101 2nd Street, Suite 202  
Holly Hill, FL 32117

**(815) 806-1705 | [aspengroup.com](http://aspengroup.com)**