



**Faith in Action!**

# **MBC COVID-19 Re-opening Guidance**

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# Contents

1. Objective
2. Approach
3. Phases of Pandemic and Triggers
4. Hierarchy of Controls
5. Basic CDC Requirements While at Church
6. Assessing Risk Under Specific Settings
7. Change Management
8. Things to Consider in Re-opening
9. Planning Template
10. Steps in Preparing Re-opening Plan
11. Individual Ministry Focus

# Objective

Build a plan to provide guidance on how the church can responsibly and methodically resume activities at 26 Wilson Avenue after the shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to accomplish this while safeguarding against anyone being exposed to or infected by the virus while engaging in church activities.

# Approach

The fundamental approach we are suggesting is to identify each church activity (both overall church and individual ministry level) and see how it can navigate through the stages of reopening while following all applicable internal and external guidelines.

Re-opening will mean different things to different organizations so we should be careful to filter through what is relevant to houses of worship and pay attention to those purposes remain faithful to the will of God.

It is important to build the plan ahead of time so that it can be activated on short notice. The re-opening process is infinitely more complicated than the shutdown process for the Church so we should engage all available resources to create a thorough roadmap.

# Phase I - Slow the Spread

**The goal of Phase I is to save lives by:**

1. Slowing the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 across the United States by reducing the effective reproduction number of infections,
2. Increasing testing capacity to accommodate the ability to test everyone with symptoms and their close contacts, and
3. Ensuring the health care system has the capacity to safely treat both COVID-19 patients and others requiring care.

A successful Phase I will allow for a significant relaxation of physical distancing measures and a progression to Phase II, when more targeted, case-based interventions are possible.

## **Trigger to move to Phase II**

To guard against the risk that large outbreaks or epidemic spread could reignite once we lift our initial efforts to “slow the spread,” the trigger for a move to Phase II should be:

1. The number of new cases has declined for at least 14 days;
2. Rapid diagnostic testing capacity is sufficient to test, at minimum, all people with COVID-19 symptoms, as well as close contacts and those in essential roles;
3. The healthcare system is able to safely care for all patients, including having appropriate personal protective equipment for healthcare workers;
4. Public health workers have the capacity to conduct contact tracing

# Phase II – Re-open State by State

## **The goals of Phase II are to:**

1. Lift strict physical distancing measures in a concerted and careful fashion,
2. Allow the vast majority of businesses, schools and faith communities to open, and
3. Continue to control SARS-CoV-2 transmission so we do not revert back to Phase I.

The adoption of these Phase II measures will require a careful balance. We will need to constantly reevaluate the implementation of these measures based on available surveillance data, and we will need to be ready to adjust our approach over time according to the epidemiology of local, national, and global spread. This is especially true as we transition from one phase to the next.

## **Trigger for Moving to Phase III**

Once a vaccine has been developed, has been tested for safety and efficacy, and receives FDA emergency use authorization, or there are other therapeutic options that can be used for preventive or treatment indications and that have a measurable impact on disease activity and can help rescue very sick patients, states can move to Phase III.

# Phase III - Establish Protection Then Lift All Restrictions

**The goals of safe and effective technologies for controlling transmission are to:**

1. Prevent infection;
2. Treat those with early disease to prevent bad outcomes;
3. Provide a prophylaxis for those exposed to infection to prevent them from developing disease or reduce its severity;

In the case of a vaccine, build population-level immunity to the virus in order to reduce illness and death and stop or greatly slow spread; and

Enable the lifting of all physical distancing measures.

# Phase IV - Rebuild Our Readiness for the Next Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed serious gaps in our nation's pandemic preparedness. COVID-19 will not be the last public-health emergency to threaten American society. We must invest in the scientific, public-health, and medical infrastructure needed to prevent, detect, and respond to the next infectious disease threat. Some ways to do this would be to:

