

June 9th, 2020

FBC Worship Service—Phase 3—Return to the Worship Center

Dear Church Family,

We have been so excited to have our first “in-person” worship gatherings these past two Sundays. It was a joy to see your faces and to worship the Lord together at the pavilion. As you know, this is phase 2 of our FBC reentry plan, and we will also follow the same guidelines. This is an encouraging first step back toward life together as a faith family, but it is far from “normal.” We have met with our medical team and have decided that it is appropriate for us to continue reopening by advancing to our **phase 3** of the reopening plan. We know that you will have many questions, so we put together this document to communicate our plan for gathered worship services (phase 3), beginning on June 14th. We hope this will answer your questions, ease your concerns, and get us all ready to make the most of our gathering this Sunday and on June 14th.

Approach

The leadership of FBC Sparta has been working diligently over the past few weeks to establish a reentry plan for corporate worship. This plan has been crafted utilizing the following:

1. By humbly seeking the Lord’s wisdom persistently through prayer.
2. By seeking to make decisions based on the mind of Christ and truth from His Word.
3. By speaking with many in our congregation and gathering an assessment of various needs.
4. By studying various guidelines and research pieces detailing suggested practices for a successful church reentry process.
5. By seeking counsel from local and area medical professionals, as well as various ministry, church and public leaders.

Principles for Gathered Worship

- Focus our worship, in spirit and in truth, on the One True and Living God collectively as a faith Community. (John 4:24)
- Eliminate distractions and prefer one another as we seek to worship God collectively in spirit and in truth. (Acts 2:42)
- Reflect the joy of our salvation and the sweetness of fellowship among God and His people and with one another. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Safety Guidelines for Worshiping Together (during this season)

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- We want to provide a safe environment for all to gather and worship, so please **practice social distancing and make every effort to minimize contact outside of your family unit.**
- **If you are considered high risk**, please consider the medical protocol that is recommended for your circumstances and condition. Every person/family, please make the best decision for yourself/yourselves.
- **If you are feeling sick or have or have had a temperature** in the past few days, please stay home for the safety of others. Obviously, please do not attend if you have tested positive and have not been cleared as recovered.
- **If you have been in contact in the last 14 days with someone that has tested positive** for COVID-19, we encourage you to watch our online worship service instead of the public gathering.
- **All Staff and Volunteers will be encouraged to wear a mask before and after the service.** Masks are not required by attenders in phase 3, however, in consideration of our attendees, some of our staff and volunteers will be wearing them while assisting our members. It is up to your discretion whether or not you choose to wear a mask.
- **Hand Sanitizer Stations will be set up around the facility** for your convenience. We invite you to regularly utilize those, or bring some with you.
- **Masks will also be available for those that desire to wear them in the facility.** There will also be wipes and tissues available as well.
- **Restrooms will be available.** We ask that only one family unit use the restrooms at a time. There will be a table with wipes and sanitizer, along with soap, in all bathrooms.

Worship Service Details –

- In order to provide the space for social distancing, we will be having 2 worship services. **Our Worship service times will be from 9:00am - 10:00am (Service 1) and from 11:00am - 12:00pm (Service 2).** We will intentionally keep our services short for a number of reasons (to provide time to clean in between services, no child care, etc...). We encourage you to arrive from **8:30am - 8:55am (Service 1) and from 10:30am - 10:55am (Service 2),** so that we can assist you in the facility and help you get properly seated.
- **In Phase 3, there will be a Corporate Worship Service only.** At this time, there will be no Sunday School, nursery, or children's church provided. The first room on the right in the educational wing will be open for nursing mothers or for a changing station. Also, the audio for the service will be playing in the lobby if anyone needs to step out with their children.

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- **Greeters will be available to answer questions and greet you, but the worship guides will be placed (by individuals with gloves) on the pew seats for you to pick up yourself.**
- **Our worship Center pews will have every other pew marked off where no people will be sitting.** We ask that you and your family unit be seated in a pew. If a person or another family member sits on your pew, please leave adequate social distancing space between the units (approx. 4-6 ft.).
- Allowing for Social Distancing, our seating capacity will be much less, so **we ask that we would disperse over the two service times (9:00am & 11:00am).**
- **We will be sanitizing the facility in between the services.** We ask that you would help us by not congregating in the facility and by not entering into unused rooms.
- **Parking will be available at the church building.** Please use common sense social distancing while navigating through the parking lot and approaching the church area.
- **Kids will remain with families for the duration of the service.** We will not be offering children's church or nursery at this time. In light of that, we encourage your family to feel free to bring, toys, snacks, books, or whatever may be needed to make it a more comfortable experience.
- **We will not have a designated offering time during our service, where we pass the offering plates.** However, we will have some ushers that will be posted with collection bins that before or after the service. You can also give through our online giving platform (fbcsparta.org), text giving, drop it in our locked mailbox, or our locked drop box outside of the church office.
- **We have temporarily removed pew Bibles and hymnals in order for us to be able to spray the pews down properly while disinfecting.**
- **If you are not able to attend, or do not feel comfortable gathering just yet, our worship service will be recorded and posted online.**
- **You can see the following resources for further guidelines:**
 - <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/governoroffice-documents/House%20of%20Worship%20Guidance%20FBCI.pdf>
 - <https://www.tnbaptist.org/reopen>

We love you and are praying for you and your families. Please let us know if you have any other questions or if you would like to serve on one of our teams that helps facilitate these plans. We need plenty of servants! See you Sunday, Lord willing!

In Christ,

Pastors Brad, Jon & Kevin