The current best advice is that until there is a vaccine, there is no safe public singing.

With singing and specific instruments (brass and wind instruments), droplets can be projected farther than six feet and remain suspended in the air longer.

Considerations

Guidelines for numbers of people in the sanctuary are determined by local and state governmental directives. Within the NEAC, this includes the six New England states. If a group follows the guidelines to safely meet in-person to record music for virtual worship, then decisions will need to be made about whether vocal musicians can perform while wearing a mask.

A webinar of major singing organizations in the United States met the week of May 3 to discuss the future of singing while the coronavirus is still active. Here are some of the things that were mentioned about masks and singing:

- No masks are currently safe for singing.
- N95 masks must be fit-tested first.
- They also decrease the singer’s oxygen levels due to rebreathing expired carbon dioxide and increasing levels (in the body). This is risky for people with asthma, COPD, and heart disease.

Humming, even with a mask, is not a viable alternative to singing normally; aerosolized particles are still released through the nostrils and around the edges of the mask. Vocalists commented that decreased oxygen levels could be the biggest problem with singing while wearing a mask. They also mentioned that when opening their mouths wider to achieve some pitches and vowels during rehearsals that their masks were pulled down off their noses and over their mouths, requiring readjustment during the performance.

Consider a virtual choir: Ask people to record from their homes and then mix those recordings.