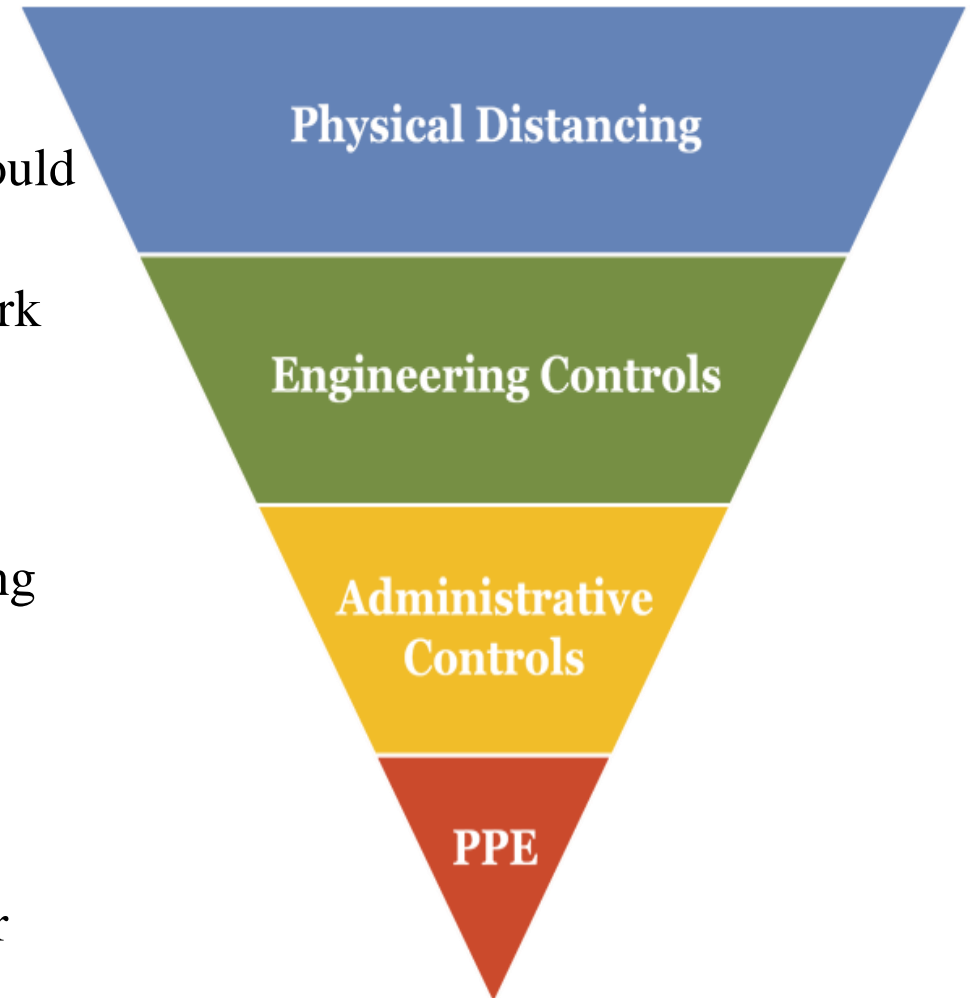
1. Develop Vaccines for Novel Viruses in Months, Not Years
2. Modernize and Fortify the Health Care System
3. Establish a National Infectious Disease Forecasting Center
4. Establish effective Governance at a National level



# Hierarchy of Controls \*

The likelihood of increasing transmission and the consequences of transmission must be considered when planning for reopening. A modified hierarchy of control should include:

- Physical Distancing - wherever possible having people work or access the business from home; this should include restructuring responsibilities to minimize the numbers of workers that need to be physically present.
- Engineering controls (Physical Building Controls) - creating physical barriers between people
- Administrative controls - redistributing responsibilities to reduce contact between individuals, using technology to facilitate communication
- PPE (Personal protective Equipment) - having people wear nonmedical cloth masks



\* From the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health – Guidance for Governors

# Basic CDC's Guidelines to Follow While at Church

- **Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for, at least, 20 seconds.**
- **Sneeze or cough into a tissue if available or the crook of your elbow, not your hands. Toss any used tissue. Wash immediately after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.**
- **Avoid touching your face, especially your mouth, nose and eyes, with unwashed hands.**
- **Frequently disinfect surfaces touched including keyboards, desktops, cell phones, elevator buttons, doorknobs, handrails and remote controls.**
- **Use hand sanitizer that is, at least, 60% alcohol.**
- **Avoid close contact with anyone who has flu-like symptoms.**
- **Practice “social distancing” which means not being within 6 feet of another person.**

# Assessing Risk under Specific Settings

Understanding certain qualities of organizations/settings can help determine the risk and possible mitigation measures.

- **Contact intensity** is defined as a function of contact type (ranging from close to distant) and duration (ranging from brief to prolonged). Low contact intensity activities are interactions that are brief and fairly distant, like walking past someone in a shop. High contact intensity activities involve prolonged close contact, like sharing a sanctuary. Medium contact intensity activities fall between these 2 poles, like sharing a meal in seats that are separated by several feet.
- The **number of contacts** is defined as the number of people in the setting at the same time, on average. A higher number of contacts is presumed to be riskier.
- **Modification potential** is the degree to which mitigation measures can minimize. It is a qualitative assessment of the degree to which activities can be modified to reduce risk.

