



BAYLESS BAPTIST CHURCH

Regathering Plan

INTRODUCTION

Dear Friends,

Even as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a drastic impact around the world as well as within our own community, I know all of us are eager to return to some sense of normal, especially in our corporate worship together.

The Bible is clear that God's people are meant to be together. Barring extreme circumstances like the ones we are in, God warns us against forsaking worship together (Hebrews 10:25), and even while we are grateful for technological solutions, they are no replacement for corporate worship and, unfortunately, exclude those unable to access them. It is like walking on a broken ankle. This is not a "new normal."

On the other hand, as eager as we are to once more praise Jesus and gather under his word in the same room, we are also instructed to pray for and submit to our governing authorities who are tasked with preserving the lives and well-being of their citizens. We do not believe that our religious liberty has been infringed upon or removed, and we must trust God's sovereign goodness when he imposes unpredicted and unprecedented limits on us. He is not caught by surprise in these times and has purposes for our corporate and personal holiness even in a pandemic.

All that being said, national, regional and local leaders have indicated that we are ready to explore a strategic return to activities which include work, social interaction and worship. To that end, our leaders have devised the following plan to return to corporate worship.

The following pages of this document will detail a regathering plan that includes:

- A **Wellness Policy** for the entire church
- An overview of the different **Phases** of church operation¹
- An initial **Timeline** for regathering the church that is tied to our phases
- **Details** for worship service, ministry, and campus event norms during each phase
- A **Plan** for what to do if additional infection waves and shutdowns occur in the future

¹ These phases are modeled after the guidelines provided by the White House in the document entitled "Opening Up America Again" (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>).

We believe each of these components is essential in creating a wholistic regathering plan that addresses the safety concerns of the present and accounts for any unforeseen circumstances in the future. A church-wide **Wellness Policy** sets some sickness and sanitization standards for on-campus gathering. Clear **Phases** allow us to distinguish between levels of operation at any time and clearly define expected changes in operation when moving between them. A **Timeline** helps our families plan their engagement with the church and its ministries accordingly. Phase **Details** give a more granular look into how each ministry will function during each Phase. Finally, a **Plan** for the future will allow us to smoothly revert to any prior Phase based on the needs of our community or the public health status of the city, county, or country.

As you know, the situation is fluid, and directives can often be competing and conflicting. Making decisions like this are complicated and fraught with frustration and concern. We encourage you to pray for wisdom for your leaders as they seek to prioritize safety for our congregation, concern for our community and neighbors, and respectful adherence to the developing guidelines. We also encourage you to model humility and patience with those who disagree, outdoing one another in showing honor, since these are not issues worth dividing over.

We are staying informed regarding recent regulations and directives, and even this plan is only a projection which may need to be modified as circumstances warrant. Also, should we experience a new wave of infections and sicknesses in the fall, we will adjust our current timeline and active Phase accordingly.

Please contact the church directly with questions or concerns or to give your feedback. You may do so via phone: (314) 638-4408; or email: church@baylessbaptist.org.

You are loved.

In Christ,

Evan Skelton

Lead Pastor

WELLNESS POLICY

For the foreseeable future, we are implementing the following campus procedures to help ensure a clean and sanitized environment for everyone in our building, and we will update these procedures as needed based upon information released by federal, state, and local agencies until normal operating procedures are allowed.

Restricting Attendance Based on Symptoms

If you or any of your family members display any of the following symptoms, we ask that you remain away from the church campus until the symptoms have subsided:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

This list does not include all possible symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Vulnerable Populations

Following governmental regulations, **we encourage all members of vulnerable populations to consider their participation in gatherings and activities with caution and care.** We will continue to offer our Sunday services online in order to allow high-risk and immune-compromised individuals to continue to self-isolate and to worship from home.

Vulnerable population members include any individual at high risk for severe illness and complications from COVID-19, specifically adults over the age of 65 and people with pre-existing medical conditions. Such conditions include: chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, diabetes, serious heart conditions, severe obesity, chronic kidney disease, liver disease or those who are immunocompromised from cancer treatments, transplants, or from taking medications that weaken the immune system, like corticosteroids.

Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Sanitation

Our cleaning service will be making a thorough sweep of the campus to complete a detailed cleaning and disinfection of high-traffic areas and high-touch surfaces. High-traffic areas include kitchens and break areas. High-touch surfaces include tables, desks, countertops, doorknobs, light switches, handles, faucets, computers, phones, and other equipment or electronic devices. They will conduct routine disinfection schedules to clean surfaces using soap and water, followed by disinfection with an EPA-registered cleaner effective against SARs-CoV-2.

Social Distancing Practices

Social distancing (staying at least six feet apart) will remain a common practice as in-person attendance resumes and increases:

- Limit gatherings in a common area or meeting room at any one time to **10 people** to enforce social distancing protocols. If this isn't feasible, people should take steps to sit at least **six feet apart** from one another.
- Limit **two people at one time** in all high-traffic choke points such as bathrooms.
- Consider **outdoor areas** surrounding the building as viable spaces to meet and socialize.

