

Church family,

The following is both an update on our services in light of Covid-19 and a means of spiritually encouraging and shepherding your hearts. May your heart be informed and blessed as you read.

Spiritual Encouragement

We praise God for the way he uses all things, even affliction, for his people's good, both individually and corporately. As we consider the wisest way to navigate through our current circumstances in the year 2020, we hold fast, first and foremost, to the voice of our Lord. We are encouraged by the following passages of scripture as well as others:

(Psalms 119:71)

[71] It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.

(Romans 8:28)

[28] And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

(James 1:2-4)

[2] Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [4] And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

(Romans 13:1)

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

(Luke 20:25)

25 He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Practical Application

With regards to Covid-19, we have sought to respond to CDC and state recommendations with meaningful adjustments to our assembling. We have installed extra hand sanitizing stations, provided contactless entry, encouraged social distancing, enhanced online ministry, provided pastoral care and continued meaningful outreach through our counseling ministry and Freedom That Lasts outreach. Most recently, the Governor has issued guidelines directing face coverings in public when social distancing is not possible with the following exemptions:

- "children under two years of age should not wear a face covering because of the risk of suffocation;"
- "children who are over the age of two years and under the age of eight years . . ."
- "any person with a medical condition, mental health condition or disability which prevents wearing a face covering;"
- "any person while giving a speech for a broadcast or to an audience if the person can maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household;"
- "any person attending or engaged in a religious service as he or she must already maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household."¹

With this in mind, we understand the spirit of this mandate to be that individuals wear face coverings when they are not in a properly socially distanced environment in efforts to curb the spread of Covid-19. We humbly recommend all to wear masks in and around the church when you are unable to socially distance.

A Path Forward

We recognize that it is our responsibility as under-shepherds to provide as many options as possible for God's flock to be obedient to Christ, and also to be ministered to and cared for. So, with prayerful consideration to the contents above, we as under-shepherds of Noblesville Baptist Church would like to recommend the following course of action:

¹ See Executive Order 20-37. <https://www.in.gov/files/Executive%20Order%2020-37%20Face%20Covering%20Requirement.pdf>

Live-streaming Option

- It is still our position to strongly encourage anyone who is showing any symptoms of sickness to stay home and continue live streaming our times of worship and study. We realize that there are many within our body and leadership team who will think it best for them to refrain from meeting in person; we want to assure them of our love for them and of our support for them in their decision to stay home. We desire every believer to pray, seek wisdom, walk in biblical discernment, and act according to their conscience.

8:00AM Service Option

- This service is uniquely geared toward those who are considered “high risk” (due to age or health).
- All attenders are asked to wear masks for the entirety of the service.
- This service attendance has been averaging around 30 people so far, so there is ample space. These services have been marked by a sweet spirit and joyful fellowship.
- There is no childcare offered during the 8:00AM service, however the nursery rooms are available for parental use if needed.
- This service is being offered, in part, to help alleviate attendance at the 10:30AM service, but also to provide an assembling option for those considered “high risk” that prefer a reduced crowd.

10:30AM Service Option

- We understand there are many differing and strong opinions regarding the use of face coverings; we want to encourage everyone to walk in love, patience, and grace towards one another. We have an abundant supply of disposable and cloth masks that are available each Sunday morning should you need one.
- We encourage you to wear a mask as you make your way to your seat, and then, as you are properly distanced remove or maintain wearing your mask. We encourage you to do this also while exiting to the foyer or parking lots.
- We will continue to encourage individuals and family units to sit “spread out”, throughout the auditorium, leaving 3 seats between their family unit and the next individual or family. We are striving to follow physical distancing guidelines.
- Our goal is to utilize our auditorium at less than 50% capacity. If the need arises, the resource center and fellowship hall will be utilized as an over-flow area to accommodate more people.
- Every other row will be marked off to help make it clear where families and individuals should sit.
- Nurseries are available for the 10:30AM service. Parents may drop off their children (ages 0-3) between 10:15 – 10:30AM. (Each child’s temperature will be checked with a touchless thermometer before being admitted into the nursery.)
- The 4-5 year old junior church will be dismissed at the time of corporate Scripture reading.
- Children’s worship bulletins are available in the foyer to aid their enjoyment of the regular service.

Additional Reminders

- There are two wooden giving boxes located on the back wall of the auditorium. You may also give online at noblesvillebaptist.com. If you prefer to mail-in a financial gift or drop it off at the church office, you may do so throughout the week. The church office is open Tues. through Fri. from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- At the close of the service we will dismiss in an orderly way in order to help people exit to the parking lot with minimal contact with others. This will enable families to fellowship while avoiding congested spacing at dismissal.

Final Thoughts

Regardless of what your beliefs and preferences are concerning Covid-19, quarantine, face coverings, social distancing guidelines, etc. this is a great opportunity for all of us to practice and demonstrate Christ-reflecting, sacrificial love for one another. We want to encourage everyone to think upon and to be governed by these wonderful Christ-centered exhortations:

(Philippians 2:3–8)

[3] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. [5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

(Romans 13:8–10)

[8] Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. [9] For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” [10] Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

(Romans 15:1–3)

[1] We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. [2] Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. [3] For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.”

If you have any questions, please reach out to us at the church office. May the Lord continue to watch over our church as it ministers within our community and assembles for His glory!

Sincerely,

Your pastors