

First Baptist Church of Ravenswood
Health Guidelines for Services Inside the Church Building
During the COVID-19 Pandemic
Effective May 31, 2020

In an effort to comply with Governor Jim Justice’s Executive Order 9-20 for religious entities including religious facilities, entities, groups, and religious gatherings, the leadership of First Baptist Church has implemented the following guidelines effective immediately. These guidelines pertain to services/gatherings held within the church building to ensure compliance with state and local health guidance. This plan will remain in effect until local and state guidance changes and/or FBC leadership amends. The congregation is being mailed a copy of this guidance.

1. **SAFER AT HOME ORDER:** The Governor has stressed for people to remember that the it is “safer to stay home,” while the Coronavirus19 is still circulating. Church services can be held inside the building as long as distancing and safety measures are put into place and followed. Thus, our church leadership has developed these guidelines moving forward. We ask for your full cooperation as we aim to keep our congregants safe.
2. **ILLNESS:** According to the health department, should someone who has attended one of our church services on a Sunday become ill and test positive with COVID-19 on Monday, everyone who was within 6 feet of that ill person for a period of 15 minutes or longer, would be quarantined for 14 days. No attendees in that quarantine would be tested unless they become symptomatic. However, the quarantine if deemed necessary by health officials would be mandatory. Therefore, FBC leadership asks that we all follow the precautions in this guidance to help reduce the risk of illness and quarantine. FBC will cooperate with the health department in the event of an outbreak.
3. **SERVICE TIMES:** Until further notice, FBC will only meet in the sanctuary on Sunday morning at 10:45 a.m. Our Wednesday evening Bible Study at 6:30 will be broadcast online. There will be no Sunday School, Youth Group meetings, junior church, or nursery at this time.
4. **FELLOWSHIP HALL:** The Fellowship Hall will only be used for FBC services at this time. The Fellowship Hall is not permitted for parties, community events, or family events through at least the month of June. The Community Kitchen remains suspended but may open in June for “lunch bag takeout” at the door.

5. **MEETINGS:** Standing meetings have been temporarily suspended with the exception of the Deacon meetings as they meet with Pastor Toby as part of this pandemic. Groups who need to meet or share information with each other are encouraged to meet by phone, use a service online like zoom, or share updates in writing by email or group texting. The church quarterly business meetings are on hold until the meeting can be open to in-person attendance. If your group has a pressing issue and needs to meet in person, please let the Pastor know and special arrangements will be made in consultation with the deacons for a meeting in the fellowship hall using distancing measures.
6. **FIRST DATE OF SERVICE INSIDE BUILDING:** The first worship service inside the sanctuary will be on May 24, 2020. This will allow time to monitor case counts as the state opens. Wed night service will only be available online at this time.
7. **ARRIVAL TIME:** Please do not arrive earlier than 20 minutes before the service start time (10:25). Please arrive no later than 5 minutes before the service start time (10:40) in order to be seated timely. In the event we are at capacity, you will not be able to attend the service. Remember, you can watch or listen to the service from home and not miss anything. Please keep a safe distance of at least 6 feet between you and others while inside the sanctuary and while outside of the building.
8. **ONE ENTRY/EXIT POINT:** Only the front entrance to the church will be used for Sunday worship. The fellowship hall doors and sidewalk office door entry will be closed/locked. All exits can be used in an emergency.
9. **BEFORE ENTERING THE SERVICE/BUILDING:** You will need to 1) sanitize your hands or be wearing gloves, and 2) wear a mask or face covering the nose and mouth prior to entering the door. Everyone inside of the building is expected to wear a mask. **The only exception will be during the time the pastor and worship team is in the pulpit area.** Once they come out of the pulpit, they must wear masks. If you don't have a mask, we will have some available at the door, but they are limited. Youth size masks are available.
10. ***SERVICE CHANGES:** *There will no congregational singing at this time and no choir. Persons are asked to refrain from handshakes, fist bumps or hugging. There will be no responsive readings. Singing will only be by the worship team at this time. Additionally, there will be no children's church or nursery until further notice. You should expect to see the same service format that you have been watching online.

