

Dear FBC Yazoo City Family of Faith,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord! God bless you for your devotion and perseverance in faith over these past three months in this interesting time of COVID-19. God bless you and thank you that as a church and staff you have continued to press forward to trust, seek, obey, serve, and glorify God in your church and life, even in these trying and unusual times. I have been so blessed by the FBCYC ministry team, the audio/visual team, the TV ministry team, your leadership, and your church family in your faithfulness and perseverance during these days, and for the wonderful worship experiences they have helped facilitate each Sunday in the worship services. Your ministry team has also done a great job in discussing and wrestling with the issues involved in us returning to church physically in the safest manner possible, and I greatly appreciate their wisdom and service. Please join me in expressing thanks to them every opportunity you get.

We also praise God for the leadership from our government and healthcare leaders in our state and nation in guiding us through these unprecedented times. Please continue to pray for God's perfect wisdom, guidance, and strength for them as they press forward in leading us through this battle. We are especially thankful for the recent guidelines and input from Governor Tate Reeves in giving guidance and encouragement to reopening churches in a prayerful, gradual, and safe manner. In response to the information in his eight-page document, *Safe Worship: Guidelines for In-Person Worship Services*, here are plans for reopening church worship at FBC Yazoo City, MS:

- The weekly broadcasts of our worship service at 11 a.m. will continue to be available through livestream on the church website (www.fbcyazoo.org), the church's Facebook page, on radio at Power 107.1 FM, or Yazoo City Cablevision channel 72. We understand that as we start meeting physically again, there will be people in the high-risk groups – those over 60, young children, those with weakened immune systems, those battling illness, those taking medical treatments, and those overcoming medical procedures – who will still not need to immediately return to church for their safety. Some people will not want to return immediately out of personal concern or worries. This is completely understandable, and if you are in any of these groups we want you to know it is alright to wait to return to church until the threat from COVID-19 subsides in a greater way, or until you have a greater peace from God about returning to church. By the way, all these media outlets engaged in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a blessing in fulfilling the Great Commission in a greater way in our community and world.
- We will begin physical gatherings for worship again on Sunday morning, June 7, with a 9 a.m. worship service in the church fellowship hall, and an 11 a.m. worship service in the church sanctuary. Having two worship services in two

different locations will help decrease the possibility of spreading germs and also alleviate the need for immediate deep cleaning for multiple services held in the same location. The Governor's guidelines requests that churches not exceed 50 percent of their capacity in people attending a service, so two services will help us ensure we meet those guidelines as well. Plus, we will start out asking that only people over 60 years of age attend the 9 a.m. service in the church fellowship hall, allowing our seniors a safer environment to attend worship.

- For the month of June, we will not have physical gatherings for Sunday School or small group meetings on Sundays or Wednesdays, and the church leadership will reevaluate holding these meetings on a month to month basis. We encourage Sunday School classes and small groups to use the 10 a.m. hour on Sunday mornings to teach Sunday School through Zoom or other online/technological options. On Wednesday nights, I will continue to lead Bible study and Prayer Meeting via Facebook Live on my Facebook page, which will then be made available through the church Facebook page. John and Tiki will also be making available teaching and fellowship times for the children and students on Wednesdays as well through technological options. If you have prayer requests, text them to me at 601-559-9352 or contact Jessica Wever.
- For the month of June, there will not be nursery or childcare available during the worship services, and this will also be evaluated on a month to month basis by the church leadership. Children sitting with their families are welcome in our services if you choose to bring them.
- In worship services, we ask that families that have been in quarantine together to sit together as a group. We also ask people to spread out through the sanctuary, accommodating a six foot distance in all directions between you and the nearest other family/individual. We ask that you keep a pew between you and the people in front of you and behind you, and stagger your seating where you are not sitting directly behind the group in front of you. To assist in this "social distance" seating, the staff has placed tape on pews where family groups should sit. In the church fellowship hall, we will spread the chairs out to accommodate a six foot distance in all directions.
- We strongly encourage people who are not feeling well, have a fever or a cough, have traveled in highly infected areas, or have been in possible contact with an infected individual, to please stay at home and worship through one of our media sources, and do not come to church worship for 14 days until you are adequately able to assess your health. Please take your temperature before you come to church each week, and if you have a fever, please stay at home and worship online. Remember the possible symptoms of COVID-19 are cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fever, loss of taste or smell, vomiting, or diarrhea.

