



May 2, 2020

Trinity has been livestream-only for our worship services since March 22, 2020. With the recent implementation of reopening plans for Texas by Governor Abbot, we are ready to slowly resume ministry activities, beginning with church services.

Summary: We will use the rest of May to slowly return to socially-distant worship in the auditorium and then begin phasing in Sunday School in June. During this whole time we will continue to offer livestream worship as well.

Details: (also see the detailed guidelines on the next page)

Beginning on Sunday, May 10, 2020 we will again welcome people to come to the building for worship, with strict guidelines on social distancing and sanitization. Beginning on June 7, 2020 we will begin offering some Sunday School and nursery options, yet to be decided.

Distancing will be accomplished by setting up the chairs in groups of two or four using a spacing pattern that will give six feet of separation. Groups who are already in a household larger than four will be free to gather nearby chairs and sit in their group. We recommend that contact with others outside your household be from a distance of six feet or more.

Sanitization will be accomplished by careful cleaning of the church on Saturday, by encouraging washing on arrival, by the provision of hand sanitizer and disinfectant spray, and by encouraging the wearing of personal face masks.

We recommend that people return to worship slowly, with caution. All who are vulnerable or at-risk, those over 65, those caring for at-risk people, those with symptoms of illness, and those exposed to confirmed COVID-19 cases are encouraged to use the livestream option until we (as a church and a culture) see how this reopening goes. In addition, we encourage parents of younger children to evaluate whether their children will be able to follow the distancing guidelines.

Thanks for your support during this time transition

In Him

Bob DeGray, for the elders

Detailed Guidelines

The Governor's report included specific guidance for churches and guidance for individuals taking advantage of the reopening, including those going to restaurants and movie theaters. We think these guidelines are valuable and we reproduce them here with slight modifications:

Standards for those in vulnerable groups:

The majority of severe cases of COVID-19 have occurred among vulnerable groups. The at-risk population is those who are 65 or older, and those with chronic lung disease; moderate to severe asthma; chronic heart disease; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; liver disease; or weakened immune system.

Churches have been asked to strongly encourage the at-risk population to watch or participate in the service remotely. We agree with that guideline and would be glad to provide technical help to anyone who is having trouble watching the livestream.

Standards for individuals attending services: (modified from standards for individuals, restaurant patrons and movie theater patrons)

Self-screen before attending a service. Look for any new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19: cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; chills; 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 confirmed to have COVID-19

Maintain at least 6 feet separation from other individuals not within the same household. In addition, other measures such as face covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced.

Wash or disinfect hands upon entering and after any interaction with others or with items and surfaces in the church.

Consider wearing cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth) when entering the church or when within 6 feet of another person who is not a member of your household. (Once you are at your seat, and during the service, feel free to remove the mask for worship, or continue to wear it at your discretion.)

Standards for our facilities and those using our facilities: (from the Governor's guidelines, which we will follow)

We will regularly and frequently clean and disinfect any regularly touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, and restrooms.

We will disinfect any items that come into contact with attendees.

We will make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available.

We will put up signs to remind everyone of best hygiene practices.

“If a church or place of worship provides meals for employees, volunteers, or attendees, they are recommended to have the meals individually packed for each employee, volunteer, or attendee. Maintain rigorous sanitation practices like disinfection, handwashing, and cleanliness when preparing or serving anything edible.” We understand this to mean that when we have communion at the church, probably beginning on May 17, 2020, we will make the elements of communion available in individually packaged units prepared with rigorous sanitation practices.