

First Baptist Church

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Dear First Baptist Church Brothers and Sisters:

I pray that you and your families are safe and well. Enclosed is important information regarding the decision to re-open the Sanctuary for worship on **Sunday, May 2, 2021 at 10:00am.**

The transition team, pastoral staff, FBC Building and Grounds, volunteers, and an advisory team that includes healthcare professionals in our church family, have been communicating with each other as we closely monitored the effects of COVID-19 on our nation, state, and region.

We have been vigilant and must remain vigilant about loving our neighbors by wearing face coverings, washing our hands frequently, and keeping a safe distance from each other.

Your consistent generosity in your financial commitment to the ongoing mission and ministry of our church has been outstanding. God is faithful, alive, and active in our congregation. We praise God for all these things!

Our transition team has put guidelines in place that we pray will minimize the risk to you and your family. Every attempt is being made to minimize the risks involved in gathering for worship and we encourage you to consider these risks carefully when making the decision whether to attend worship onsite. We will continue to stream service via the website also.

Please know that you are prayed for daily as you care for those around you. You are not alone. Especially now, we find great hope in the promise of Jesus, "I am with you always..." (Matthew 28:20).

Yours in Christ,

Timothy F. Brown, Ed. D., Senior Pastor

"Dedicated to the Glory of God and the Service of Man."

AS WE GATHER AGAIN:

IN-PERSON INDOOR WORSHIP:

Sunday worship will resume on *May 2, 2021 in the Sanctuary at 10:00am.*

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

- If you are at increased risk of severe illness (older adults, persons with medical conditions), stay at home and continue participating in distance worship via FBC Facebook page.
- If you have been exposed to COVID-19, stay at home and self-isolate.
- If you “feel” sick or are symptomatic, stay at home and monitor your symptoms, seeking medical care if warranted.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

MAINTAIN A MINIMUM OF 6 feet of distance between yourself and others who are not members of your household.

- Pews have been marked off in the Sanctuary to help you maintain this distance protocol.
- Ushers/Social Distance Ambassadors will seat and dismiss worshipers to prevent gathering in proximity with others.
- Worshipers are encouraged to leave the building as soon as worship concludes. **NO CONGREGATING!**
- Sunday School and Penn Fellowship Hall will not be open during this period of the pandemic.
- Handshaking and other forms of personal contact will be discouraged.

PRACTICE HEALTHY HYGIENE:

- **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and water for at least twenty seconds.
- Use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) as an added defense. Hand sanitizer station will be located at church entrances.
- Face masks are always required.
- A limited number of face masks will be available for those who attend worship without one.

CHANGES IN WORSHIP PRACTICES:

- A one-hour spirit filled worship service will occur in the Sanctuary.
- Unison singing and speaking will be discouraged.
- All Bibles and hymnals have been removed from worship spaces.
- Printed bulletins will not be used. A digital version of the bulletin will be accessible on the TV monitors in the Sanctuary.
- Offering plates will not be passed. Offerings may be placed in offering trays near the entrance to the worship space.

- On first Sundays, communion will be provided and is to be taken after leaving the worship experience, ***IN YOUR VEHICLES.***

FACILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Entrance to worship will be the front and elevator entrances ***ONLY!!!!***
- Temperature checks: Infrared No Contact Forehead Thermometers for temperature readings will be done.
- Bathroom access will be limited to the facilities in the Sanctuary hallway.
- The water fountains will not be in service.
- *CDC CLEANING GUIDELINES* will be followed, after worship services.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- If you develop symptoms while at worship, you will be asked to leave immediately, if possible. If that is not possible, you will be taken to a pre-determined area for isolation until further steps can be taken. Children will not be left without adult supervision.
- If a person diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the facility, lead staff will assist local health officials in communicating with staff members and congregants about potential exposure while maintaining confidentiality. Areas used by a sick person will be closed off and not used again until thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. A third-party vendor may be employed for deep cleaning.
- **No one with symptoms of COVID-19 or who has tested positive for COVID – 19 should enter the church until they have met CDC’s criteria to discontinue home isolation.**

Keep in Mind

These protocols may be adjusted as we move forward to further ensure everyone’s safety while worshipping in the facility. Be assured that we are in contact with our medical team and are following their recommendations as well as those published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

We also recognize that there may be a time in the future when we need to scale back in-person activities here at the church due to another surge in COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations. The board and the staff will continue to monitor the local situation and keep you informed regarding the ministry we share here at First Baptist Church.

Final Word

We ask you to please continue praying for our leadership and congregation as we continue to provide worship services online, remain connected to each other through ZOOM meetings and Sunday School conference calls. Please remain faithful in your giving and be vigilant about remaining safe and providing safety for our neighbors. May God continue to bless all of us until we meet again.