**(See the next page)**

# Assessing Risk under Specific Settings \*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Contact Intensity</b>	<b>Number of Contacts</b>	<b>Modification Potential</b>
Places of worship	High	High	Medium
Weddings/Funerals	High	High	High
Community centers	Medium	High	Medium
Small social gatherings	High	Medium	High

\* From the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health – Guidance for Governors

# Change Management

- **Congregants** have been excited about worshipping together and hugging and touching. The thought of a "change" in the way we do things may not be on people's minds! We will need to prepare them for the new way of doing things. Consider, during Sundays livestream, a few brief talks about re-entry, and what to expect and what expectations there are. Cushion the hit so to speak. Maybe one about moving forward/touch, explaining that although we are soon to come together, we must begin to do things a new way... a new way of giving, a new way of contact, a new way of learning, a new consciousness of life today.
- The **church** should think of the impact that COVID-19 will leave on its overall operating dynamics and strategy. For example, to maintain social distancing the church may not be able to accommodate more than a fraction of its members simultaneously. How will people react if we cannot provide signature services for a prolonged period of time? Will they turn away and go elsewhere? They may not be satisfied with watching livestream for capacity reasons while the first 100 or so attend services in person. What's the maximum number of times we could have services live on Sundays?

# Things for All Ministries to Consider

These are ideas to help ministries think from a broad perspective and are likely to be relevant to all ministries. The items for specific ministries are indicated on the individual ministry pages. While the list is long, it is most likely not complete:

- Expected size of activity
- Number of personnel involved
- Seating (recognizing social distancing)
- Location/Room size... old vs. new if relocation is involved
- How does wearing masks affect speaking?
- Will we have to do any checks (e.g. taking temperature) before individuals enter the rooms where activities are held?

# Things for All Ministries to Consider - Cont'd

- Crisp and clear communication so that expectation for all activities can be fully understood by participants
- Audiovisual services, especially if they will aid visibility where distance will be a factor
- Which ministries are functioning well using virtual meeting formats and which have a greater need for space, materials and logistical support.
- Staffing - Do we need to restructure how we do what we do and how many people we utilize in our activities?
- Materials to be used and whether or not they will be touched by multiple individuals

# Planning Template

The written plan for each activity should include the items below along with anything else that may be deemed relevant. Documents can be written free-form as long as they are simple and clear.

- Name of activity
- Brief description of activity
- Contact person
- Responsible ministry
- Other ministries involved
- Location of activity (room)
- Schedule/timing/length of activity
- Description of major components of process to successfully complete activity
- Describe any modifications made (before vs. after) to accommodate guidelines
- Problems anticipated (build problem mitigation into your process)
- Approvals received (if applicable)
- For first time activity is performed in the reopening period, provide an assessment of what didn't go well and propose process improvements.



# Steps in Preparing Re-opening Plan

1. COVID-19 Workgroup develops starter package to aid in preparation of re-opening plan for the various elements of the church's operations
2. Pastor and selected ministry leaders to convene in groups <10 to review package and answer some questions together
3. Workgroup creates Re-opening subgroup
4. Subgroup determines who will prepare the respective sections of the re-opening plan
5. Ministers/individuals contacted with instructions to prepare re-opening plan for their respective areas of responsibility
6. Subgroup consolidates inputs from ministries and perform any follow ups to clarify responses
7. Subgroup reviews package with COVID-19 Workgroup
8. COVID-19 Workgroup/Pastor approves plan
9. COVID-19 Workgroup/Pastor activates implementation of plan at the appropriate time.

# Custodial

## **Activities:**

- Cleaning/sanitizing church building and equipment
- Arranging room for gatherings (table, chairs, equipment lay out)

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- What do we have to do different from the Pre-COVID-19 period when the constraints were not as many?
- Resources needed to maintain more intense cleaning/sanitizing.

# **Individual Ministry's Focus**

(These are examples and do not cover every ministry. Adjust to cover any ministry not listed.)

# Prioritization of Ministry Work

While we would like all ministries to complete the planning template, because certain activities are more critical to mission than others (i.e. not having an annual celebration is not as crucial to the redemptive plan of God as having a prayer vigil) we want to be especially mindful that we are comfortable with the planning for those activities.

The following pages seek to highlight some of the activities for ministries and provide some thoughts on things to be mindful of in the reopening process.

# Pastoral Ministry

## Activities:

- Worship Services
- Teaching/Training
- Baptism
- Church Anniversary events

## Things to Keep in Mind:

- Change of spacing of chairs in sanctuary will be necessary to allow social distancing so we should explore maintaining streamlined services and additional services with less density.
- In the summer, are there outdoor options for worship?
- Baptism
  - Do we need to change the process? Is immersion still ok or do we do something else?
  - We may have to schedule so we only do one at a time since water may have to be changed after each one

# Diaconate

## **Activities:**

- Communion supplies procurement
- Communion serving at church
- Responding to requests from needy MBC members
- Visiting the sick, including administering communion (at home and in medical facilities)
- Revival planning
- Pastor's anniversary

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Assistance to MBC members could be higher than pre-COVID-19 times
- Communion serving - Utilize individualized closed all-in-one communion kits (better design than current batch) to avoid shared touching of items.

