

A Plan to Reopen Goshen Baptist Church in Phases

Introduction: The last time that Goshen Baptist Church had an on-campus service was Sunday, March 15. Due to the spread of COVID-19 and the government social distancing restrictions that accompanied, GBC voluntarily suspended all on-campus services and activities beginning the week of March 16. As we look to the possibility of social distancing restrictions being lifted in a phased approach in the weeks and months ahead, this is a plan to consider how GBC may safely begin meeting together again in accordance with remaining social distancing restrictions. This plan was developed by consulting the [White House Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#).

Phase 0: Extreme Physical Distancing/Stay At Home Order

- All on-campus services and activities remain suspended until Stay at Home Order is lifted and we enter Phase 1 of reopening.
- Continue to produce video sermons to be viewed via YouTube, Facebook, and DVD.
- Continue to host weekly congregational ZOOM meeting for singing, prayer, and fellowship.
- A weekly Bible study will be held via ZOOM.
- Send communication via email and letter.
- Utilize online giving and mailed checks for tithes and offerings.

Phase 1: Strict Physical Distancing

- All inside services and activities remain suspended for the length of Phase 1.
- When Phase 1 begins, we will begin holding an outdoor Sunday morning service at 9am. This service will continue for the duration of Phase 1.
 - Service will be on the back field behind the church building.
 - The service will be limited to 1 hour to minimize need for bathroom facilities.
 - Those identified as especially vulnerable to COVID-19 should consider remaining in their vehicles. They will be able to hear the service through their FM radio or by rolling down their windows.
 - Those choosing to participate in the service outside their cars should bring their own chair. A limited number of chairs will be available under the pavilion for those who may need them. Participants are also encouraged to use outdoor canopies to provide protection from the elements.
 - Anyone outside their vehicle will be required to wear a face mask. Those leading the service will wear a face mask when they are not speaking or singing. Participants should bring their own face mask. A limited number of masks will be available for those who may not have one.
 - All participants must maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet apart. This requirement does not apply to family members of the same household.
 - Hand sanitizer stations will be available.
 - Restrooms will be available in case of emergency.
 - In the event of light rain, the service will go on. In the case of forecasted heavy rain, the service for that week will be canceled and a video message will be available via YouTube, Facebook, and DVD.
- The Sunday morning sermon will be available on YouTube, Facebook, and DVD.

- No in-person small groups will meet during Phase 1.
- A weekly Bible study will be held via ZOOM.
- Continue to use online and mail in giving. Also provide opportunity for folks to drop offering in a bucket as they arrive. No passing of a plate.

Phase 2: Moderate Physical Distancing

- We will ease back into gathering inside for worship during Phase 2.
- We will use 2-3 Sunday services to allow for appropriate social distancing.
- Services will be spaced out enough to allow for one group to leave and the next group to arrive without intermingling.
- The facility will be disinfected between services. The fellowship hall may be used for a service to make this possible.
- Anyone inside the building will be required to wear a face mask. Those leading the service will wear a face mask when they are not speaking or singing. Participants should bring their own face mask. A limited number of masks will be available for those who may not have one.
- Participants will be encouraged to maintain adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet apart. This guidance does not apply to family members of the same household.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be available.
- Adults may meet for in-person small groups either in homes or in the church building at a time when the building is not being occupied for worship services.
- Continue to use online and mail in giving. Also provide opportunity for folks to drop offering in bucket as they arrive for service. No passing of the plate.
- Doors will be opened by greeters.
- There will be no children's activities through the end of Phase 2.

Phase 3: Limited Physical Distancing

- We will ease back into a more normal routine for gathering during Phase 3.
- This could still include multiple services to allow for social distancing.
- This may include resuming Sunday School and some limited children's activities (i.e. nursery, children's church).
- Hand sanitizer stations will still be available.
- Face masks may be required.
- Giving may still need to follow the plan for Phase 2.
- Special precautions will be taken for observing the Lord's Supper.
- Specifics will be worked out as we move through the phases and get closer to this point.

Additional Considerations:

- There remains uncertainty regarding specific restrictions that will be in place from state and local government at each phase.
- This plan is to get us thinking and planning. The plan will undoubtedly require adjustments. There may be setbacks. Patience will be a necessity.
- If we are still in Phase 1 when Fall arrives, we may have to move our outdoor service to the afternoon.

- If we are still in Phase 1 as Fall turns to Winter, we may need to explore our options for utilizing the church building to meet in smaller groups.
- In each phase, we will seek to balance our Biblical mandate to gather, submission to government authorities, and the safety of everyone as we resume gathering.
- While those most vulnerable to the virus may need to limit their interaction more than others, we will not forget them as we move through these phases.