



April 29, 2020

Beloved,

I would rather be tasked with expositing the entire New Testament from Greek to English in one week (if such a thing were possible) as I would to put together this letter detailing precautions and limitations that must be put into place in order for us to resume gathering corporately with some regularity. And yet, here we are in these strange times and this is the conversation we must have.

To begin, let me remind you of the Gospel of our Lord in which we find much rest and joy and comfort and assurance in our eternal pardon. No amount of quarantine can change that. No amount of any trials of any kind can alter what God has eternally prescribed for them that are in Christ Jesus!

***Romans 8:37–39 - [37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)***

I know that you all share in my longings for us to once again return to our regular gathering. For that matter, we all share in longing to just return to normal life at all. I want to assure you that the Deacons of our church, as well as Brother Seth, and myself have joined you in praying for those two things specifically.

Additionally, most of the men mentioned above and myself have met together. I cannot tell you how refreshing it was to have a face to face meeting with them, even though we sat at an acceptable distance from one another.

We opened with prayer and then began to discuss a plan for “re-opening” our corporate gatherings given the ever decreasing restrictions coming from the Governor’s Office. We do not want to be overzealous, nor over cautious. After our discussion, I believe we have arrived at a plan that will help us to gather while being careful to monitor COVID-19 developments in Dallas County should a reprise of this virus occur sooner than anticipated.

Before I get to the plan, let me just say once again how encouraged I have been in speaking with many of you. I am also encouraged by how faithful you have all made arrangements for both watching our services online as well as continued financial giving to support our church.

God has so faithfully worked through your generosity and support that it seems the financial impact of this whole situation may not be felt as strongly by our church as many of us likely were concerned it would be. All glory to God! Praise Him for He is always good!



Brethren, I realize these seem strange and perhaps even harsh, but I assure you they were all formed with your health and best interest in mind and also finding a way to reestablish our gatherings.

If you are concerned with your health and safety, please feel free to stay home. Sermons will be uploaded Sunday afternoon to accommodate those who elect to stay home. If you do attend service, please feel free to wear a mask if you like.

One day this will all be over and we will move on with life as usual. I pray that in the aftermath we all guard our hearts against ever taking our weekly gatherings for granted ever again.

The following is that plan and please know that while some dates are discussed in this letter, everything is flexible depending on any further restrictions which may be imposed.

Please feel free to call me or any of our Deacons if you have questions or concerns.

Soli Deo Gloria,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason P Hilliard", written in a cursive style.

Pastor Jason P Hilliard



Faith Baptist Church will resume Sunday morning corporate worship gatherings beginning Sunday, May 17! That's the good news! The less than good news are the limits we believe prudent in order to facilitate a great balance between the safety of our congregation and our corporate gathering.

The re-establishment of our gatherings will occur in phases as we observe the patterns of the virus spread decrease in Dallas county.

#### Phase 1: Re-establish Sunday morning corporate worship - May 17, 2020

- Faith Baptist will begin meeting Sunday mornings for corporate worship. Services will begin at 10:45am and the West Sanctuary doors (facing toward Duncanville Rd) will open at 10:30am.
- Sunday School classes will remain cancelled until a later phase (see below for skeleton of all phases).
- Nursery will be open; however, the Nursery will be restricted to that week's volunteers, the children who qualify for nursery care, and their parents only. No visitors are permitted for any reason before, during, or after service.
- The Nursery staff will be restricted to those under the age of 65. According to all credible reports, COVID-19 is most dangerous to those aged 65 and above. The decision to restrict Nursery volunteers to those under 65 is a step taken to protect our members who fall in this more susceptible range. Meg Hilliard will coordinate volunteers as usual. Parents: If you do not feel comfortable leaving your child in the nursery, please feel free to take them into the service as usual.
- As for the gathering itself. You will be asked to sit on odd numbered pews only. Even numbered pews on each side of the aisle will be left empty to accommodate recommended social distancing. This may mean you have to select a different seat than the one to which you are accustomed.
- We will dismiss one pew at a time and ask that you promptly exit so that we can move everyone out in a timely manner.
- Family units may obviously sit close together, however, everyone else will be asked to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet. Please help us by abiding by these suggestions.
- There will be no offering plate passed. However, we will have a time of prayer for the offering. We ask that you continue dropping your offering in the office mail slot before or after Sunday service or during the week.
- All entering and exiting will take place through the main Westside Sanctuary doors only (facing Duncanville Rd.); the Fellowship Hall will not be available for awning exits.



- No choir in the loft at this time, as that will lessen the areas that must be cleaned after each service.
- **Member's Meetings (Church Conference) will resume May 24th.** It will be held immediately following the morning service and follow our regular format.

**For your safety:**

- All areas used for any part of the service will be sanitized each week.
- Please, no congregating before or after service unless you do so near your car in the lot and for extended conversations, masks are recommended.
- Pastor will stand outside of the West sanctuary doors to greet you as you exit.
- As difficult as it will be to refrain, we ask that there be no handshaking nor hugs between us, brethren, at this time. As over the top as that may seem, we have to take precautions to care for all our members.
- VBS will be cancelled for this year.

If you would feel more comfortable wearing a mask, please feel free to do so. I recognize it will feel strange, but it will not bother anyone for you to do so and if you feel more comfortable attending with a mask, please wear one.

Finally, per the Governor's recommendation, if you are considering attending, please see the following list of self-screening tasks you must perform.

You should not attend if you have any of the following health related issues. These may or may not be indicative of the COVID-19 virus, but because of the COVID-19 virus, the following could cause worse health issues.

You should **not** attend if you have or have had within the last 14 days of the church service:

- a cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- chills (generally related to a fever)
- repeated shaking with chills
- muscle pain
- headache
- sore throat
- loss of taste or smell
- diarrhea
- feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19
- obviously if you have had COVID-19, you must remain isolated for the appropriate time as designated by your health provider, usually 21 days.



The following are the phases for reestablishing the rest of our gatherings. No dates have been set for these phases as they will be determined based on COVID-19 activity in the county.

Phase 2 - Add Wednesday Night Services

Phase 3 - Add Sunday School

Phase 4 - Add Sunday Evening Services and fellowship meals