

# Returning to Church

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# Introduction

**Note:** This is still a work in progress and will change in the days and weeks to come.

For the past few months we have gladly followed the guidance of our government for the safety of others and cancelled all church services in order to practice social distancing during the COVID-19 breakout.

Now, as our President is urging cautious return to business, our state's "safer at home" end date of mid-May is approaching, and our mayor is moving to a "Phase 1" opening for city affairs, we feel a stirring from God to prepare adequately and safely for the slow and safe return to worship. We have sought legal and medical counsel, as well as consultation with our elected officials in making this plan. Mostly, we are sensitive to the leading of the Lord in the process.

The following pages will outline our plan in phases. Churches in states with less sickness may return to worship earlier, and smaller churches may mobilize more quickly. We all need to study and prepare for the issue in context of our circumstances. It is imperative that LBC return with proper patience, understanding, and biblical conviction. Church members and workers are urged to read this document in order to participate in upcoming services.

We all desire safety as instructed by government leaders (Romans 13), and we desire to obey the command of Scripture to assemble and worship (Hebrews 10:25). Let's work together to make this happen for the glory of God and with a right testimony to those who have not yet trusted Christ as Saviour.

**Paul Chappell**  
Senior Pastor  
Lancaster Baptist Church



# SECTION ONE

Regarding Senior Citizens and those  
with Underlying Health Conditions

# Section One

## Regarding Senior Citizens and Those with Underlying Health Conditions

Because of the dangers related to COVID-19, we are asking all members age 65 and older and members of all ages who have underlying health conditions such as breathing conditions, cancer treatments, suppressed immune systems, etc, to please stay home and continue worshipping via livestream during Phase I of our return. (Phasing will be explained in Section Four).

It may be necessary for those folks to stay away from “crowds” longer than Phase 1, however, we must start with this safety measure.

### **Who Is at Risk?**

Based on what we know now, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- People 65 years and older

People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised

Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications

# Section One

## Regarding Senior Citizens and Those with Underlying Health Conditions

- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

**If we become aware that someone who has been in a service becomes ill, we will follow these procedures:**

- We will ask the person to stay home and seek medical care if needed. Persons should stay at home for at least seven days after symptoms started AND three days after symptoms are improved and fever resolves without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- We will contact local health officials.
- If public health officials determine we need to, we will assist with determining who needs to be contacted for contact tracing.
- Any areas we determine the confirmed COVID-19 person visited will be sanitized.

