



## **Guidelines for Resuming Church Activities**

### **RATIONALE**

The United States Federal Government has recommended a three-phase approach to reopening facilities and resuming activities. Using this approach as a template, the Ministerial Staff, Deacon Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, and Personnel Chairperson have developed the following guidelines for resuming activities at Oakland Baptist Church. These guidelines have been approved by the Fellowship of Deacons.

Extensive consideration has been given to each of these guidelines, along with consultation from public health officials, medical experts, and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship leaders. Schedules and plans for moving from one phase to the next is fluid based on recommendations from regional public health officials and mandates from state government.

The way forward will not be a matter of following a timetable, but of faithfully discerning the current situation and responding accordingly. Throughout each phase we will seek to be good global citizens by respecting the knowledge of those greater than ourselves. We will also not be given to fear, but given to the power, love, and self-discipline that comes through Jesus.

### **CLEANING PREPARATIONS**

Prior to beginning Phase 1 our custodial vendor will conduct a thorough cleaning of all rooms, meeting spaces, and surfaces using approved products from governing authorities. This includes sanitizing desks, pews, bathrooms, doorknobs, and wall switches. Special attention will be given to Children's areas. We will also conduct a thorough check of mechanical, HVAC, and Fire/Life Safety systems.

Throughout the building signs will be displayed reminding people of social distancing and hygiene protocol. Each designated entry door will have a hygiene station and you will be encouraged to clean your hands before entering. Taped lines will mark the floors to keep social distancing a priority.

Please know that for the next year our lives will be shaped by Covid-19 and if we push to reopen our building and resume activities too soon, we unfairly place our staff, our members, and our community in the position of choosing their involvement in congregational life over their health and the health of their families. To prevent this from happening each of us must do our part to respect the guidelines set forth in this document and to continue practicing measures that reduce the spread of the virus, a new wave of infection, and more deaths.

Throughout this process may we continually pray for God's wisdom to guide our decisions and may we give thanks to God for instilling wisdom in researchers and medical professionals who are tirelessly working to find a cure.

Below you will find the guidelines for each of our three phases for resuming activities.

## **PHASE 1**

In Phase 1, our main goal is to have ministers and staff resume office hours with appropriate measures of social distancing. This phase will begin on Monday, May 11, 2020. The following guidelines will govern Phase 1.

### **Facilities**

- The main office door will serve as a single point of entry for all deliveries
- Hand-sanitizing stations will be available throughout the church and at every entry door
- Water fountains and elevator usage will be prohibited via CDC recommendations
- A strict no visitor policy will be maintained with the exception of pastoral care appointments

### **Worship**

- Virtual worship services will continue throughout Phase 1

### **Pastoral Care**

- Ministers and staff will continue to engage by phone, text, email, and videoconference
- Pastoral care and counseling will occur in the office by appointment only, provided physical distancing is maintained

### **Meetings and Gatherings**

- Sunday School and Bible study classes will continue using alternative methods
- Committees and other groups will continue using alternative methods
- Outside groups are prohibited from using the facility without express permission

### **Staffing and Volunteers**

- The office will be open from 8:00AM-3:00PM Monday through Friday
- Ministers and staff will resume normal working hours
- Staff meetings will be held in larger classrooms with proper social distancing
- A strict no congregating policy will be maintained inside each office space as well as hallways and foyers
- Volunteer engagement will be strictly limited

### **Children and Youth**

- Virtual children and youth activities will continue throughout Phase 1

### **Amenities: Worship Guides, Coffee/Food Stations, Restrooms**

- Worship Guides will be made available on our website for usage at home
- All coffee and food stations will be prohibited
- Specific restrooms will be designated for use so that our cleaning vendor will be able to conduct a thorough cleaning each week

### **Ministry Center**

- The Ministry Center will remain closed during Phase 1

## **PHASE 2**

In Phase 2, our main goal is to resume worship activities while adhering to strict safety measures so that all participants will remain healthy. The shift from Phase 1 to Phase 2 will be evaluated based on recommendations from regional health officials. The following guidelines will govern Phase 2.

### **Facilities**

- Facility use will remain as described in Phase 1 with the exception of elevator usage
- Visitors will be allowed by appointment only, provided social distancing measures are maintained

### **Worship**

- In-person worship will resume by offering multiple services to encourage health and safety
- Worship services will be conducted in the sanctuary at 8:30AM, 9:45AM, and 11:00AM
- Participation in worship services will be assigned by Sunday School classes in order to maintain social distancing measures and a limited number of persons in the sanctuary at one time. Accommodations will be made for those without a Sunday School class. These assignments will be made at a later date.
- Worship will be 45 minutes in length with cleaning measures taken between services
- All three worship services will be available through Live-Stream
- Greeting time, Communion, and passing the offering plate will be prohibited in Phase 2
- Nursery care will be prohibited during Phase 2

### **Pastoral Care**

- Pastoral Care will remain as described in Phase 1

### **Meetings and Gatherings**

- With strict precautions, some small gatherings will resume based on necessity
- Sunday School, Bible Study, and other groups will remain as described in Phase 1

### **Staffing and Volunteers**

- The office will maintain working conditions as described in Phase 1 with the addition of volunteers
- Observing social distancing protocols, volunteer engagement will resume

### **Children and Youth**

- Virtual children and youth activities will continue throughout Phase 2
- Limited Youth activities may resume provided social distancing measures are maintained

### **Amenities: Worship Guides, Coffee/Food Stations, Restrooms**

- The order of worship will be projected on the screen during worship services; hymnals will be prohibited. Worship Guides will continue to be available on the website.
- Other amenities will remain as described in Phase 1

### **Ministry Center**

- Using precautionary measures, volunteers will work to prepare the center for reopening

### **PHASE 3**

In Phase 3, our main goal is to resume other campus activities, including Sunday School, Bible Studies, and other group/committee meetings. The shift from Phase 2 to Phase 3 will be evaluated based on recommendations from regional health officials. Expect this shift to come after several weeks of improving conditions as outlined by the CDC gate measures. The following guidelines will govern Phase 3.

#### **Facilities**

- Facility use will resume as normal with proper adherence to social distancing measures

#### **Worship**

- Worship will resume with normal scheduling while following social distance measures
- Nursery care will resume with strict cleaning procedures put in place for children's areas

#### **Pastoral Care**

- Pastoral Care will resume, including visitation, where it is appropriate to do so without compromising the health of vulnerable individuals

#### **Meetings and Gatherings**

- Sunday School and Bible study groups will resume meeting in the church facilities, provided appropriate social distancing measures are maintained
- With strict precautions, some small gatherings will resume based on necessity
- Outside groups must receive permission before resuming use of any meeting space

#### **Staffing and Volunteers**

- The office will resume normal working conditions while maintaining social distancing measures
- Volunteers will resume in all phases of church life while maintaining safety measures

#### **Children and Youth**

- Children and Youth activities will resume with precautions for vulnerable children
- Strict cleaning procedures will be created for use of children's spaces

#### **Amenities: Worship Guides, Coffee/Food Stations, Restrooms**

- The printing of Worship Guides will resume, but the use of hymnals will be prohibited
- Coffee and food stations will remain prohibited
- All restrooms will be reopened

#### **Ministry Center**

- The Ministry Center will reopen to the public with volunteers taking precautionary measures to remain safe.

### **Recommended Reading**

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

<https://cbf.net/covid-19>

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>

<https://kenbraddy.com/2020/04/18/20-questions-your-church-should-answer-before-people-return/>