PHASES OVERVIEW

GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES

	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	Normal Operation
Social Distancing	Strict	Moderate	Limited	None
Vulnerable Populations	Stay Home	Stay Home	Distance Required	Discretionary
Max Group Size	10	50	Discretionary Limit	No Limit

BAYLESS GUIDELINES

	PHASE 1 <i>March-June 7th</i>	PHASE 2 <i>June 14th-July 5th*</i>	PHASE 3 <i>July 12th-August?*</i>	Normal Operation
Social Distancing	Campus Closed	Church-Insisted	Self-Enforced	No Enforcement
Masks	Campus Closed	Recommended	Recommended	Optional
Worship Services	Online Only	Resume w/ Caution	Restricted Schedule	Normal Schedule
Bible Studies	Paused	Paused	Resume w/ Caution	Normal Schedule
Bayless Kids	Paused	Paused	Resume w/ Caution	Normal Schedule
Campus Events	Paused	Paused	Resume w/ Caution	Normal Schedule

** These dates are subject to change.*

REGATHERING TIMELINE

Based on the Phases Overview above, our tentative timeline for Phase implementation is as follows:

Phase 1 (*Paused Gatherings*)

- **March–June 7th**
- *Key Changes Include:*
 - All on-campus ministry events are paused.
 - Worship services will be online-only.

Phase 2 (*Resumed Gatherings w/ Strong Safety Protocols*)

- **June 14th**
- *Key Changes Include:*
 - Cautious resumption of corporate worship at 10:45am in in main auditorium with overflow in Fellowship Hall.
 - Bayless Kids ministry paused, though families with young children may worship in the Fellowship Hall.
 - Vulnerable populations encouraged to worship together in small groups (6 or less) from home.

Phase 3 (*Resumed Gatherings w/ Recommended Practices*)

- **July 12th**
- *Key Changes Include:*
 - Bayless Kids ministry, student ministry, members meetings will resume.
 - On-campus Bible studies/Sunday School may resume with additional precautions.

PHASE 2 DETAILS

(RESUMED GATHERINGS W/ STRONG SAFETY PROTOCOLS)

Social Distancing

- The church campus is reopened under social distancing guidelines.
- Church leadership will insist upon social distancing guidelines in the worship service, but they will be self-enforced in gathering spaces like the foyer and restrooms.

Masks

- Masks and mouth coverings are not required, but they are **recommended** for all persons gathering on the church campus.

Worship Services

- On-campus corporate worship will resume with **additional precautions** made for appropriate social-distancing. This includes:
 - *a new seating pattern in the auditorium*
 - *an adjusted greeting time instead of handshakes/hugs*
 - *hand sanitizer at dedicated stations*
 - *a pause in serving coffee/water (you are encouraged to bring your own)*
 - *propped doors*
 - *digital rather than paper bulletins*
 - *Communion by sealed individual service*
 - *deep cleaning of all areas of the church building during the week*
- We will **continue streaming the service online** for those who continue to worship from home.
- The main auditorium will be limited to **25% of seating capacity** (65 persons).
- The service will be **streamed live to our Fellowship Hall** for the convenience of families with children as well as overflow guests should the need arise.

Bayless Kids

- All on-campus Bayless Kids events are **paused**.

Bible Studies

- On-campus Bible studies remain **paused**.
- However, vulnerable populations are encouraged to worship together in **small groups** (6 or less) **from home**.

PHASE 3 DETAILS

(RESUMED GATHERINGS W/ RECOMMENDED PRACTICES)

Social Distancing

- The church campus is open under social distancing guidelines.
- Church leadership will insist upon social distancing guidelines in the worship service, but they will be self-enforced in gathering spaces like the foyer and restrooms.

Masks

- Masks and mouth coverings are not required, but they are **recommended** for all persons gathering on the church campus.

Worship Services

- On-campus corporate worship will continue with **additional precautions** made for appropriate social-distancing. This includes:
 - *a new seating pattern in the auditorium*
 - *resumed greeting time respecting one another's contact preferences*
 - *hand sanitizer at dedicated stations*
 - *open coffee/water station TBD*
 - *digital rather than paper bulletins*
 - *Communion by sealed individual service*
 - *deep cleaning of all areas of the church building during the week*
- We will continue streaming the service online for those who continue to worship from home.
- The main auditorium will be limited to **25% of seating capacity** (65 persons).
- The service will be **streamed live to our Fellowship Hall** for the convenience of families with children as well as overflow guests should the need arise.

Bayless Kids

- All on-campus Bayless Kids events will **resume**, though class sizes may be restricted and additional (child-safe) sanitation precautions will be made.

Bible Studies

- On-campus Bible studies will **resume**. However, individual teachers may take **added precautions** such as restricting class sizes, meeting outdoors, etc.

Members Meeting

- Monthly Members Meetings will **resume** with **added precautions** for social distancing concerns.
- Social distancing will be self-enforced by the event attenders.

WHAT'S NEXT?

This plan, its phases, and its timeline are all predicated upon continuously improving circumstances surrounding COVID-19. If we experience a new wave of infections and sicknesses in the fall, we will adjust our current timeline and active Phase accordingly. Having clearly defined Phases helps us transition smoothly from one Phase to another. We will communicate any and all Phase transitions to the church immediately. For questions or concerns regarding our Regathering Plan, please contact our Administrative Assistant, Ashley Stier, at ashley@baylessbaptist.com.

Until then, we're going to stick to our current trajectory, continue to trust God's sovereignty, continue to serve the needy, and minister to you and your family through these challenging times.

We love you, Bayless! We're in this together.