

Hi everyone, we are moving into a new phase of the coronavirus quarantine. I am optimistic that this coming Sunday, we begin the process of opening our church facilities for corporate gatherings. We are going to do this as safely as we can. We have gathered information and guidelines from the Governor's office, other churches, and our Baptist state conventions. We have reviewed this collective information and with much prayer have decided on some guidelines that we think will best fit our church and help us conduct gatherings in a safe manner.

On the Sundays of May 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 10th we will be having **Sunday morning worship services at 11:00 am** open to anyone who wants to attend. This time allows those who are involved in our small group livestream classes to finish up and make the trip for worship here at our facility. (Remember, if you feel like you need to stay home for health concerns, please do.) We will provide all the livestream services, youth, and children's videos and classes that we currently are offering. The nursery will be available during service time, if needed. Likewise, if you like to keep your family together in the sanctuary this is more than acceptable. (see nursery guidelines below)

We have looked at State and Federal Guidelines. We will not be breaking any laws if we begin meeting together. In the State of Tennessee Executive Order No. 30 by the Governor, the restricting language has been lessened. On page 3 on paragraph 3 concerning places of worship, weddings, and funerals he writes, "Religious services, rites, or gatherings, weddings and funerals are not social gatherings under paragraph 2, **and nothing in this Order mandates closure of places of worship, or prohibits wedding or funerals as a matter of law...**" Because worshipping at churches is considered an essential and critical activity, we are not restricted to the 10 or less social guidelines. Governor Lee went on to add that he encouraged us to conduct as much online services as possible and for churches to follow the recommendations and guidelines of the Governor's office for how to conduct meetings in our facility safely. In paragraph 4 on the same page Governor Lee writes, "... all persons are still strongly encouraged to continue to stay at home and to minimize in-person contact with people not in the same household, **except** when engaging in critical activities such as employment or occupational activities, activities integral to health and safety, obtaining supplies or services, engaging in permitted outdoor activity, caring for or visiting family or friends, **visiting a place of worship**, or travel associated with such activity." We are also in compliance with Federal guidelines.

We are going to continue as planned but we need to follow the below guidelines. This is essential for the well-being of members. Remember, we are just beginning the process of restarting church activities at our facility, and we want you to come back when you feel it is the appropriate time for you and your family.

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES AND POLICY FOR THESE GATHERINGS

1. Doors to the church will be opened by our greeters for you to enter and exit the building. This will allow you to enter without touching the handles on the doors.
2. Hand sanitizer and gloves will be available near the entrances.
3. Bulletins will be available for pick-up near the doors but not handed to you by greeters.
4. Greeters will be located at the doors to give directions and to welcome people from a safe distance.

5. Once in the sanctuary, please sit one family to a row or at least 6 feet apart, if possible, with an empty row in front and behind you. (There will be blue tape on the suggested rows.)
6. We will not be shaking hands during our welcome time. Please talk and welcome each other -from the appropriate distance- before and after service.
7. Offering plates will be provided after the service at the doors to receive our tithes and offerings.
8. The areas that we use will be cleaned weekly for virus prevention.
9. If you want to wear masks and gloves that is your individual choice. For those who choose not to wear them, please observe the 6 ft recommended distance.
10. Please do not use the elevator if it is not a necessity for you. You can also enter through the sanctuary doors if you do want not to climb any stairs. (The elevator buttons will be cleaned by the greeters after each use)
11. For the first few weeks as much as possible we want to limit ourselves to the A-wing section of our building helping us focus our cleaning efforts to these areas of our church – except the nursery floor in the B-wing.
12. Our nursery department is taking extra precautions for the safety of our children and our workers. (See Guidelines Below)
13. If you are sick, please stay home.

#### NURSERY GUIDELINES

1. Meet families at check in. Take everyone's temperature and sanitize hands. No parents in preschool area.
2. Workers will be provided with masks and gloves.
3. The number of children in each room will be limited.
4. Everything in each room used will be sanitized at the end of service. When we begin Wednesday nights, the toys used on Sunday will not be the same toys used on Wednesday.
5. When Picking up or dropping off children at library be courteous of the family ahead of you and give as much space as possible.

Beloved, I know times like these are difficult and many people will have various opinions on how things should open back up. Even the so-called experts cannot agree. We as believers need to trust in God. I ask each of you to pray to God about when the best time will be for your family to return to church. The Bible tells us to lean upon God for His wisdom and He is the sustainer of life. We are going to do our part to keep things clean and safe as we trust God with the rest.

Blessings, Pastor Doug.

