

Dear Church,

As you can imagine, the situation involving COVID19 is ever evolving, and making decisions as to how and when to re-open our church services and building use has been a challenge. I wrote a letter earlier that outlined the four commands that are driving the decision making process, and that has not changed. We have become more and more aware of the challenge of having indoor services at this time considering the various perspectives about this virus among our own body. Eph. 4:1-3 says, ***“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*** I cannot think of a more appropriate passage of Scripture for the situation we find ourselves in. Part of bearing with one another is respecting various perspectives and concerns about this virus, though they may be different. We also know that every single person is valuable to the body and most (if not all) have a strong desire to gather together for worship. Our task as elders was to put together a plan that provides a safe way for all our people to gather as one body. We have developed a phased plan to help us wrap our minds around how and when our buildings and ministries will be opened up. Our hope is to provide at least some clarity to this question. We also realize that things are always changing, so we do not view this plan as “set in stone”. We fully expect to revise it as new information comes out. The following graphic is our attempt to help make sense of all this. For reference, based on the Governor’s lifting of some restrictions this past Monday, we consider ourselves to be in Phase 1 of this plan.

FBC Phased Opening Matrix

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Corporate Worship	No corporate worship. Online viewing from home of recorded service.	On-line streaming as primary means of at home worship. A socially distanced outdoor service is offered dependent on weather.	Indoor worship with limited group size and under social distancing guidelines. Online service available for those staying home.	Resume traditional in-person worship service.
Children’s Ministry	No in-person children’s ministries. Grab-bags of materials available for families to use at home.	No in-person children’s ministries. Grab-bags of materials available for families to use at home. Children worship with families at outdoor service.	No in-person children’s ministries. Grab-bags of materials available for families to use at home. Children worship with families during service.	Resume all children’s ministries.
Group Meetings (Life Groups, D-Groups, Youth, etc.)	No in-person group meetings. Groups to connect online.	On-line meetings are encouraged. Groups of up to 10 persons meeting indoors are permitted within state guidelines.	Groups of up to 25 persons meeting indoors are permitted, following social distancing guidelines.	Resume all group meetings
Buildings and Grounds Use, including Extra Curricular Activities (Gym use, outings, baby showers, etc.)	All buildings and offices closed. Limited maintenance and security checks. All activities are cancelled	Limited access to buildings and offices, primarily for maintenance and security checks. Small groups up to 10 people are permitted by church authorization and within state guidelines. Outdoor areas (fire pit, parking areas) are open for socially distanced groups.	Access to buildings and offices for small groups up to 25 people permitted by church authorization and within state guidelines. Outdoor areas (fire pit, parking areas) are open for socially distanced groups.	Resume all buildings and grounds use and activities.
Staff	Remote work as much as possible. Visits to FBC members and public spaces only as necessary using extreme caution.	Staff permitted to use office, however work from home is encouraged to limit exposure. Visits to FBC members and public spaces with caution and only as necessary.	Staff permitted to use office. Visits to FBC members and public spaces as needed within state guidelines.	Resume staff activities, buildings and office use, and visits with FBC members and general public.
What driving factors move us between phases?	The elder board will determine when FBC moves from one phase to another based on our understanding of the situation within our body as well as in coordination with guidance provided by our state and local government.			

The elders have put together a video for you to watch that helps you understand the heart behind this decision. You can access that video here: https://youtu.be/p_UYh3BTRWI.

As you can see in this phased plan, we will be offering an outdoor service starting June 7th at 9:30am. This service is weather permitting, and if it is canceled due to weather, we will direct people toward our online service. We will still be recording our service for those that do not feel comfortable gathering together at our outdoor service and for home worship if our service is canceled. We have developed a page on our website that will give you the information that you need to participate in the service. On this page you will find:

- Information about the outdoor service.
- Access to lyrics for the songs that we will be singing that morning in a pdf document, which you can either print out ahead of time or view from your mobile device.
- Suggestions on what to bring to help with the sun or bugs.
- Information about cancellation. If the service is canceled due to weather, we will post it on that page, email out that information the morning of the service, and post it on our FBC Facebook page.

You can access that page here: <https://www.fbclowell.org/Outdoor-Service>

If you have any questions, feel free to email me at pj@fbclowell.org or call me at 616-916-3063. We know that any decision that is made is a tough one, but we are moving forward with what we feel is best for our body given all the factors that need to be considered to make a wise decision with the whole body in mind.

Blessings,

Pastor Jon on Behalf of the Elders of FBC