

FBCA2 SAFE PATH PLAN

Guidelines for In-Person Regathering

REGATHERING FOR WORSHIP

On **Sunday, October 10 (10/10 at 10)**, we will be gathering in our sanctuary for in-person worship for the first time since March 8, 2020. What follows is our current set of guidelines for gathering, which are based on our Safe Path Pandemic Plan. At the end of this document, you will find information about updates to our May 2021 guidelines.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

These guidelines apply to all gatherings that take place at First Baptist Church:

- Masking is required indoors for everyone over age 2, except for eating or drinking, regardless of vaccination status. There are limited exceptions for worship leaders (see below).
- Physical distancing (6 feet between households) is required indoors, regardless of vaccination status.
- For outdoor gatherings at church, physical distancing or masking is encouraged, regardless of vaccination status. We will make stickers available for individuals to communicate to others their comfort level with physical distancing and contact.
- All staff, worship leaders (including choir members and other musicians), and Church School teachers/volunteers must be vaccinated.
- If anyone tests positive for COVID within 14 days of being in the building, they should inform the main office for contact tracing purposes (office@fbca2.org, 734-663-9376; confidentiality around identity will be maintained).
- Hand sanitizer and masks will be available throughout the building.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

These guidelines apply to in-person worship in the sanctuary at First Baptist Church:

- Physical distancing between households will be maintained within the sanctuary.
- Worship leaders who are actively speaking can remove their masks while they are speaking, as long as they maintain at least 16 feet of distance from the congregation.

- For now, there will be no congregational singing and no full choir. An individual or small ensemble (6 or fewer) may sing, masked and maintaining 3 feet of distance from each other and 16 feet of distance from others in the congregation.
- Wind/brass instruments may be used indoors if covered with a bell mask.
- A printed order of worship will be available at the sanctuary entrances, to be picked up by participants rather than passed out by greeters. A digital order of worship will also be available for those who would prefer to follow the order on their own digital device.
- Offering plates will not be passed during the service; they will be located at the sanctuary entrances/exits.
- The worship service will last no longer than 45 minutes.
- Communion elements will be pre-filled juice and wafer sets, to be set out in the pews ahead of worship.
- The Passing of the Peace will be verbal, with no physical contact.
- There will be no “handshake line” with the pastors after worship.
- Fellowship time will happen outdoors (weather permitting), with individually packaged food.
- On the way out of worship, stickers will be available for individuals to put on their nametags. These stickers are intended to communicate individual comfort level with physical distancing/contact once outside (indoors, everyone is expected to maintain physical distance).
 - Red=No physical contact. Please keep 6 feet of distance.
 - Yellow=Limited physical contact. Handshakes, fist bumps, or high-fives. Please keep 3 feet of distance.
 - Green=No limit on appropriate physical contact and no physical distance required.
- If a worship attendee tests positive for COVID within 14 days of worship, that individual should contact the church office (confidentiality around identity will be maintained).

CHURCH SCHOOL

These guidelines apply to Sunday Church School offerings for all ages at First Baptist Church:

- We will have a staggered start to Sunday Church School classes (i.e., these will not begin the same date we begin in-person worship).
- Gatherings of children under age 12 will occur outdoors.
- Eating and drinking of pre-packaged foods will be permitted outside and distanced.
- Some Church School offerings will remain online for the foreseeable future. Others will occur in a hybrid format.

- If a Church School attendee tests positive for COVID within 14 days of worship, that individual should contact their Church School teacher, who will inform the church office for contact tracing purposes (confidentiality around identity will be maintained).

CHOIR

These guidelines apply to in-person participation in the First Baptist Church Sanctuary Choir:

- Choir members must be vaccinated to participate in choir.
- The choir will not perform in Sunday Worship until our risk level moves to moderate/medium (per capita daily new cases of 10/100,000 or fewer). We will consider increasing the size level of ensembles that can sing in worship before that time.
- The choir may rehearse together under the following circumstances:
 - Masked and distanced
 - Outdoors - take a 5-minute break after every 60 minutes of singing
 - Indoors - the choir should meet in the largest room available and take a 5-minute break after every 30 minutes of singing
- If a choir member tests positive for COVID within 14 days of worship, that individual should contact Bonnie Kidd (confidentiality around identity will be maintained).

REVISIONS TO METRICS AND THRESHOLDS

We have made some recent revisions to our approach to metrics and thresholds that we believe will allow us to take a more flexible approach to safely regathering, while also offering us some clearer markers for tightening or loosening our guidelines and gatherings if and as necessary.

METRICS

Our May 2021 updated pandemic plan was based on two metrics: our county vaccination rate and our 7-day per capita positive case count (which is what the CDC uses to determine community transmission level). In order to provide greater clarity, **we have refined our second metric to reflect daily new cases rather than weekly.**

STATISTICAL SOURCES

Our May 2021 plan referred to the [Washtenaw County Health Department website](#) for our county vaccination rate and the [CDC COVID data tracker website](#) for the 7-day positive case

count. In order to be able to offer more accessible and easy-to-understand data, we have added [COVID Act Now](#) as a data source.

RISK LEVELS

As we have communicated our various steps along the way of our pandemic plan, we have used the CDC language of risk level assessment (low, moderate, substantial, high). In order to allow for a more refined and flexible approach to assessing risk when community transmission levels are higher, we are now incorporating the [COVID Act Now risk levels](#) into our risk assessments. COVID Act Now breaks the “high” risk level down into the further categories of “very high” and severe.” We believe that referring to these risk levels will allow us to have clearer guidance for risk mitigation when the per capita case count is high.

THRESHOLDS

Using the metrics and thresholds of our May 2021 plan, we would still not be able to meet for in-person worship at this time, despite the many layers of risk mitigation we have in place. With our revised approach, we believe we can safely gather, even at the “high” risk level.

COVID Act Now risk levels are as follows:

- Low risk - <1/100k daily new cases
- Medium risk - 1-10/100k daily new cases
- High risk - 10-25/100k daily new cases
- Very High risk - 25-75/100k daily new cases
- Severe risk - 75/100k daily new cases

The guidelines articulated in this document are based on our currently being in the High risk level. As we move into the Medium risk, we will release updated guidelines for gathering.