



T H E
first baptist church
O F C A S E Y

June 2, 2020

Dear Church Family,

So much can change in such a short amount of time. Last week I sent you a letter telling you that we still were not sure how long it would take for us to be able to gather again. I had a teleconference on Thursday with Alliance Defending Freedom (one of the world's most respected legal firms which specializes in religious liberty cases) and they told us to be patient. That same day, the governor announced that his "restrictions" were now "guidelines" and that churches were free to meet together! This means many things for us and we are trying, as best we can, to interpret and apply the guidelines provided, while creating our own process of reopening and changing the guidelines to fit our church and community.

Our first Sunday back in our facility for corporate worship will be **June 21** (my family has had a trip to spend time with Lindsay's family planned for over a year. We were not sure what that would look like when the pandemic hit). I cannot imagine a scenario where I would be ok being gone for what I view as our church's most important Sunday in my time as pastor. For this reason, the deacons agreed that it would be wise to wait. I'm sorry that it cannot be sooner. Please blame me!

Our restart date is especially meaningful because it is Father's Day. Think about it this way. For a few months now we have been unable to come together but on this Father's Day we get to return to our Father's House!

This next two pages of this letter will outline our plan to reopen. The guidelines for our reopening are on the next page and the third page provides some additional information about the church's reopening plan. I am grateful for our deacons and proud of the thought, care, and most of all, the prayer that they put in to this plan. It was not easy for us to come to this place, but they sought to serve the Lord and the church by developing the plan. Our church should be proud of the men that we have serving our church as deacons.

These are the details developed by the Deacons, Bro. Jacob and myself:

- We will begin with worship at 10 AM and no Sunday evening services until further notice.
- Individuals and classes who are able to use Zoom are encouraged to continue to meet through Zoom for Sunday School. For those who are unable there will be one large Sunday school class that will meet in our Fellowship Hall at 9 AM. Our hope is that in short order we will be able to meet again in our small group Sunday School classes.
- When you arrive at church please come to the North or South Main Entrance of our new building.
- Someone will be there to open the door, greet you, and check your temperature. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or above will be re-checked. If the temperature continues to be 100.4 or above that individual and their household will not be able to stay in order to protect others.
- When you come inside you will need to proceed to the Worship Center/ Sanctuary where you will be seated by ushers. Seating will be from front to back and you may not be able to sit in your normal spot. All households will be seated together (anyone under 18 MUST be seated with their families). We will try to leave at least two seats between family units. At the end of our service, the ushers will dismiss you by rows. When you are dismissed please proceed to the parking lot. We look forward to being able to fellowship together after church in our hallways and other indoor spaces soon.
- If you have a health condition that makes exposure especially dangerous and you choose to attend, please let an usher know as you come in. The balcony will be reserved for people with this specific need, along with the audio-visual team. Please allow those who are vulnerable to have this space if you do not require it.
- There will be no bulletins for a while and the offering will be taken at the back of the Worship Center as you exit.
- There will be no childcare available, no nursery, and no children's church. If you need to change you child's diaper, the nursery will be available for a changing room. Our nursing room will also be available for mothers who need it. We know that kids make noise and we want to tell you that **IT'S OK** if your child cries, colors, talks a little bit, or does something else to "act like a kid". That's what kids do and we are encouraged by those kids. That noise means LIFE for our church and we are excited and thankful for that life, and for parents who seek to raise their children to worship the Lord when they can.
- Water fountains will be turned off. If you need water, please feel free to bring it with you.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at different locations (some of the ushers will have bottles and other bottles will be spread around the church).
- Our services will continue to be available online and through DVD. Unfortunately, at this point it is not possible for us to make them available live. If you would like a copy of our services they should be available each week by Tuesday.

Some other things to note. The church office is now open! The North Entrance (near Hwy. 49) will be unlocked during regular office hours. Small groups are able to meet at the church during the week, but we do encourage you to be wise in your gathering and practice social distancing. Please let our janitor, Dawn, know what room you met in so that she can do the appropriate cleaning.

The youth will begin to meet again, mostly in outside areas unless weather makes that impossible in which case they will move to our Fellowship Hall.

Our church will be in a very good position for this restart. Your faithful continued generosity to the ministry of our church has meant that we could continue many of our ministries and we have even started new ministries! We have been at or above our projected needs every month during this pandemic. This is a reality that most churches have not experienced. So thank you for continuing to support the work of the church!

Some of our Sunday school classes have been meeting over Zoom (an online meeting platform) and those classes have experienced very high attendance and participation. We look forward to adding our class for those who do not have Zoom, and even more, we are excited that we are moving toward our smaller Sunday School gatherings.

If you choose to attend in person and you feel like you need to wear a mask, please do. Be aware that not everyone will be wearing a mask, and we will do our best to seat those who are wearing masks together (because most people who are wearing a mask want to sit near others who are wearing one as well).

Please understand that we are doing all that we are doing to try to ensure the safest environment possible. We cannot guarantee health and safety, however. To that end, when you come to church please do what you can to protect others.

And finally, please know that there will be those who do not feel comfortable in large group settings. If you are one of those persons, know that we will not look down on you because you do not rush back to church. We want you to be as comfortable as possible when you do return.

Please know that I am continuing to pray for you. I love you all and can't wait to see you again!

Blessings,

Pastor Jon McDonald