- As we return to church, we must please resist greeting or fellowshiping with handshakes and hugs. Please continue to practice the 6-foot “social distancing” in our personal interactions. Wave to one another, talk to one another, but maintain social distance and do not engage in physical contact with another person. Also avoid congregating in groups in common areas of the church.
- Pay special attention when entering and leaving the worship service to maintain the six foot social distance and not stop and congregate for an extended time. Keep the traffic flow safe and steady as you exit the building.
- In this initial period in worship, we will not have congregational singing, but instead we will have special music and solos by individuals and/or small ensembles. Medical professionals have warned that congregational singing could pose a great danger in spreading germs and the virus in a service.
- We will hold the worship services to 45 minutes in this initial period to limit the time we are grouped together.
- We will not pass the offering plates during an offertory, but we will station ushers/security standing near offering plates/collection boxes at the entrance doors as people enter and leave the worship services to collect weekly offerings. Please continue to faithfully give your tithes and offerings to support the ministry of FBC Yazoo City. You can also continue to tithe and give by mailing your offering in to the church office, through online giving on the church website, through text giving, or through bank drafts. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT** as we recover from this challenging time, so please be faithful to God by tithing through FBCYC to support the ministry of His church.
- We welcome and encourage people to wear protective masks and protective gloves while attending church services. In fact, a wonderful group of ladies at FBC Yazoo City has sewn protective masks to give to people who need one. While they last, you can pick up one of these masks, or contact Missy Helton or Jessica Wever in the church office to receive one.
- We encourage you to regularly wash your hands and use hand sanitizer often before, during, and after church.
- We have removed all the pew hymnals, Bibles, envelopes, and pencils for this initial period to reduce the risk of passing germs from these items.
- We will not produce a Sunday bulletin for this initial period as well to reduce the risk of passing germs.

- We will also prop the entrance doors open on Sundays to help avoid contamination through touching door knobs or panels. Thus, we will need to have the church security teams monitor these doors closely.
- In this initial period, we will not make coffee stations available at the church, and please avoid use of any of the water fountains.
- We will also strive to ensure that the facilities receive a deep and thorough cleaning each week after our services.
- If anyone happens to test positive for COVID-19 after attending a worship service, please inform us ASAP so we can take appropriate action in reporting and informing those in attendance.
- Please continue to pray for God to direct you each day to at least three people you will commit to reach out and minister to in our church and community, such as check on elderly or sick church members to assist them and run needed errands for them; encourage people who are not able to leave their homes by contacting them to talk and minister to and pray for them; minister to medical professionals, hospital, nursing home, and hospice staffs during these stressful times; and help with financial or ministry assistance for workers and businesses they may face financial struggles during this time.
- Continue to pray fervently for God's healing, deliverance, blessing, protection, conviction, provision, and comfort during these difficult days for our community, state, nation, and world.

I want to again say a special thanks to your wonderful staff ministry team at FBC Yazoo City. We have had numerous discussions sharing needs, issues, and ideas in preparing for this moment of return to physical meeting at church, and their insights and ideas laid a great foundation for this plan. Even with these adjustments in this reopening phase, I am crying out as David did in Psalm 122:1, "I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'" I can't wait to meet physically as the body of Christ on June 7! God bless you and thank you for the blessing and privilege of walking by faith and serving Christ with you during this interim period.

For God's Glory,

Dr. John Pace - Numbers 6:24-26