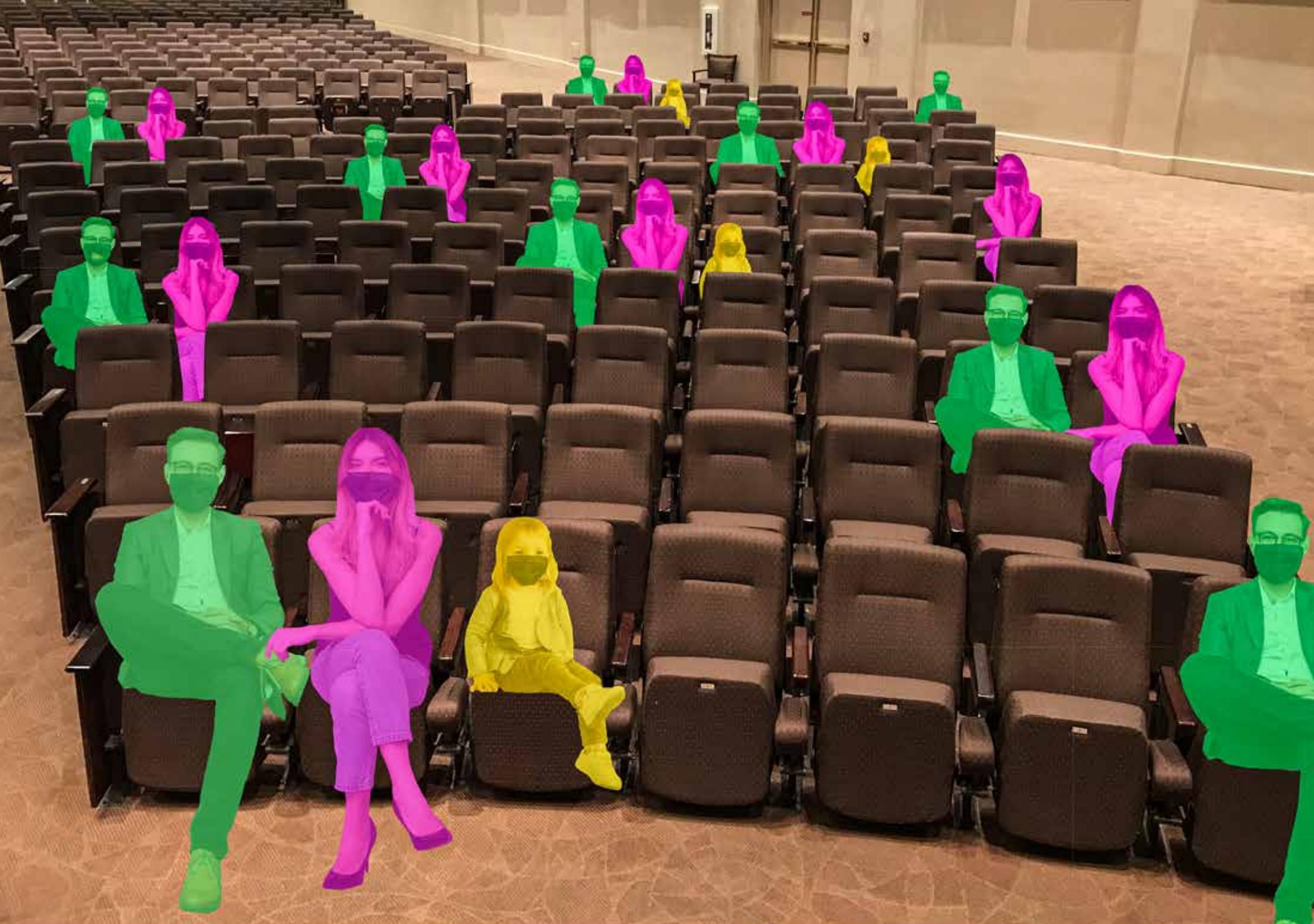
**Source:** Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website, April 2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

A woman with long, light-colored hair is shown in profile, facing right. She is wearing a dark, textured face mask. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

## SECTION TWO

### Social Distancing



# Section Two

## Social Distancing

Signs will be posted around our church campus, and shall be observed by members and guests on return to campus.

No one should plan to attend services who is known to have had any contact with known COVID-19 confirmed case.

Members are asked to wear a mask until further notice and to maintain six feet of distance when speaking to one another. (Thousands of masks have been purchased by Lancaster Baptist Church and are available for those who have forgotten to bring one.) No one will be permitted into the auditorium without a mask. Adults and children age 5 and older will need masks.

A plexiglas barrier has been installed on the platform in front of the podium to protect the audience.

**To simplify this process, the following practices shall be observed:**

### DO

- ✓ Wear a mask (ages 5 and up)
- ✓ Wash your hands before and after services
- ✓ Stay six feet from others
- ✓ Cover your coughs or sneezes
- ✓ Visit hand sanitizer stations frequently

### DON'T

- 🚫 Shake hands
- 🚫 Hug others
- 🚫 Come to church if you are sick
- 🚫 Touch your hands, nose, and mouth
- 🚫 Leave trash in the Main Auditorium

# Section Two

## Social Distancing

### Volunteers

With the help of our volunteers, we will be observing these distancing policies:

- Parking lot attendants will wear masks.
- In the parking lot, we will use every other parking space.
- No one will be permitted into the auditorium without a mask. Please bring a mask. If you forget one, they will be available in the West Wing Lobby. Adults and children ages 5 and older will need masks.
- Ushers will wear masks.
- Ushers will wear gloves if passing out or collecting materials.
- Attenders and ushers will maintain social distancing of six feet at all times from the time we drive onto the property and exit our car until the time we get back into our cars after the service.
- Auditorium doors will be propped open to avoid the touching of door handles.
- Hallways and aisles will be clearly marked for one-way foot traffic. Please follow all signage inside the building.
- Doors will be designated as “entrance-only” or “exit-only.” Please observe all signage.

