



COVID-19 MINISTRY HANDBOOK

Due to continued concern over the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it has become necessary to implement temporary modifications to our worship services and ministry operations. The following guidelines are intended to provide detailed instructions for all members and ministries to observe.

I. WORSHIP SERVICES

A. CONGREGATIONAL PRACTICES

Congregational worship on the Lord's Day is essential. The church in Scripture is literally 'the assembly' (ekklesia). As such, we are called and commanded to assemble together (Heb. 10:25) for worship, fellowship, and discipleship. Knowing this, it is our goal to facilitate safe opportunity to obey God's Word.

- i. Any congregant exhibiting one or more symptoms of COVID-19 should avoid attending service. These symptoms include:
 1. Cough (dry or wet)
 2. Fever
 3. Shortness of breath
- ii. All congregants must wear face masks (or an appropriate face covering) during the service. The masks should cover the nose and mouth and should not be removed during the service, with the following exceptions:
 1. Those reading, singing, praying, speaking, or preaching into a microphone may remove their face mask until finished.
 2. The face mask may be temporarily removed to eat/drink Communion (Lord's Supper).
 3. The face mask may be temporarily removed by those who are being baptized. Those baptizing, however, must wear a mask.
- iii. To avoid cross-contamination, congregants should refrain from wearing gloves (even if they are disposable). Those requiring gloves for ministry tasks will be provided with them during service.
- iv. Congregants are asked to enter the building through the front entrance (glass doors) unless it is necessary to use the handicap

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- ramp.** The front entrance doors will be propped open for the entirety of the service.
- v. **Until further notice, all public water fountains are out of service.** Congregants are encouraged to bring a personal water bottle if they require water during service.
 - vi. Congregants are expected to wash their hands under hot water for at least twenty (20) seconds after using the restroom.
 - vii. **Congregants are expected to remove and dispose of all personal trash by the end of service.** This includes, but is not limited to: tissues, napkins, paper, pens, candy wrappers, etc.
 - viii. Congregants should refrain from hugging, kissing, or shaking hands, even if wearing gloves. Appropriate greetings are waves and elbow bumps.
 - ix. Congregants should refrain from passing out or sharing candy, gum, mints, cough drops, etc.
 - x. Congregants are encouraged to sit on the same row as members of their own households, if possible.
 - xi. Congregants are encouraged to continue utilizing online or text giving, if possible. **If giving in person, please avoid licking offering envelopes to seal them.**
 - xii. Congregants are encouraged, but not required, to bring a personal bottle of hand sanitizer to be used after touching any surface.
 - xiii. **After the benediction is given, congregants are asked to remain seated, as we will be dismissed row by row to avoid congestion.**
 - xiv. If congregating in the parking lot after service, congregants should continue to wear a mask (or an appropriate face covering) and avoid touching, shaking hands, hugging, or kissing.

B. BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study is an important aspect of Christian discipleship. Our Lord instructed disciples to be made by "...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). Unlike the Lord's Day, however, Bible Study can be done without in-person gatherings. Nonetheless, to limit the potential for exposure to COVID-19, in-



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person Bible Study will continue to be suspended until August. We will continue to have virtual Bible Study via Facebook Live on Wednesdays at noon.

C. SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School provides our members with an additional opportunity for Christian education through the continued study of God's Word. Additionally, because we offer Sunday School classes for different ages and genders, we are able to further fellowship and build deeper connections with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Nonetheless, to limit the potential for exposure to COVID-19, Sunday School will continue to be suspended until August.

D. BAPTISM

Baptism is the first of two ordinances in the Baptist denomination. Jesus commanded that disciples be made through baptism (Matt. 28:19). In baptism, we are identified with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4). Thus, baptism is not optional for the believer, and should not be neglected. Nonetheless, because baptism is necessarily physical and involves person-to-person contact, the following temporary guidelines should be observed to minimize potential exposure to COVID-19:

- i. Deacons/Deaconesses assisting with baptism must be masked at all times.
- ii. Deacons/Deaconesses assisting with baptism must wear a new pair of disposable gloves at all times.
- iii. Only one (1) Deacon and/or Deaconess may assist each baptismal candidate.
- iv. All Elders participating in the baptism must be masked and wear a new pair of disposable gloves.
- v. If there is more than one (1) candidate for baptism, the Elders should discard and replace their gloves before baptizing the next candidate.
- vi. Baptismal candidates should **not** wear a mask during the baptism, but must wear a new pair of disposable gloves.