- 11. SEATING:** The Head Usher anticipates as many as 50 people, perhaps more will be permitted in the sanctuary. Seating number can vary. Immediate family members who live in the same household may sit together. Others will be spaced apart by 6 feet or seated zig-zagged in every other pew at the discretion of the Head Usher. Only every other pew may be used. The first row will not be used on either side of the church. Please understand, you may not get to sit where you normally sit.

SEATING PLAN

- Upon arrival you will be required to sanitize your hands (or wear gloves)
- The usher will seat you starting at the front of the church (second row) to the back so that a 6-foot distance is maintained in the sanctuary.
- Once sanctuary is full the front door will be locked and sign placed on outside of door indicating we are at capacity.
- When the service is over, the usher will dismiss you row by row.
- As you are dismissed, the offering will be taken.

Teenagers or other Youth attending services will not be permitted to sit together with other youth unless they live together. Please explain this process to them.

- 12. STAY IN THE CONGREGATION AREA:** Once you are inside the church, please try to stay in your seat and refrain from walking into other parts of the building. Most areas will be closed off including the stairs. If possible, please try to use the restroom at your home before getting to the church. If needed, please use the restrooms by the office. The fellowship hall door is locked. If you are bringing a young person to church, please take them to the restroom, to reduce any wandering through the building.
- 13. YOUTH GROUPS:** Youth groups are not permitted to meet at this time. We will be working on a plan to resume youth groups later in June or July with limitations.
- 14. OFFERING:** Tithes and offerings will be received as you exit the church. We will not pass an offering plate.
- 15. COMMUNION:** Communion will resume in June. Planning for communion is underway. Details will be announced soon.
- 16. BULLETINS:** No bulletins will be distributed. Bulletins are available online or by mail prior to our services. If you need a copy of the bulletin mailed to you because you do not have Internet, please let Susan know.
- 17. *SONG BOOKS/PEW BIBLES:** Hymn books and Pew Bibles are being removed from the sanctuary. *Lyrics will not be projected on the screen in the sanctuary at this time.

18. **ALTAR CALL:** Due to social distancing, we ask that you pray from your seat. If you need special prayer at the end of the service, raise your hand, and the pastor will pray for you specifically. The pastor is available after service if needed.
19. **WHO SHOULD NOT ATTEND:** We all want to worship together, however, we all shouldn't be together at this time. Please consider staying home if you are: 1) age 65 or older; 2) if you consider yourself at high risk for serious illness because of health issues; 3) have underlying health issues or a close family member with health issues that could lead to complications for them if you contract COVID-19; and 4) are generally concerned about being around others for an hour in one location. Further, if you have a conscientious objection to adhering to the guidance that is outlined here, we ask that you watch the service from home instead of being upset during church. The church services will continue to be streamed live over the Internet.
20. **I DON'T/WON'T WEAR A MASK OR FACE COVERING:** We understand some of you cannot wear a mask due to breathing issues, or you simply refuse to wear a mask as part of a conscientious objection. However, please understand that at this time, masks/face coverings are required to be worn in order to attend FBC's worship service inside the building. These face coverings must cover your mouth and nose while inside the building. If you are uncomfortable wearing a mask, please watch or listen to the service from home.
21. **ILLNESS RECENTLY:** If you are ill, think you might be becoming ill, have a persistent cough or sneezing, have had a fever or chills, or have experienced the loss of smell or loss of taste recently, then please stay home. If you have been in close contact with someone known to have had COVID-19, please stay home. There is no need whatsoever to put others at risk, even if you are only experiencing bad allergies.
22. **EXTRA CLEANING:** If you are willing to help clean the church after the service, please let the office know. Our janitors typically clean prior to every service, the day before, but we will need additional cleaning in the areas that will be in use.
23. **AFTER SERVICE ACCOUNTING:** If you assist with finances after the service, you will need to wear gloves and mask during your work. This work will be done in the fellowship hall not in the library.
24. **CONFERENCE CALL:** Please attend a toll-free conference call hosted by Pastor Toby on Thursday, May 21 at 6 p.m. to discuss this guidance and how we are proceeding with our services. The conference call phone number and access code are included in the cover letter with this guidance. Please call into the conference call between 5:55 p.m. - 6:00p.m. The meeting begins at 6:00 and is expected to last about an hour.