

Dear Morningview Baptist Family,

(DATE)

As we begin to hear more from our authorities about the easing of social distancing measures in the coming weeks, we want to be rightly prepared to resume congregational meetings in a safe manner that accords with civil directives. It is clear that COVID-19 is going to remain a concern for some time, so we want to take proper measures to ensure the health and well-being of all our members. To that end, we have compiled this list of items to help us all navigate what the “new normal” will be as we gather in the immediate aftermath of this pandemic.

SMALL GROUPS: It is possible that our civil authorities will “reopen” our state in stages, shifting the permissible size for a group gathering from 10 up to maybe 50, and then maybe 100, etc. Until this number reaches a threshold that allows our whole congregation to gather (350+), we will encourage our adult group leaders and Sunday School teachers to discuss meeting possibilities with their respective groups. Video conference meetings may continue, or if the majority of a particular group is favorable toward resuming in-person meetings, they may do so in a manner most conducive to biblical fellowship and safety. Such meetings should be coordinated through Jon English Lee, our Pastor of Discipleship.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE: When it is permissible for our whole congregation to gather again, we will resume both our Sunday Services: Morning Worship at 10:30am, and Evening Worship at 5:30pm (Please Note the Adjusted Time). We will not immediately resume Sunday School, and we will have an early beginning to our summer schedule of having no Wednesday activities on campus. Regarding Sunday School, leaders at every level have expressed reservations toward returning to classes like normal. Many of our teachers have family members who remain more susceptible to this virus. So we think it best to delay the start of Sunday school at least a month. Regarding Wednesday evenings, our normal activities will resume in August. As is our summer practice, we encourage members to plan and gather for smaller fellowships in each other's homes on Wednesday evenings.

NURSERY/WORSHIP CARE: When we resume congregational gatherings on Sundays, we will not have nursery/preschool care during our worship services for at least the first month. The reason for this decision is the same as the reason to delay the start of Sunday School. Plus, our small ones tend to interact in a much more physical manner, and we do not want to risk their health. Thus, you may bring your preschoolers with you to the Worship Services. We know it can be hard, but we love our little ones (even their noises!), and it is a great opportunity to welcome them and train them. But if you have need, our 1st Floor North Chapel and our Main Lobby will be set up as alternative spaces for viewing the live stream.

SANCTUARY SEATING: For the first several weeks of congregational gathering, we will encourage a degree of social distancing by keeping every other pew empty and by asking you to sit at least 6 feet away from non-family members when you share the same pew.

LORD'S SUPPER/OFFERINGS: For the near future, we will no longer pass plates for either the Lord's Supper or for Offerings. For communion, we have designed a new procedure where we will come forward by rows to receive elements that will be pre-prepared for each individual. A deacon will personally deliver the elements to any person unable to walk forward. Regarding offerings, our ushers will be holding offering plates at every entrance/exit to the sanctuary both before and after the services. Please drop your offerings in those plates as you arrive or depart. Remember that you can also give online through Morningview's web site, or if you have not yet registered to use REALM, this is a great time to do so. Members can give and track their giving through their personal REALM account.

MASKS: In accordance with guidelines being given by our medical professionals, we support (not require) the wearing of masks to any and all public places and gatherings for as long as you personally feel it necessary.

PHYSICAL GREETINGS: Also in accordance with guidelines being given by our medical professionals, we ask that everyone continue to refrain from shaking hands, hugging, or having any physical contact with anyone outside of your own immediate family. I know we miss one another, but we must share our joy and show our love for one another in more reserved ways during this season.

BUILDING SANITATION: In addition to normal cleaning procedures, we will continue to take extra measures to sanitize door knobs, push plates, handrails, and all other commonly touched surfaces. We will also continue to have hand-sanitizer available for use at key points in the building. Please help us by washing your hands, and the hands of your children, often.

NON-ATTENDANCE: We appreciate the fact that many of you are more cautious and may have greater concerns about the health of your family due to preexisting conditions that place you at more of a risk for contracting COVID-19. If you feel it is best to remain home, we support your decision and remain committed to caring for your spiritual, relational, and physical needs. For the benefit of all who are homebound, we will continue to live stream our two Sunday worship services just as we did before this pandemic.

One thing we have all realized during the past weeks is the number of things we had previously taken for granted, including the privilege we have to gather for worship and fellowship. As restrictions are removed, remember that how we recover from this time is just as critical as how we have weathered it. So as we continue to grow through this challenging season, I pray that we each will have a renewed love for Christ and His church. As Paul tells us in Romans 12:5, we “are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” It is good for us to be cautious, but it is necessary that we work together to get back to regular biblical practices as soon as possible. I love you all dearly!

Pastor Shawn