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E. COMMUNION (LORD'S SUPPER)

Communion is the second of the two ordinances in the Baptist denomination. The night of his betrayal, the Lord Jesus instituted Communion, saying "...do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19). Because Communion is something that must be done together in one another's presence (Matt. 26:29; 1 Cor. 11:33), the following temporary precautions will be enacted:

- i. Only pre-packaged Communion should be used.
- ii. When preparing Communion trays, Deacons must wear disposable gloves.
- iii. When serving Communion, Deacons must wear disposable gloves. Those gloves should be discarded after the Communion service.
- iv. To minimize contact, Communion trays will not be passed. One Deacon on each side of the sanctuary will hold a tray. **Congregants will proceed one row at a time on either side in a single file line and pick up their own Communion packet.**
- v. Congregants with physical limitations can remain seated and a masked, gloved Deacon will bring a Communion tray to them.
- vi. Masks may be removed **only** when eating and drinking, and should be replaced **immediately** after.
- vii. Empty cups must **not** be left in the pews, but should be disposed of by the congregant in a trash can before exiting.

F. FUNERALS

Death is never easy, but can become more difficult when there has been no planning. While it is our hope and prayer that all of our members remain healthy and alive, we nonetheless understand that death is a reality in this world. Thus, we will enact the following temporary guidelines for all funerals to be held at First Baptist Church Old Jonesboro until further notice:

- i. The funeral will be limited to a twenty-five (25) person gathering.
- ii. All funeral attendees must wear a mask (or an appropriate face covering) for the entirety of the service.



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- iii. Music during the service will be limited to soloists. No choirs or praise teams will be permitted to sing during funerals.
- iv. The funeral will be conducted in its entirety by Pastor Davis. No other Elders, Pastors, or Ministers will be allowed to assist.
- v. The Ushers will **not** serve during the funeral.
- vi. There will be **no** repast at the church.

II. MINISTRIES

A. AUDIO/VISUAL (A/V) MINISTRY

The Bible informs us that "faith comes by hearing..." (Rom. 10:17). By monitoring and maintaining the sound system, the Audio/Visual (A/V) Ministry assists the congregation in experiencing the service as clearly and easily as possible. Additionally, they aid those not present to hear the proclamation of God's Word through the weekly sale and distribution of sermons. The following temporary guidelines will enable our A/V Ministry to serve in the safest way possible:

- i. Due to the size of the A/V room, no more than two (2) workers may serve at a time.
- ii. All A/V Ministry members must wear a mask (or an appropriate face covering) while serving.
- iii. All A/V Ministry members must wear disposable gloves while serving. Those gloves must be discarded once finished.
- iv. To minimize potential exposure, the sale of physical CDs is temporarily suspended. Those requesting a copy of sermons should be directed to our website, www.fboj.church.

B. CULINARY MINISTRY

Eating a meal together is a fundamental aspect of fellowship. The Culinary Ministry, therefore, is a vital component of the fellowship of the Church. Nonetheless, due to the constraints of fellowship space and concerns of sanitization, there will be no food prepared or served at First Baptist Church Old Jonesboro until further notice.

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C. C.A.R.E. MINISTRY

In the life of the Church, new members are added. It is important that those new members are welcomed with joy. Our C.A.R.E. Ministry provides that at First Baptist Church Old Jonesboro. The following temporary guidelines will enable the C.A.R.E. Ministry to serve in the safest way possible:

- i. All C.A.R.E. Ministry workers must wear a mask (or an appropriate face covering) at all times.
- ii. When receiving new members or baptism candidates, C.A.R.E. Ministry workers must be sure to avoid hugging, shaking hands, or kissing them. Elbow bumps are an acceptable alternative.

D. CUSTODIAL STAFF

The Custodial staff ensures that our facilities are neat, clean, and orderly prior to each service. This is especially important during this COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the weekly cleaning schedule currently in place, the following temporary guidelines are to be followed:

- i. When cleaning the facilities, disposable gloves must be worn at all times.
- ii. All public surfaces must be disinfected after each service.
- iii. All pump hand soap should be removed from the restrooms so that only touch-free soap dispensers are used.
- iv. In addition to our typical cleaning routine, the Deacons will lead the sanitation efforts. This will be done on Friday or Saturday each week.

E. DEACONS'/DEACONESS' MINISTRY

Deacons/Deaconesses are one of two offices in the Church (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:13). They are responsible for serving the Elders by caring for the physical needs of the congregation (Acts 6:3-4). The following temporary guidelines will enable our Deacons'/Deaconess' Ministry to serve in the safest way possible:

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- i. For instructions on Baptism and Communion (the Lord's Supper) see above.
- ii. To decrease the number of people utilizing the same microphone, Devotion is temporarily suspended.

