

Re-Gathering Plan

(Adapted from TX and GA Baptist Convention Suggestions)

What Are The Options for Re-gathering?

1. Drive-in church or out-door church

2. Sign-up worship services: The legal COVID-19 service capacity may not hold an entire congregation. So ask congregants to sign up for live services. Consider offering multiple services per week. It might be wise to allow for guests by signing fewer people up for each worship service than the maximum allowed. Remember to thoroughly clean the building between services.

3. Utilize multiple methods.

4. Small groups live and corporate worship online: Dedicate well-prepared and cleaned space for small groups/Bible studies to happen on campus. Then continue to live stream weekend worship to post online.

Re-Gathering Checklist

1. Cooperate: Consider the advice of local/national authorities. Speak well of your governing authorities no matter the speed/content of their decisions.

2. Communicate:

- Use email, phone, texts, and social media to inform the church about preparations.
- Consider using words like “clean, safe, and mindful of health needs and issues in preparation for a non-touch experience” or something similar.
- Emphasize that if they are sick, then they should not attend and can join online instead.
- Train volunteers to answer questions on procedures/policies upon return to the building.
- Communicate cleanliness and health expectations to all attendees. (Frequent hand washing, don't touch your face, social distance etc.)
- Post signs about not shaking hands and doing non-contact greetings.

3. Encourage Wisdom from At-Risk Groups: Encourage wise decisions for those who are at-risk (pre-existing conditions and those over age 65) and those who might be hesitant to gather for other health reasons. Consider asking these groups to wait to attend.

4. Screening Attendees: Consider screening attendees. Consider a temperature check on all staff and volunteers. (Sample screening questions: Do you have a cough? A fever? Have you travelled within the past 14 days? Have you been exposed to anyone who tested positive for COVID-19?) If any answer is “yes”, ask them to refrain from attending worship in person.

5. Tracking: Keep a record of attendees in case contact tracing becomes necessary.

6. Provide COVID-19 Protection:

- Offer masks. Decide whether to require masks for all attendees and volunteers (Note: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children 2 years of age and under do not wear masks or face coverings.)
- Provide hand sanitizing stations both inside and outside of the building.

-Ensure doors are propped open or have the greeters hold them open. Weather permitting, open windows and doors for ventilation.

7. Clean & Clean Again: Thoroughly clean your entire facility to CDC standards.

- Shampoo carpets and thoroughly clean all floors.
- Sanitize seats, door handles, light switches & things usually touched by the hand.
- Sanitize worship equipment: pianos, mics, drum sticks, in-ear monitor stations
- Sanitize computers, laptops, etc. after every use.
- Keep a record of when each item was cleaned.
DO NOT use water on electronics. Alcohol-based cleaners are best.
- Sanitize the pulpit and podiums after every use
- Remove hard copy Bibles and all print material from pews/church chairs.

8. Appropriate Social Distancing: If the standard is 6 feet, set your chairs 6 feet apart. Use the common standard until the standard is changed. Set your worship centers to comply with current standards and develop an entrance/exit strategy for worship services that meets requirements. Consider placing some kind of blocks in your sanctuary or classrooms to ensure social distancing. Tape, remove chairs, use cones, etc. to indicate the distance needed. If your people are from the same household, they can sit together. Consider spacing out other groups. Consider dismissing in an orderly way to ensure there is social distancing.

9. Rest rooms: Either choose to communicate that rest rooms will be closed, or develop a plan for multiple cleanings per assembly hour. If you don't think you can allow open restrooms, then it may not be time to return to the building. If your bathrooms are open, have greeters monitor the bathrooms to ensure hands are washed and social distancing is followed. Consider signage reminding people to wash hands. Consider limiting the number of people in the bathroom at one time.

10. Pre-School Area Remove everything nonessential from the room to limit surfaces for potential contamination. Thoroughly clean between uses. While children's ministry will be among the last ministries to be implemented, keep the rooms as clean as possible. Consider closing these rooms and any other rooms not in use.

12. Omit Some Elements:

- Consider having church members enter the building and immediately go into the worship service to be seated
- For door greeters, go to a smile and wave approach. NO hand shaking or hugs.
- No greeting times in worship or invent a fun way to greet others in a no-contact way.
- No passing offering plates. Place a box in the back or highlight online giving.
- No handing out bulletins. Instead project announcements on screens. Consider placing bulletins on the pews or chairs, but ask the people to take bulletins home with them.
- No Coffee and donuts
- Change the way you offer communion. Avoid passing a plate or bowl. LifeWay.com offers combined elements of communion that can be picked up as people enter – but make sure that people are not picking from a deep bowl.