# Christian Education

## **Activities:**

- Bible study classes
- Vacation Bible School sessions (cancelled for 2020)

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Can Bible Study follow Sunday School's example of virtual classes?

# Sunday School

## **Activities:**

- Sunday school classes

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Exploration of ongoing bible study classes virtually for vulnerable populations.
- Classroom lay-out for classes



# Health Ministry

## **Activities:**

- Health Workshops/Conferences
- Eating/exercising plans i.e. The Daniel Plan, Exercise classes

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Will we need to create some new things to respond to the Health needs of the congregation as the pandemic continues and after it eventually ends?
- Could the Health ministry put together something related to distancing expectations, existing cold/flu issues/testing before we start re-assembling.

# Community Engagement

## **Activities:**

- Outreach activities to assist the community
- Backpack
- Thanksgiving baskets

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- The need may be greater than pre-COVID times
- How do we handle higher demand for backpacks?

# Trustees

## **Activities:**

- Financial matters, especially mechanisms for receiving offerings/donations (may be wise to encourage members to continue online giving even after church reopens)
- Financial planning (attention to estimates, especially cash flow)

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Offering:
  - Coordinate offerings for the numbers of services we will have in a way that minimizes touches by the hands of congregation.
  - Consider encouraging members to continue giving online
- Management – stay on top of expenses to factor in lower income

# Communications

## **Activities:**

- Communication in all its various forms (e.g. Website, E-News, Mass mailing/emailing, Ad hoc announcements, etc.)
- Mass communication system administration oversight
- Providing publication help to ministries

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Having the right tools in place to communicate
- Adequate training to effectively utilize communication vehicles
- Keeping up with increased conferencing

# Music & Arts Ministry

## **Activities:**

- MBC Musicians & choirs activities related to MBC worship services
- MBC Choirs rehearsals
- Engagements at other churches
- Other choirs coming to Macedonia for rehearsals
- Liturgical dance activities

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- When will we be able to sing again?
- Which of the above activities can we do and when?
- Social distancing and aerosol spray issues
- What happens to Voices of Faith?

# Men's Ministry

## **Activities:**

- Fishing Trip (cancelled for 2020)
- Food Taste
- Men's Day Celebration

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- What extra precaution will we need to take in preparing food for Food Taste if we still have it?
- Responding to ad hoc requests for assistance

# Women's Ministry

## **Activities:**

- Women's Day Celebration
- Partnership with shelters and other organizations that assist residents

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- How does this affect your outreach work in the community

# Grief & Bereavement

## **Activities:**

- Non-Member funerals
- Grief counselling using internal resources
- Grief counselling referrals

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic's worries, do we need to restructure and/or re-staff the ministry to respond to potential needs?



# Hospitality

## **Activities:**

- Food Services internally
- Food services for external entities conducting workshops at Macedonia
- Sunday café operations

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Items that will have multi-touch or self-serve
- Serving routine
- Use of utensils

# Audiovisual

## **Activities:**

- Audiovisual work in multiple situations, especially Worship Services

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Handling/Touching/Sanitizing equipment
- Booth size in accommodating social distancing
- Staffing for possible increased streaming activity

# Ushers

## **Activities:**

- Annual Day at MBC
- Annual Day at sister churches
- Directing worshippers to seats
- Providing assistance if someone falls ill (e.g. faint)
- Handling of drink for preacher

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Close contact with people is the nature of the work. How do you change?

# Safety & Security

## **Activities:**

- Building/Events security
- Process for authorizing access to the building

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Guidance/notification from Homeland Security and Local FBI
- Do we need to re-look at who has fobs?
- Monitoring who enters the building and for what purpose
- Will need to develop guidelines for gatherings just as we now do now with the Safety guidelines we announce before each meeting
- Incorporate recommendations from Homeland Security, Local FBI and other Law Enforcement Agencies as we ramp up operations.

# Scholarship

## **Activities:**

- Scholarship gala
- Manage scholarships applications
- Administer MBC students awards

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Interview process for scholarships
- When to schedule next gala after 2 years absence? How is balance doing?
- Will we have to suspend any scholarships (e.g. MBC Merit Scholarship)

# Utilization of Gifts & Talents

## **Activities:**

- Recruiting 2021 slate of officers

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- How does COVID-19 affect our ability to recruit and interview new officers for the upcoming year?

# General Building Operations

## **Activities:**

- Large meetings/gatherings (Banquets, Quarterly Reviews, Annual Meeting, Church Associations and other entities)
- Small meetings (e.g. ministry meetings, external entities)

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Scheduling the utilization of facilities - may need to tighten/modify requirements and approval process for allowing use of building (e.g. ensuring Health and Safety & Security ministries are comfortable with activities as planned.)
- Will need to think about how we assemble ministry leaders for a debrief/orientation on new expectations before we open the doors to allow entrance.