## Section Two

### Social Distancing

- Ushers will seat attenders before the services. Families will sit together. There will be 2-3 empty seats between families.
- We will sit every other row, and staggered in the rows in an alternate seating pattern to ensure social distancing. Distancing will be kept in all directions—front, back, left, and right.
- At the end of the services, ushers will dismiss attenders in a controlled orderly manner maintaining social distancing. Ushers may need to direct people to a specific exit door. There will be no gatherings at doorways.
- Offering plates will not be passed during the services. Secure receptacles (see appendix) will be available in the lobbies for you to drop your offering, or you are encouraged to use online giving.
- Attenders are encouraged to promptly return home and refrain from fellowshipping at the end of the service.
- We will not be distributing a service bulletin or printed outline. We will continue to email bulletin announcements to the church family on Fridays.
- No coffee or food will be shared on campus.
- Playgrounds on the property will be closed.
- The second and third floors of the Revels Building will be inaccessible in Phases 1 and 2.

# Section Two

## Social Distancing

### **Greeters and Hospitality Teams**

- Greeters will be required to wear face masks and gloves. They will adhere to social distancing of six feet and will abstain from hand shaking. Greeters will be stationed outside of the West Wing lobby along the sidewalk and inside of the main lobby. They will have assigned positions. They will wear their LBC “I’m Here to Help You” lanyards.
- There will be no food or drink refreshments offered by the Hospitality team in the West Wing refreshment area.
- We will have large sandwich board signage placed outside of the West Wing lobby and main lobby directing visitors to the North Auditorium for childcare registration. We will have large signage posted outside all entrances to the main auditorium explicitly detailing requirements for service attenders.
- Space in the lobbies and common areas will be reduced to discourage social congregating before or after the services.

### **Guest Services**

- We will staff each of the three guest service counters with one team member. They will wear a facemask and gloves and adhere to social distancing. They will ensure that there is at least six-feet of space in-between them and those they are assisting on the other side of the counter. We will have stanchioned off cue lines with floor markers 6 feet apart at each counter to ensure that people are practicing social distancing while in line.

# Section Two

## Social Distancing

### **Invitation/Altar Call**

- At the end of the Bible message, attenders will be encouraged to make decisions in their seat or speak privately with their Connection Group leader.
- After the services, prayers with people needing spiritual counsel will be made in church patio observing social distancing guidelines.

### **Believer's Baptism**

When we resume baptisms, we will observe these social distancing policies:

- Baptistry workers and those being baptized will wear face coverings.
- Baptistry workers will wear gloves and protective eye glasses, and will maintain six feet of distance as much as possible.
- People getting baptized will bring their own clothing.
- We will provide a baptismal T-shirt for them when they get baptized.

### **The Lord's Table**

- We will wait to observe the Lord's Table until we have a better sense of health needs. We will likely pre-distribute elements to each chair.

# Section Two

## Social Distancing

### Children's Ministry

- We will use a paper check in system (no touch screens) and encourage parents to use their own pens. If they do not have pen, we can have boxes of pens at each counter and encourage them to keep it for later.
- We will require parents to stand six-feet apart when pick up and dropping off outside nurseries with lines on the ground.
- The forehead of children entering the nurseries and classrooms will be scanned for temperature. If your child has a fever, you will be asked to take him home and watch the services online.
- If your child has had a fever in the last 24 hours, please keep him at home for the well-being of workers and other children.
- If it is determined during a service that your child is sick, you will be called immediately and the child will be moved to a designated pick up area.
- Snacks and drinks will not be provided by the Ministry for children.
- All workers will wear masks and gloves at all times.
- Children age 5 and older will need a mask.

## Section Two

### Social Distancing

- A maximum of 10 children will be allowed in a nursery or classroom. When a room hits capacity, we will move a child to the nearest room closest to their age group.
- Chairs and tables in each nursery/classroom will be configured for six-foot distancing.
- We will prevent the sharing of toys and materials among the children. We will have crayons in separate sealing storage bags. We will encourage children to play with toys individually with puzzles, blocks, coloring pages, etc. and not in groups.

