



SKIN Factsheet Corona

1. What are the current government rules for churches?

The Dutch government has forbidden all group meetings until 1 June 2020. In principle, this also applies to church services and other church activities. It is possible to livestream church services online. You can meet in the church with only those people who are needed (pastor and technician). Always keep a distance of 1.5 meters from each other.

What about the so-called 'thirty people rule'?

For the organisation of religious gatherings, church funerals and weddings there is a maximum of thirty attendees, who must keep 1.5 meters distance from each other. The number of attendees must be "as small as deemed necessary". Read more about this [here](#).

SKIN endorses the [CIO](#) call to limit or postpone physical meetings as much as possible, to take care of each other sensibly, and to broadcast services and celebrations online as much as possible.

Would you like more information? The Protestant Church in the Netherlands has published [guidelines](#) for churches.

More information on the prevention of corona in English, Spanish, Arabic, Papiamentu, and Polish can be found [here](#).

2. How can you continue your activities as a church in different ways?

All kinds of creative solutions are currently being sought by churches. Many churches have already switched to livestreaming their services. This can be done via [kerkomroep.nl](#), [kerkdienstgemist.nl](#), or facebook. Some churches also hold meetings via Zoom. There are even signs that more people participate in these online meetings than would normally attend the meetings in the church! There is - quite understandably - a need for spiritual support in these times, and it is nice to see how churches are trying to provide it. Collecting offerings seems to be the most problematic, because not all church members donate digitally. If the fixed costs continue for a church, but less people donate money, this can cause problems. Churches try to solve this by, for example, making a clear call for offerings via their livestream, sending [Tikkies](#), or using [Givt](#). For elderly people, these digital solutions are sometimes quite difficult! Please keep that in mind.

3. Problems & help available

Do you want to help people who are lonely or stressed, can't go shopping, need a chat or some other form of help? Or do you know people who are in this situation? On [www.nietalleen.nl](#) you can register yourself, as a church that wants to offer help, or as a person who needs help.

Some churches are currently in a difficult situation themselves. Samuel Lee, national theologian of the year, wrote [this blog](#) about it two weeks ago. This resulted in the initiative Samen Kerk = Samen Sterk, coordinated by a.o. SKIN, SOFAK, SKIN-Rotterdam, PCC, and the Hub The Hague. Via [www.steunkerken.nu](#) we are currently raising funds for the corona emergency fund, which is managed by SOFAK.

Thanks to Ceder Advocatuur and SKIN-Rotterdam, two [sample letters](#) are available online, which can be used to request for leniency or postponement of payment from a landlord.

Do you need help as a church? Please contact SKIN via madelongrant@yahoo.com, so that together we can see which solution would be best for your church! Churches in Rotterdam, Amsterdam and The Hague can contact SKIN-Rotterdam, the PCC, and the Hub The Hague.

Do you have paid members of staff? In some cases it is possible to apply for a [reduction in working hours](#) through the UWV. If you would like to know more about this, please contact SKIN via madelongrant@yahoo.com.

4. Prayer points

The SKIN board would like to ask your prayers for the following prayer points:

- we pray for international and migrant churches that are now in trouble because of the coronavirus.
- for all people who are now unable to be with their loved ones because they are not allowed or unable to travel.
- for all elderly people and people working in health care, especially those with a migrant background, for strength and protection.
- that fear will not dominate our emotions, but that the peace of Christ will fill and surround us.
- that God will grant wisdom to our political leaders.
- we thank God for all gestures of solidarity, mutual help and cooperation.