



Dear Friendship Family,

We are anxious to resume in-person services at Friendship Baptist Church! We plan to reopen our facilities and services using a **phased strategy** for in-person gatherings based on ensuring safety to the extent possible. At Friendship, we want to *love your neighbor as yourself* (Matthew 22:39) and *...in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others* (Philippians 2:3b-4).

We need your help and cooperation in protecting not only yourself, but also the health of others, and will be asking that you follow some important guidelines to enable us to meet as safely as possible. As we grow closer to being ready to open, we have been planning for the day and preparing our facility. We want to be sure to follow all state and local guidelines as we reopen. This letter shares some of the plans going forward in **phase one** and requests your help as we plan to meet together.

The target date for our first in-person service is June 14.

(This could change based on new COVID-19 cases in our area; watch for announcements)

On the date we reopen, we will have two worship services, one at 9:00 AM for those more at risk (older adults and those with cardiovascular or respiratory issues or otherwise compromised immune systems) and at 11:00 AM for others. It is up to you to decide which service you wish to attend. We will have multiple spaces to gather for worship – the Sanctuary and two large Sunday School rooms. Having two services and multiple spaces will allow proper social distancing and allow space for everyone who wishes to attend.

Here are some guidelines based on the best information we have at this time from health officials and others:

- Facilities will be cleaned and sanitized prior to and between services.
- To help protect each other, we are asking that you wear a mask or face covering at all times. (Children under the age of 7 and anyone with impaired breathing are exempt). If you cannot bring your own mask or face covering, we will have some extras available.
- Sanitation and temperature check stations will be available for all. Non-touch temperature checks will be made upon entry.

- In all our spaces we will be using proper social distancing and ask that you be seated in family units. To minimize contact, spaces will be determined for seating and an usher will direct families or individuals to seats on a first-come basis from front to back of the Sanctuary. Ushers will also help with exiting from back to front so that we maintain social distancing. Only the main Sanctuary entry will be open to minimize contamination.
- Before and after services please do not gather in common spaces.
- Your prompt exiting of the building after services gives us time to clean and prepare for the next service.
- In moving in and out of the Sanctuary, please be mindful to keep a safe distance between yourself and others.
- Offering boxes will be available for you to give your tithes and offerings as you enter and exit the building.
- Doors will be opened for you to minimize surface contamination.
- If you are in the vulnerable population, we ask that you please use your best judgement on when to begin attending in-person gatherings. Watching online services at home may still be your safest option.
- If you have experienced a fever or any viral symptoms or if you have had any contact with someone with the Coronavirus in the past 14 days, please remain at home.

Here are a few things that we are **not yet ready** to start:

- The most difficult part for the Friendship family – no hugging, no shaking hands! Give the / *Love You* sign or thumbs up – from six feet away!
- Childcare will not be provided as we first reopen. Please plan to keep children with you and sit as family units.
- To minimize surfaces that could transmit the virus, printed bulletins and children's worksheets will not be used.
- Sunday School and Discipleship Training classes and small groups will continue to meet online. Classrooms and hallways do not allow enough social distancing if all groups were to meet simultaneously on Sunday morning and evening. Please continue to meet via Zoom or other means. In addition to zoom, small groups and classes may decide to meet in-person at staggered times during the week, following all social distance and face-covering guidelines. Teachers may contact Bro. Jeremy to arrange a time and space.

We will continue to live stream all services on Facebook and on <https://www.friendshipsturgis.com/> for everyone to watch at home. Please remember this is a rapidly changing situation and as in many areas of our lives it has been hard to plan what's coming next. We want to do our best to protect you and your family and still provide an opportunity to worship in person. We have set the target date of June 14. Please know that opening on June 14 could be delayed if the circumstances in our community change. We will continue to evaluate as we get closer. Please stay connected to our social media platforms and our website for more details in the coming weeks. As soon as possible and assuming phase 1 works well, we will announce phases 2 and 3.

We are all excited about being able to worship in person together again! We look forward to seeing you in the coming weeks!

Sincerely,

Bro. Jeremy, Staff and Deacons