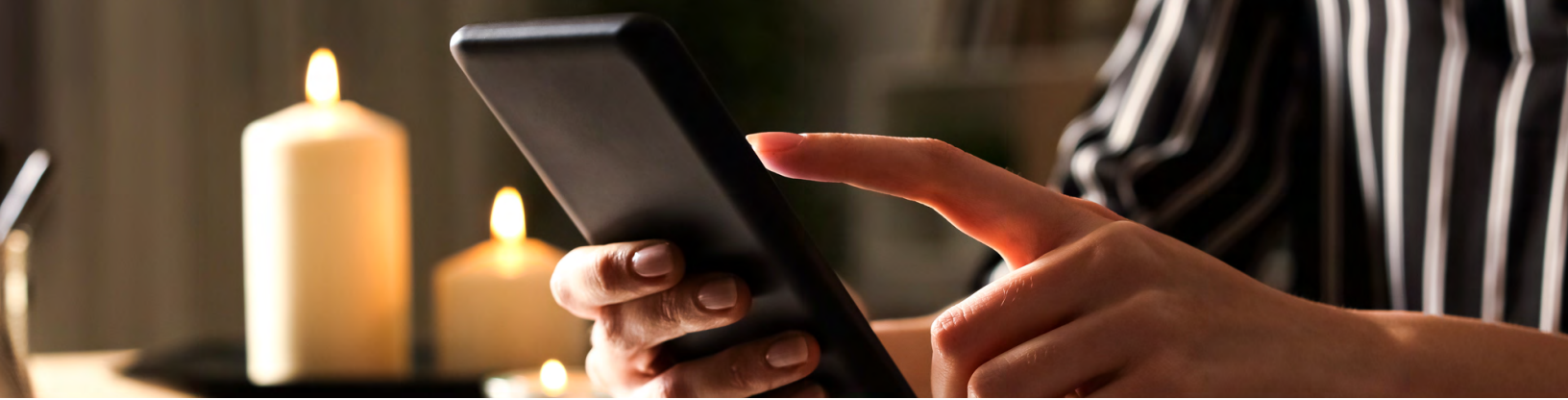




Five Best Practices for Communicating Inclement Weather Closings for Faith-Based Communities

One Call **Now**
POWERED BY ONSOLVE



Inclement weather is a part of life, and so are the challenges of protecting your faith community from the elements. When extreme winds, flooding, wildfires and ice storms come calling, they threaten everything from engagement to human life. A well-organized plan supported by an effective emergency [mass notification](#) system can serve as your modern ark.

To get everyone on board, follow these best practices to minimize confusion and maximize safety for your congregation.

ONE

Plan Proactively

Last year the United States was hit by 18 separate [billion-dollar weather events](#). While many ministries include disaster relief efforts following a major storm, it's important to remember that before you can render aid to others, your own house of worship has to be secure. Does yours have an inclement weather policy? If so, when was the last time it was updated? Are your members aware of the plan? Is it easily accessible to them? Each of these questions must be asked and answered in order to achieve both clarity and transparency.

In addition to communicating to members that a plan exists and where to find it, it's also important to inform them of updates as the plan evolves. As a severe weather event progresses, you should be able to reach everyone quickly and easily, especially members who may need assistance.

TWO

Address the Specifics

It's not enough to have a general plan in place. You must also establish and communicate detailed procedures. When leadership decides to delay or cancel services or events due to inclement weather, can your congregation count on receiving notice in time to adjust their plans? Do you have a way to send information to everyone all at once in just a few clicks? Or is it a cumbersome and time-consuming process?

It all comes down to specifics. The more detailed you are in defining and communicating policies — such as who will send the message and which channel(s) will be used — the more likely they are to hold up in emergency situations.

Telling members they'll be informed of a cancellation decision via email is only a small part of the equation. They also need details outlining when the decision will be made and communicated. This helps to eliminate frustration and prevent needless waiting, uncertainty and risk.

THREE

Embrace Technology

Twenty years ago, phone trees were just about the only option for communicating with large numbers of contacts, and they were fraught with problems. From misunderstandings to complete breakdowns in communication due to a single failure in the chain, phone trees have historically increased rather than reduced confusion.

Today's mass messaging services offer an innovative solution by allowing both leaders and members to have more control of how they deliver and receive [critical communications](#).

The right system will offer:

- **Multiple Modalities:** Recipients can set their preference to receive alerts via voice, text, email or push-notification.
- **Alert Send Data:** Senders can see a detailed report of who has and hasn't received the messages, including everything from time of contact to erroneous phone numbers.
- **Contact Groups:** These can be created so your messages target only those who need them
- **Language Preference:** Automatic translation allows senders and receivers to create and receive messages in their preferred language, improving clarity and understanding.
- **Message Templates:** Senders have access to customizable templates for a faster and more convenient process during emergencies.

In times of severe weather when stress is high, a better process will include all of these capabilities and facilitate a safer and more informed faith community.

FOUR

Streamline and Save Time

There's no time to spare when severe weather strikes. That's why it's important to find a solution that makes emergency alerting as fast and simple as possible. Advanced functionality should increase speed and decrease stress.

The following features will help faith leaders reassure their members and improve peace of mind:

- **Audio Library:** Senders can pre-record and store messages to be sent at later times or dates. This option allows recipients to hear your voice, which provides additional reassurance.
- **Real-time Polling:** Senders can obtain instant feedback from recipients via keypad response. This is especially useful when members need help or assistance or when you need RSVPs for an event.
- **Hot Transfer:** Callers can be automatically transferred to the administrative office at the end of the message. This gives worshippers another way to reach you.

All of these added options deliver the personalization that helps people feel connected and supported during frightening weather events and other emergencies.



FIVE

Maximize Your Message

While harsh weather can put a damper on services and events, it doesn't have to cause detriment to community engagement. By establishing a clear communications plan and sharing it with your members, you can reassure them you're doing everything in your power to keep them safe, connected and informed.

To ensure your messages cut through the noise of today's fast-paced digital world, remember — clear and concise is best. Recipients shouldn't have to repeatedly listen to a message to be certain they've absorbed every relevant piece of information. Keep messages brief and to the point, and make subjects descriptive and action-oriented, particularly when a response is requested.



Looking for one convenient and user-friendly solution to do it all?

Learn how easily and affordably OnSolve® One Call Now® can be implemented into your house of worship's critical communications plan.

[TRY ONE CALL NOW FOR FREE TODAY →](#)

About OnSolve One Call Now

OnSolve® One Call Now®, one of OnSolve's market-leading critical communications products, enables groups and organizations of all sizes and types to quickly, securely and reliably distribute critical information to large numbers of people on virtually any device and network. OnSolve sends billions of alerts annually and has provided proven support to both the public and private sectors. OnSolve delivers critical event management solutions that give our customers the ability to proactively keep everyone informed, instill confidence, foster teamwork, mitigate disruptions, improve operational outcomes, protect assets and save lives. Visit www.onsolve.com.