F. GREETERS' MINISTRY

Greeters are often the first ministry workers congregants encounter. They set the tone of Christian love and fellowship to be experienced during the service. The following temporary guidelines will enable our Greeters to serve in the safest way possible:

- i. Each greeter must wear a mask (or an appropriate face covering) at all times.
- ii. Greeters should avoid hugging, kissing, or shaking hands while greeting.
- iii. Greeters will be provided with hand sanitizer prior to service. **All non-gloved worshippers should be given one (1) squirt of hand sanitizer before entering the sanctuary.** A pair of disposable gloves must be used while operating the hand sanitizer. Gloves should be discarded when done serving. Unused hand sanitizer should be returned at the conclusion of service.
- iv. **Until further notice, no visitor cards should be distributed or filled out.**

G. MEDICAL MINISTRY

Medical episodes and emergencies are often unpredictable. When they occur, it is necessary that trained and qualified individuals be present to assist. Our Medical Ministry members provide this invaluable service for our congregation. The following temporary guidelines will enable our Medical Ministry to serve in the safest way possible:

- i. **Only members of the Medical Ministry are authorized to assist during a medical episode or emergency. All others, including family members, must maintain a six feet distance from the area where the medical episode or emergency is being treated.**

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- ii. Members of the Medical Ministry must wear a mask (or an appropriate face covering) while assisting congregants.
- iii. Members of the Medical Ministry must wear a new pair disposable gloves while assisting congregants. Those gloves must be discarded once finished.

H. MEN'S MINISTRY

It is a blessing for men to fellowship with one another (Psa. 133:1). Our Men's Ministry provides the opportunity for the men of our Church to have fellowship with one another outside of the worship service. Until further notice, however, all Men's Ministry outings and events are temporarily suspended.

I. MUSIC MINISTRY

Music is a gift from God. We use music to express emotions, communicate ideas, entertain, etc. In the Bible, music is also used in praise and worship (Psa. 150). One major aspect of this is singing (Psa. 100:2). Because COVID-19 is a respiratory virus, it is especially important that we adjust activities that requires one to expel breath in large amounts. Obviously, singing is one such activity. As such, our Music Ministry will implement the following temporary changes:

- i. All choirs are temporarily suspended. In their place, the Praise Team will sing for at least the first month.
- ii. Singers should be spaced 6 feet apart from one another at all times.
- iii. Singers should **not** have their face covered while singing, but are encouraged to wear a new pair of disposable gloves when handling microphones.
- iv. Each singer will be given their own personal microphone cover. When singing, the singer must use their microphone cover and remove it when finished.
- v. Only authorized persons should touch or play the musical instruments. Musicians are encouraged to wear disposable gloves while playing, if possible.

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J. SICK AND SHUT-IN

Prayer for and visitation of the sick is one way that the Church displays Christian love for one another (Matt. 25:36; James 5:14-15). However, because those with compromised immune systems are especially susceptible to COVID-19, it is unwise to risk in-person visitation at this time. Therefore, all in-person visitation (both hospital and home) continues to be temporarily suspended until further notice. Those desiring prayer should contact one of the Pastors/Elders.

K. TRUSTEES MINISTRY

Trustees are responsible for accurately counting and preparing the cash and checks given as offerings for banking deposit. The following temporary guidelines will enable our Trustees to serve in the safest way possible:

- i. Trustees must wear masks while conducting business in the finance office.
- ii. Trustees must wear disposable gloves while opening offering envelopes and counting money. These gloves should be discarded after counting is completed.

L. USHERS MINISTRY

Ushers provide a valuable ministry in the sanctuary. Not only do they assist congregants with seating, they ensure that the service remains orderly by minimizing distractions during sacred moments. The following temporary guidelines will enable our Ushers to serve in the safest way possible:

- i. Each usher must wear a mask (or an appropriate face covering) at all times.
- ii. All ushers must wear disposable gloves while ushering. Gloves should be discarded at the end of service.
- iii. Ushers should avoid hugging, kissing, or shaking hands while ushering.
- iv. Ushers will be provided with hand sanitizer prior to service. All non-gloved worshippers should be given one (1) squirt of hand sanitizer upon reentry to the sanctuary.



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M. WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Fellowship is essential for the Christian (Acts 2:42, 46). Our Women's Ministry provides the opportunity for the women of our Church to have fellowship with one another outside of the worship service. Until further notice, however, all Women's Ministry outings and events are temporarily suspended.

N. YOUTH MINISTRY

The Church is an institution that transcends barriers. It is comprised of Jew and Gentile, men and women, rich and poor, and even young and old. It is important that we engage and enable our youth to learn about and live for Jesus. Youth Ministry is a vital component of that effort. The following temporary guidelines will enable our Youth Ministry to serve in the safest way possible:

- i. All Youth outings and trips are postponed until further notice.
- ii. Pro 226 Life Skills classes are temporarily suspended until further notice.
- iii. Youth Choir is temporarily suspended.
- iv. All Youth Ushers should adhere to the guidelines for Ushers in this handbook.
- v. Due to proximity issues and safety risks, all praise dances are temporarily suspended.