# SECTION THREE

## The Sanitization of Our Facilities

# Section Three

## The Sanitization of Our Facilities

While Lancaster Baptist has always maintained high quality standards of cleaning our facilities, many adjustments have been made in order to prevent illness from spreading in our common areas. **We have purchased Electrostatic Backpack Sprayers that we will use to sanitize the auditorium after each service.** We want you to be aware of our practice going forward.

### Facility Janitorial/Maintenance

- We have a tremendous team who cleans and sanitizes our facilities daily!
- Every worker, staff member, and/or volunteer performing cleaning tasks will be required to wear a mask and gloves while working at all times. New gloves will be put on after completing a restroom or area of the building.
- Only cleaning products provided by the ministry will be used. Approved cleaning products use these chemicals: Isopropyl Alcohol, Nonionic Surfactant, Quaternary Ammonium Chloride.
- Every worker, staff member, and/or volunteer will adhere to the six foot social distancing rule while working.

### Entry Doors/Lobbies

- Handles to all entry/exit doors are being sanitized before and after each service.
- Handles to all restroom and closet doors are being sanitized before and after each service, and once an hour during services.

# Section Three

## The Sanitization of Our Facilities

- Counters, tables, fireplace surfaces, Guest Service Counters, staircase rails, and all lobby furniture is being sanitized before and after each service.
- Drinking fountains are being sanitized before and after each service.
- Sanitizer stations are cleaned, checked for functionality, and refilled before and after each service.
- Light switches are sanitized before and after every service.
- Facial tissue will be available in the lobbies and restrooms.

### **Restrooms**

- Cleaning schedules are posted in the wall inside each restroom.
- Every worker, staff member, and/or volunteer performing cleaning tasks will be required to wear a mask and gloves while working at all times. New gloves will be put on after completing each restroom.
- Toilets, urinals, and sinks will be sanitized before and after every service and once an hour during services.
- Counters and surfaces will be sanitized before and after every service and once an hour during services.

### **Auditorium and Balcony**

- Handles to all entry/exit doors are being sanitized before and after each service.

# Section Three

## The Sanitization of Our Facilities

- Chairs and tables used by the ushers are being sanitized before and after each service.
- After each service, the arms of each chair will be sanitized.
- The balcony railing and glass will be sanitized after each service.
- Immediately after each service, the entire auditorium will be sanitized by one of the seven Professional Cordless Electrostatic Backpack Sprayers we have purchased. Each sprayer can cover up to 23,000-square-feet on a single tank of fluid. It provides an electrical charge to the cleaning solution of hypochlorous acid, which allows for effective and even coverage.
- After each service, we will remove all trash and left over personal items from the auditorium. Personal items will be taken to the lost and found closet in the North Building.
- We are increasing ventilation as much as possible in the buildings. We use HEPA air filters that are inspected weekly and replaced every six weeks.

### **Back Hallway**

- Handles to all entry/exit doors are being sanitized before and after each service.
- The outside of the music storage cabinets and handles will be sanitized before and after each service.
- Handles to the restroom, Ready Room, baptistery, and storage closet doors are being sanitized before and after each service, and once an hour during services.

# Section Three

## The Sanitization of Our Facilities

- Drinking Fountains are being sanitized before and after each service
- Sanitizer stations are cleaned, checked for functionality, and refilled before and after each service
- Light switches are sanitized before and after every service.

### **Baptistry**

- The baptistry water is safely disinfected with bromine weekly. Water will be tested weekly to ensure proper levels of bromine.
- The baptistry changing areas will be cleaned prior to every service.
- Following a baptism, the workers will disinfect the changing area.
- Tile and Carpets will be safely cleaned and disinfected weekly.
- Chairs and dividers will be disinfected after each use.
- People getting baptized will bring their own clothing.
- We will provide a baptismal T-shirt for them when they get baptized.
- We will provide clean towels.
- Each towel that is used will be washed and returned by a designated baptistry worker.
- The baptismal gowns will not be used at this time.

