Introduction:

The Community Faith-Based Team consists of representatives from community-based and governmental organizations, including Christian and Jewish lay leaders and congregants, community advocacy organizations, local Coordinated Care Organizations, and Lane County Health & Human Services. The Team identified both strengths and needs associated with recovery from COVID-19 and the resulting economic downturn, as well as resources and recommended practices. The Team also identified the stresses and loss points that most affect Faith Institutions. The work of the Team will continue with periodic updates and additional material added to the Toolkit as the pandemic continues.

Major Conclusions:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic and 2020 economic downturn has negatively affected many Faith-Based Institutions through mandated closures due to Governor Brown’s quarantine orders and limited number of participants at indoor activities.
2. Cancelled faith programming and religious services including weekly study sessions, family and youth programs, religious school activities, senior activities, charitable events, and the ability to hold lifecycle events such as weddings, funerals and baby celebrations.
3. Technology resource disparities (lack of hardware, adequate broadband) are magnifying differences between rural and urban institutions and between wealthier and less wealthy faith institutions.
4. Limited access to faith leaders has negatively affected those in need of faith services.
5. Loss of income through reduced charitable fundraising and on-site collections.

Identified Stress/Loss Points for Faith-Based Institutions:

- Congregant basic needs for food, shelter, utilities, and healthcare could not be assisted by faith institutions
- Physical touch limitations due to social distancing was challenging for congregants
- Children missing friends and social events at religious institutions, including family lifecycle events such as weddings, baby showers, funerals
- Isolation of staff and congregants, loss of volunteer assistance
- Employment furloughs and job loss for institution’s staff
- Religious services ended due to COVID was very distressing for congregations
- Congregations’ elderly members lost a needed resource to prevent loneliness
• Loss of community caring for members in need of faith support
• Faith supports unable to attend hospital deaths/visits to ill congregants
• Increased depression or other stressors among congregants
• Racial justice movement provided an opportunity for faith communities to respond in a caring way but also stressed communities where diverse opinions may clash
• Mental Health issues addressed by faith leaders were limited
• Trauma may be experienced in many different ways, including numbness to emotional stress or withdrawal from faith