



## First Baptist Church Hudson

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May 28, 2020

Dear Hudson First Family,

When I write a letter like this, I begin seeing your faces in my imagination and think of how much I have missed seeing all of you. We've been through the strangest time of our lives, and one of the worst parts has been the separation. We have seen, however, that our church never closed; it has been wide open! While we have been apart, we have continued to "be the church" and carry out God's mission together. We are worshiping God, becoming disciples, and loving people. And we are reaching more people than ever before! Our giving has remained strong through God's faithfulness and the generosity of His people, and we are meeting real needs in our community through a number of ways, including the distribution of 150 boxes of fresh produce each Saturday to anyone in the community who needs it.

We are now in Phase 2 of our state's reopening plan which means we are planning to resume in-person worship gatherings in reduced capacities and the safest ways possible. Below is an explanation of what Phase 2 looks for us so that you will know what to expect whether you return right away or plan to wait a while before returning.

Let me address the large number of you who are not planning on returning to in-person gatherings yet. I want you to know that we fully understand and support your decision. Just the fact that we are resuming under "reduced operations" tells you that we also have concerns and are making our staff's, volunteers', and congregants' health and safety a priority. If you are part of the at-risk population – over 65 or with underlying health conditions – we especially agree with your decision to follow the health guidelines or advice of your physician, but it is YOUR decision to make. Whether or not you choose to wear a mask upon returning is also YOUR decision to make. We will respect and encourage one another's choices in Christ's love and humility.

Our start date for in-person worship gatherings is June 7, 2020. The end date of Phase 2 may change, but we are using July 12 for planning purposes. As through this entire ordeal, we are remaining flexible so we can adjust quickly if or when circumstances demand. Details are explained in the following pages.

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## **Phase 2 – Reduced Operations – starting June 7, 2020**

Steps we have taken and are taking to inform our decision-making on Phase 2 and future Phases of reopening:

1. Make key decisions in community as much as possible and with consensus from deacons and key church leaders.
2. Take the guidance of the CDC and federal, state, and local officials.
3. Confer with area churches and use recommendations from reliable ministry sources such as the Baptist State Convention.
4. Ensure that our digital presence does not decline, but rather increases in order to leverage and further develop this new blended model of ministry.
5. Survey a large sample of our congregation to assess their desires and expectations.
6. Seek professional counsel from a Health Advisory Team consisting of physicians and nurses within our church.
7. Assess the demands of reopening plans on staff and required volunteers.
8. Develop a high-level, multi-medium communication plan that both regularly informs our congregation and addresses potential concerns within the community.
9. Prepare for reopening with safety signage, foot-traffic and seating plans, volunteer enlistment and training, and cleaning and sanitizing plans.

### **Worship Services:**

1. **Enhanced Online Worship:** As we begin to regather, we are not diminishing our online presence, we are ramping it up by five-fold.
  - We will offer 5 online worship gatherings: Saturday at 8pm, Sundays at 9am, 10:30am, 2pm, and 7pm
  - Each service is a “Live Premier” and manned by staff to engage the worshipers
2. **In-Person Worship:**
  - We will offer 3 in-person worship services on Sundays:
    - 9am in the Life Center and Sanctuary simultaneously
    - 10:30am in the Life Center only
  - Live welcome and music in each service; the sermon will be pre-recorded and shown on the screens
  - Each service will last 50 minutes and have reduced congregational singing
  - Guest Services volunteers will wear masks; congregants will not be required to wear masks
  - At-risk population encouraged to follow safety guidelines

### **Life Groups/Sunday School Classes:**

- Groups will not meet on Sunday mornings while in Phase 2
- Groups are encouraged to continue meeting online
- The Life Center Dining Room and The Gathering Place will be made available by registration for groups to meet in-person on Sunday afternoons or designated weekday evenings. Group leaders will be contacted about signing up for a time for in-person gatherings.
- At-risk population encouraged to follow safety guidelines

**Campus:** Remains closed to most meetings and traffic

**Children's Ministries:** Online only

**Youth Ministries:** Limited meetings in the LCDR and outside

**Special Events:** Closed/Cancelled with exception of a planned wedding

**Counseling/Meetings:** Online only; emergency exceptions

**Media Center:** Reopen with reduced operations schedule; details to be announced in the June 4 News Blast

**Staff Location:** Admin staff returns to campus; Ministry staff continues hybrid

**Volunteers during In-Person Worship (applies to Ministry Staff also)**

- No one over 65 or with at-risk health conditions can serve as greeters
- All volunteers will be trained in protocol prior to serving
- All volunteers will be temperature and symptom screened before serving
- No physical contact will be made or accepted by volunteers
- Masks will be worn by volunteers during the entry and exit of congregation

**Signage:**

- 2'x3' signs and 11"x14" signs (Know Your W's and Stop if You're Sick) will be strategically placed in multiple locations promoting safety guidelines
- 11"x14" signs promoting social distancing and traffic flow will be strategically placed in multiple locations

**Seating for worship:**

- Sanctuary – An attractive ribbon will be used to close off every other pew; social distancing will be communicated by signage and ongoing communication
- Life Center – "Pods" of seats will be arranged; social distancing will be communicated by signage and ongoing communication

**Praise Team and Choir:**

- Congregational singing will be reduced to only one song
- The Praise Team will social distance on the stage and NOT gather backstage
- The Choir will perform in reduced numbers as solos and ensembles, socially distanced using the choir loft and stage

**Cleaning and Sanitizing:**

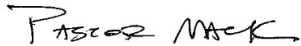
- Hand sanitizer stations will be in place (Free-standing and wall-mounted touchless stations are on order but won't arrive until early July)
- Doors will be propped wherever possible to prevent touching (doors will be held open by trained volunteers where not possible)
- A volunteer team will provide ongoing, real-time surface sanitation during entry and exit of congregants
- A volunteer team will sanitize the Life Center between services
- Curtis Cleaning will clean and sanitize the Sanctuary and Life Center before another in-person gathering

**Other Measures for In-Person Worship:**

- No nursery or childcare will be provided
- No offering plates will be passed; stationary collection trays will be placed at entries and exits
- No print material or bulletins will be displayed or distributed
- Pew bibles and hymnals will be removed
- Connect Central will not be set up

The Lord has faithfully led us and provided for us through this pandemic for twelve weeks. We are confident that He will now be with us through these phases of reopening. We seek your continued prayers for wisdom and prudence to make the right decisions before the Lord and the best decisions for our church family.

We Press On!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Mack". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Pastor Mack