# Section Three

## The Sanitization of Our Facilities

- Baptistry workers and those being baptized will wear face coverings.
- Baptistry workers will wear gloves and protective eye glasses, and will maintain six feet of distance as much as possible.

### **Nurseries and Children's Classrooms**

- Prior to Phase 1 services, all toys will be logged into an inventory. Toys that are old, dirty, or contain grooves that are unable to be cleaned, will be discarded.
- Starting in Phase 1, all toys, chairs, counters, and tables will be cleaned with Lysol wipes after each service.
- Nurseries will be disinfected after each service.



# SECTION FOUR

## Schedule of Our Services

# Section Four

## Schedule of Our Services

We anticipate rolling out our services in incremental steps as guidance is received.

Please familiarize yourself with these four phases. Announcements will be given using these terms, Phases 1–4.

In the event of resurgence of COVID-19, or another pandemic, we will use similar philosophy going forward.

Also, depending upon governmental and medical guidelines, we could skip a phase.

Hence, learn the phase schedule and we will communicate as clearly and consistently as possible.

Finally, we will need to have several Sunday morning services for the first weeks back, then go to Sunday nights services a few weeks later.

# Phase 1

Date: TBD

## **Sunday Morning Service Schedule**

We are conducting multiple services in order to meet the guidelines to reduce the seating in the auditorium to less than 20% of capacity.

### **English Services—8 AM, 10 AM, 12 PM, 2 PM**

- Services are for all, and children age 5 and older shall sit with their parent(s). Each family will be separated by 3–4 seats from the next family. Ushers will alternate seating patterns to ensure social distancing.
- Child care for ages 0–4 years will be provided in social distanced groups.
- Connection Groups will be encouraged to attend a certain service.
- Special music will be provided by ensembles.

### **Spanish Services—9:45 AM**

- All families 5 years old and up will be socially distanced in the Walther Center.
- Child care for ages 0–4 years will be provided in social distanced groups

### **Korean Services—11 AM in the Revels Building**

# Phase 1

Date: TBD

## **Sunday Evening Service Schedule**

Sunday evening services will be online for English and Spanish members.

## **Wednesday Evening Service Schedule**

Adult Connection groups in English, Spanish, and Korean will be conducted online at 7:00 PM.

**Note:** Locations for Spanish and Korean services have adequate space for social distancing.

# Phase 2

Date: TBD

**Note:** We may be able to go directly to Phase 3.

## **Sunday Morning Service Schedule**

### **English Services—8 AM, 10 AM, 12 PM**

- Services are for all, and children 4th grade and older shall sit with their parent(s). Each family will be separated by 3–4 seats from the next family. Ushers will alternate seating patterns to ensure social distancing.
- Child care for ages 0–3rd grade will be provided in social distanced groups.
- Connection Groups will be encouraged to attend a certain service.
- Special music will be provided by ensembles. (See Section Five)

### **Spanish Services—9:45 AM**

- All families 4th grade and up will be socially distanced in the Walther Center.
- Child care for ages 0–3rd grade will be provided in social distanced groups.

### **Korean Services—11 AM in the Revels Building**

**Note:** Locations for Spanish and Korean services have adequate space for social distancing.

# Phase 2

Date: TBD

**Note:** We may be able to go directly to Phase 3.

## **Sunday Evening Service Schedule**

Sunday evening services will be online for English and Spanish members.

## **Wednesday Evening Service Schedule**

Adult Connection groups in English, Spanish, and Korean will be conducted online at 7:00 PM.

**Note:** Locations for Spanish and Korean services have adequate space for social distancing.

# Phase 3

Date: TBD

**Note:** In this Phase, the requirement wearing masks may be relaxed if allowed by city ordinance.

The Great Awakening Coffee Shop and Bookstore might be open in this Phase.

## **Sunday Morning Service Schedule**

### **English Services—8 AM, 10 AM, 12 PM**

- Services are for all, and children 7th grade and older shall sit with their parent(s). Each family will be separated by 3–4 seats from the next family. Ushers will alternate seating patterns to ensure social distancing.
- Child care for ages 0–6th grade will be provided in social distanced groups.
- Connection Groups will be encouraged to attend a certain service.
- Special music will be provided by ensembles.

