

# Stage 1

for Live Church at  
11<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church

Church family, our hope is that we will be able to meet together physically soon. President Donald Trump categorized religious gatherings as “essential” on May 22. Moreover, on Monday May 25, our state government published guidelines for “live” church services. We want to assure you that we take this virus and the health threat posed by this virus seriously. Therefore, our goal is not merely to return to live church as soon as possible; rather, our goal is to return to live church as soon as we can responsibly and safely. We have developed the following guidelines for stage 1 of “live” church at 11<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist. After reading these guidelines, please complete our “Returning to Live Service: Stage 1” survey.

<https://forms.gle/fQZVLJbcanMBf7JW6>

Completing this survey will help us anticipate how many people will be in our church building on Sundays. It will also help us understand when to expect more attendance as well as your general feelings about returning to live services.

## Overview of Plan

Stage 1 is a partial reopening of church. During this stage, we are going to continue to offer our service in the online platform, but we will also begin to meet together. Here is what to expect:

- A 1-hour abbreviated family worship service
- Operating at a 25% seating capacity or 100 attenders, whichever is less. For us, that means we are limited to 100 attenders
- All other church activities will continue in their online platforms

Who Should and Should Not Attend During Stage 1?

**Those who must stay home:** Some from our church and community will not be able to attend worship services on Sunday morning.

- Those who have or had COVID-19
- Those who have been exposed or had close contact (within 6 feet of an individual for 15 minutes) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- Those who have any symptoms related to COVID-19
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fever (a temperature in excess of 100.3°F)
  - Chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Sore throat
  - New loss of taste or smell
- Those unwilling to abide by our church’s guidelines

**Those who may stay home:** There will also be a segment section of our church that we are encouraging to stay home during our stage 1 of reopening.

- Aged 65 and above: Those who are 65 years or older may stay home during our first phase of reopening. Of course, if you are in this age range, healthy, and want to attend, you are welcome.
- Those who have the following underlying medical conditions
  - Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
  - Heart conditions
  - Conditions that cause a person to be immunocompromised
  - A body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher
  - Diabetes
  - Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
  - Liver disease
- Those who are uncomfortable attending for any reason

**Those who may attend:** A segment of our Church family, those who do not fall into the above segments, are encouraged to attend during our stage 1 of reopening.

### **Logistics**

Church services will look different during stage 1 of “live” church at 11<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist.

- **Parking:** In order to maintain social distancing, your parking options will be restricted. Please park in every other space.
- **Entering the Building**
  - **Greeted:** You will be greeted by our church family from a safe social distance. During stage 1, handshakes and hugs will be replaced with air high fives, and waves. Moreover, your temperature will be checked with a non-touch infrared thermometer. You will not be able to enter the building if you have a temperature of 100.3°F or higher.
  - **Ushered:** An usher will direct you on how to enter the sanctuary: either down the center aisle, right aisle, or left aisle.
- **While in the Building**
  - **Social Distance:** A distance of 6 feet will be maintained between individuals not from the same family. Tape on the floor and signs will indicate proper spacing that must be maintained by attenders. Congregating in the church lobby is prohibited. When entering into the church building please immediately find a seat 6 feet away from other individuals/family units. Be aware that we will only be seating every other pew. Other pews will be marked closed.
  - **Bathrooms:** Bathrooms will be available for emergencies only. Moreover, use of the restrooms must be done one person at a time unless of course someone needs assistance using the restroom like a parent with a child. In order to limit the number of people using the bathrooms, our service will be limited to one hour.

- **Worship through Song:** Our service too will be modified to abide by the recommendations of our government. Although social distancing should promote a safe place conducive for singing, everyone still must wear their mask as we sing.
- **Offering:** Offering plates will not be passed at church. Rather, offering boxes have been installed at church. Please put your offering into the boxes when you enter or leave the church building. Envelopes will be available if needed. These will be sanitized for your safety.
- **Printed Materials:** Print bulletins and welcome cards will not be available. We want to limit the number of surfaces touched and the number of items passed between people. Electronic versions of these materials will be available for use.
- **Pew Bibles and Hymnals:** Likewise, pew Bibles and hymnals will not be available for use. Again, we want to limit the number of items touched throughout the service.
- **Exiting the Church:** In order to main social distancing, church services will be dismissed in sections. A few pews will be dismissed at a time.

#### **What should I bring?**

- Facemasks: everyone in the building must wear a facemask except for those portions of the population in which facemasks present a suffocation risk (such as those under the age of 2).

#### **What we are doing to keep you safe?**

Church family, we want to do everything in our power to minimize the possibility of spreading COVID-19. Therefore, in addition to the precautions outlined above, we will be providing hand sanitizer stations for your use. Use them when you enter the building and when you leave the building. Our goal is to create an environment, where we can experience the joy of our fellowship in the safest way possible.

#### **What can I do now?**

Church family, there is a lot to do while we wait to reopen "live" services. First, let's continue to pray. Let's pray that God would be gracious to us. Let's pray that the virus would not spread through us meeting together and that God would continue to protect us physically. More importantly, let's pray that God would be drawing people to himself through this virus. God is doing this, and he will continue to do this. Let's beg God that he would do that specifically through us at 11<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist.

Second, invite people to attend our "online-streaming service," and when we are able, invite them to attend our "live" services. People are more open to the gospel today than they were at the beginning of this virus. Invite them to see the fellowship we enjoy.

Third, preach the gospel to them. Church family, ultimately, the lost need to hear the gospel. Tell them about God's love for them; tell them about the hope we have in the gospel and invite

them to turn from their sins and to trust in Jesus. Of course, we hope that the lost who join us for worship either in the online or live platform will hear the gospel.

Fourth, let's build each other up in love. This season is difficult. Many of us have experienced some discouragement during this season. Please, be active in calling one another, writing letters to each other, and serving. Church family, we are doing this, but we must continue. Let's be active in loving one another for the glory of God.

Church family, I hope that we can meet together again soon. Until then, let's continue to enjoy the love of God and spread it within our church family and to our community.

Pastor Anthony