

June 5, 2020

Dear BBC Family:

In preparation for services Sunday (and in anticipation, I hope), I want to share some information and guidelines recommended by the Virginia Association of Independent Baptists and the National Center for Life and Liberties. I apologize in advance for the lengthy letter, but it covers the many necessary areas we need to discuss.

I am keenly aware there is a wide-range of opinions and feelings about this issue (and I do have my own 😊). However, the guidelines we are establishing for Bible Baptist Church are aimed at what is best for our church as a whole. We ask for your prayers, patience, and understanding as we work through these uncharted waters.

Let me ask one more thing. If you have a concern about the protective measures at BBC (whether you feel they are extreme or insufficient), please feel free to voice those to the me as pastor. Our intention is to use a “common sense” approach and seek to observe the “spirit” of the guidelines recommended to us.

At the outset, let me say to those who fall in the high-risk category for COVID-19 and those who are apprehensive about coming to services, we certainly understand and encourage you to wait until you are confident it is safe to do so. Let me reassure you, the church has been thoroughly cleaned over the weeks we have not met and necessary surfaces will be disinfected between services as well.

### **SERVICES:**

Beginning June 7, 2020, we will begin holding Sunday services as follows:

- 11:00am service
- 6:00pm service

For now, we will not have Sunday School or Wednesday Evening services. As soon as we deem it advisable, we will begin holding these services as well.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

1. If you are sick or showing any flu-like symptoms, please do not come to church. Wait until you are well to rejoin us for services.
2. If you have traveled to high-risk areas or believe you have been exposed to the virus, please refrain from coming to church (even without symptoms) until either 14 days have passed or a negative test result confirms you do not have COVID-19.
3. If you are uncomfortable coming to services due to health conditions that place you in the “elevated risk” category relating to COVID-19, we understand if you choose not to attend services at this time.
4. Please be respectful of each other’s concerns, whether more restrictive or relaxed than our own.

## SPECIFIC GUIDELINES:

1. **ARRIVAL:** While you may arrive as early as you wish, we will open the doors about 10 minutes before service and leave them open until service begins, eliminating the need to touch the door knob. (You may enter before or after this time, should you prefer. Weather permitting, it may be more comfortable fellowshiping outside than trying to maintain social distancing inside.)
2. **FACE MASKS:** Governor Northam has mandated that masks be worn by **those ten years old and older** in public buildings, businesses, and churches. Masks **may be removed in certain instances**, such as when **preaching** or **special singers** from the platform, and **those who have trouble breathing with a mask**. Please use your judgment on this. ***If you find it necessary to take the mask off*** (or think you may have to do so):
  - Please sit towards the front of the church.
  - Please refrain from singing without a mask on (except song leader).
  - Please be careful to maintain social distancing.
3. **WAIVERS:** “Waivers of Liability and Assumption of Risk” will be posted at the church entrance and on the doors to the auditorium. This was very strongly recommended by both VAIB and NCLL. To me as a pastor, they sound offensive for a church. Yet, in light of the litigious day we live in, I believe it is advisable.
4. **HUGS AND HAND SHAKES:** As much as this goes against all I’ve ever been taught, ***please refrain from hugging or shaking hands at this time*** for the protection of our church folks. Many of our congregation are among those in the elevated risk category. In an abundance of caution, let’s maintain the 6 feet distancing rule as much as possible.
5. **SOCIAL DISTANCING:** Our church is smaller, thus making social distancing a bit more of a challenge. We will not have greeters in the foyer as you come in. Depending on weather, they may be outside, or we will greet with a “Holy Wave” instead of a “Holy Kiss” prescribed in the New Testament 😊. Please understand this is not due to fear, but to respect the guidelines requested of us.

**SEATING:** You may not be able to sit in the same place you normally do – most will, but some will not. We ask for understanding in this.

  - We will rope off every other pew so there is “forward distancing”.
  - Families and those who are together regularly may sit together.
  - Please limit the number of people per pew to no more than 3, unless it is a family. (2 on one end of the pew, and one on the other.)

**Choir:** Due to distancing guidelines, the choir will be unable to minister as it normally would.
6. **HAND SANITIZER AND GLOVES:** Bottles of hand sanitizer and gloves will be provided both ***inside the restroom*** and ***as you enter the auditorium***. Please feel free to use them as needed.

**Disinfecting Wipes** will be available in the restroom.
7. **HYMN BOOKS:** You may use the hymn books if you wish. We will also plan to have some “off the wall” singing (😊) for now. We will use the projector to project the words for those uncomfortable using the books. You may also prefer to use gloves. However, ***please do not use wipes or hand sanitizer to wipe off the books, as some chemicals will damage the covers.***

8. **OFFERINGS:** We are Baptists – we have to have offerings, right?! 😊 However, we will not be passing the plate as usual. An offering plate will be placed at the entrance (either in the foyer or just inside the auditorium) to receive your offerings and gifts to the Lord.
9. **END OF SERVICES:** Weather permitting, at the end of services, we will immediately proceed out of the building and give our “holy waves” and fellowship out in the yard and parking lot of the church. This will allow us to social distance.
10. **CLEANING BETWEEN SERVICES:** Let me assure you the church has been cleaned and disinfected in preparation for services, and we will be wiping the pews and necessary surfaces in between each service. Those wishing to help after service, please see Sister Pearl Akers.
11. **BULLETINS:** Bulletins will be available for those who want to pick one up. They will also be sent over email prior to service should you be concerned about handling paper.

**FOR THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND:**

We will continue providing videos of our services for those who cannot return at this time (by request). We want to make sure you are a part of the services and teaching of God’s Word. Messages will be placed online and DVD’s made for those who cannot access the internet.

**God is in control and He knows all things – including the intents of our hearts.** We are asking each of you to honor the Lord. If you feel led of the Lord to avoid gatherings, please stay home. We understand. If you are sick or have been around someone who has been sick (colds, flu, COVID-19, other viruses, etc.), please make sure you are not sick or infected before joining us. Again, “common sense” is a pretty good guide.

We will continue monitoring guidelines from our leaders and assessing our church’s needs in particular as we adjust things back to “normal” as soon as we can safely do so. Again, please feel free to contact me with any concerns, suggestions, or just to say “hello”. I look forward to seeing you Sunday, the Lord willing!

By His Grace,  
Kenneth Wells

This is a copy of the waiver which will be posted at church.

## **Statement of Waiver of Liability and Assumption of Risk Related to Coronavirus/COVID-19**

COVID-19 is highly contagious and is known to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. By attending **BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH**, you agree to abide by the procedures established by the church to protect attendees and staff, and you voluntarily assume the risk that you and/or your family may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 either at the church, in the church worship service, or in the nursery or Sunday School. You agree to assume all the risks of attendance and participation for you and your family, and you waive any liability against the church and any other parties.