### **Spanish Services—9:45 AM**

- All families 7th grade and up will be socially distanced in the Walther Center.
- Child care for ages 0-6th grade will be provided in social distanced groups.

### **Korean Services—11 AM in the Revels Building**

**Note:** Locations for Spanish and Korean services have adequate space for social distancing.

# Phase 3

Date: TBD

**Note:** In this Phase, the requirement wearing masks may be relaxed if allowed by city ordinance.

The Great Awakening Coffee Shop and Bookstore might be open in this Phase.

## **Sunday Evening Service Schedule**

### **English Services—5 PM**

- Services are for those 7th grade through adults. Each family will be separated by 3–4 seats from the next family. Ushers will alternate seating patterns to ensure social distancing.
- Child care for ages 0–6th grade will be provided in social distanced groups.

### **Spanish Services—5 PM**

- All families 7th grade and up will be socially distanced in the Walther Center.
- Child care for ages 0-6th grade will be provided in social distanced groups.

## **Wednesday Evening Service Schedule**

Adult Connection groups in English, Spanish, and Korean will be conducted online at 7:00 PM.

**Note:** Locations for Spanish and Korean services have adequate space for social distancing.

# Phase 4

Date: TBD

**Note:** The Bus Ministry can resume in this Phase.

Promotion to the next grade will take place for children ages 5th–12th grade in this Phase.

Those with underlying conditions may return under medical advisement.

The Great Awakening Coffee Shop and Bookstore will be open in this phase.

Parking lot shuttles will resume in this Phase.

## Sunday Morning Service Schedule

### English Services—8:15 AM, 10:30

- Services are for all, and children 7th grade and older shall sit with their parent(s). Each family will be separated by 3–4 seats from the next family. Ushers will alternate seating patterns to ensure social distancing.
- Nursery and classes for ages 0–6th grade will be provided in social distanced groups at both worship hours.
- The choir and orchestra will resume, but will be split by service and will observe social distancing.

### Spanish Services—9:45 AM

- All families 7th grade and up will be socially distanced in the Walther Center.
- Child care for ages 0–6th grade will be provided in social distanced groups.

### Korean Services—11 AM in the Revels Building

**Note:** Locations for Spanish and Korean services have adequate space for social distancing.

# Phase 4

Date: TBD

## **Sunday Evening Service Schedule**

### **English Services—5 PM**

- Services are for those 1st grade through adults. Each family will be separated by 3–4 seats from the next family. Ushers will alternate seating patterns to ensure social distancing.
- Child care for ages 0–5 years will be provided in social distanced groups.

### **Spanish Services—5 PM**

- All families 1st grade and up will be socially distanced in the Walther Center.
- Child care for ages 0–5 years will be provided in social distanced groups.

## **Wednesday Evening Service Schedule**

### **English—7 PM**

- Connection Groups will be on campus in social distanced groups.
- Children's and Teen rallies for 1st–12th graders
- Child care for ages 0–4 years will be provided in social distanced groups.

# Phase 4

Date: TBD

## Spanish Services—5 PM

- All families 7th grade and up will be socially distanced in the Walther Center.
- Child care for ages 0-6th grade will be provided in social distanced groups

## Spanish—7 PM

- Connection Groups will be on campus in social distanced groups.
- Children's and Teen rallies for 1st-12th graders
- Child care for ages 0-4 years will be provided in social distanced groups.

## Korean—7 PM

- Conducted on campus in social distanced groups.

**Note:** Locations for Spanish and Korean services have adequate space for social distancing.

# Appendix

## Offering Receptacles for the Lobbies



# Appendix

## Resources

1. "COVID-19 Suggested Church Reopening Guidelines," Christian Law Association, Dr. David Gibbs
2. "Guidelines for Opening Up America Again," prepared by the White House and CDC, April 2020
3. Interim Guidance for Administrators and Leaders of Community- and Faith-Based Organizations to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>, April 2020
4. "Checklist for Churches—Reopening of Indoor Services," Pacific Justice Institute, April 2020
5. Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Faith-Based Organizations, <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/community/>



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