



May 15, 2020

Dear First Baptist friends:

I know that we are all anxious for life, including the life of the church, to return to normal. As I write you this letter, we are preparing for our tenth consecutive Sunday of live stream only worship. This, of course, is in response to the current pandemic impacting our community and the entire world.

As the nation, state and community begin to re-open, your church council has been engaged in a thoughtful process of discerning what our own plan for resuming in-person worship should be as a congregation. Each ministry area has been consulted, with attention being given to CDC guidelines, Indiana's "Back on Track" guide for churches, American Baptist Churches resources, and the guidance of our own local COVID-19 task force.

As I wrote in a prior communication, just because we can open does not necessarily mean that we should right away. Our congregation demographics reflect a large majority of senior adults who comprise a good part of our volunteer base. We have consistently been told that this demographic is at high-risk for the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, in an abundance of caution, and taking every measure we can to prepare for the resumption of in-person worship, the church council has set the date of Sunday, June 7 as our target date to reopen for in-person worship.

The enclosed "Plan for Resuming In-Person Worship Gatherings" spells out the terms under which we will reconvene for Sunday worship. Please take some time to read through it. A member of the church will be giving you a call to see if you have any questions or concerns. You are also most welcome to reach out to me or our church council leadership with your questions.

As Baptists we have long held to our individual and congregational freedoms to guide our faith. To that end, your church council has determined the timeline and process we feel best fits our congregation. However, I would encourage you to prayerfully consider your own timeline and response to this opportunity to regather for in-person worship. There is no pressure for anyone to attend or volunteer in a way that makes them uncomfortable. We will continue to provide a quality live stream opportunity for worship, in addition to our in-person experience. We look forward to connecting with you in the way that best meets your personal needs at this time. God bless you.

Pastor Dan



Our Plan for Resuming In-Person Worship Gatherings

- The first in-person worship service will be held on June 7.
- Mindful of CDC and Indiana’s “Back on Track” guidelines, persons age 65 and over, and those with compromised health situations are encouraged and asked to continue to worship via Live Stream.
- Please enter and exit the building by the main entrances (circle drive or kitchen door) to help us maintain traffic flow and continue to keep surfaces clean and sanitized. Upon entry, please proceed to a worship seating area (sanctuary, chapel or fellowship hall) to avoid congregating with others.
- All present will be asked to wear a mask or face covering. (Masks will be made available to those who do not have one.)
- Persons will be seated by ushers, safely distanced, in the Sanctuary, Chapel or Fellowship Hall. Household groups may sit together. A live feed of the service will be broadcast in the Chapel & Fellowship Hall. Ushers will dismiss seating areas to avoid congregating.
- Families are asked to keep children with them in worship. There will be no nursery, children’s programming or second hour classes.
- Coffee bar, Coffee Fellowship, Candy dishes and food receptions will be suspended at present.
- Worship spaces will be thoroughly cleaned each week before the next weekend’s services. Mid-week Bible study will continue to meet online, not in person.
- The following modifications to worship will be implemented for now:
 - Offering stations available at entrances
 - No choir at present
 - No handshakes or hugs (Waves are acceptable)
 - No communion at present
 - Sing into your mask, or in your head.

A task force will monitor our process, to recommend modifications needed.