
EPHESUS BAPTIST CHURCH



EBC Regathering Strategy

November 12, 2020

REGATHERING STRATEGY

Greetings

Oh, how I have missed seeing your faces! I pray you are well and I hope you know that you are loved! It is with a joyful heart that we send this email letter to you today. Please take a few moments to read it fully. It brings me great joy to announce that we are regathering for worship this **Sunday, November 15th at 10:00am!** If anything has been gained through this pandemic, it's been a healthy longing and appreciation for meeting together as the people of God ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#)).

While this news is exciting, it does come with some important reminders about health and safety. Due to the ongoing effects of COVID-19 and the upcoming Influenza season, we are establishing this regathering strategy and the guidelines herein to reflect our desire for safety and to follow the recommended safety measures suggested by governing authorities. We are not sure how long we will operate under these guidelines, but it's important that we follow them until the pandemic is better contained. Please know with certainty that our ministry staff is praying for you, and we can't wait to see you all again. So, keep praying for us and for our church family as we seek to faithfully follow the will of God in this crucial time.

Joyfully His,
Pastor Wayne

Should I regather to worship on campus?

With Covid-19 still present and the upcoming Influenza season, each of us must make the decision to worship on campus based on our own personal medical history and comfort level. At this time, various national and state recommendations suggest that those in high risk categories as identified by the CDC should not worship on campus. We will follow all applicable national, state, and county guidelines while returning to gathered worship to the best of our ability and knowledge.

You will have your temperature checked by our greeters before you will be allowed to enter the building. If you have a temperature greater than 99.8°F, you will politely and discreetly be asked to participate in our outdoor or on-line service. If you are showing any signs or symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste

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or smell) or have been around someone who is sick, please continue participating in our outdoor or on-line service until you have been tested, cleared, and completely recovered so that you no longer pose an obvious health concern for others. If you are not sure whether you should attend indoor services, please consider the following questions:

- Have you been in an area outside our state or contiguous states in the last 14 days?
- Have you been in contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with Covid-19 in the last 14 days?
- Have you had a fever, shortness of breath or been ill in the last 14 days?
- Are you a member of the more vulnerable or high-risk population?

You will be required to wear an appropriate face-mask while on our campus. The only exceptions will be those who are leading worship and/or preaching during the worship service, and then only when they are serving in those capacities. If you don't have a mask, a surgical mask will be provided for you.

For those who are in an at-risk category or who are unable or uncomfortable returning to gathered worship at this time, we are providing a few possible solutions for you to participate in our time of gathered worship.

1. LIVESTREAM DISPLAYED IN FELLOWSHIP HALL.

If you are uncomfortable returning to a larger gathering at this time, we totally understand your concern. To help ease your fears, we are offering a Livestream of the service to be displayed via our projector in the Fellowship Hall where you can spread out a little more and be around fewer people. If you would like to use this option, we ask that you enter into the Fellowship Hall via the main glass entry door. **Please note: Masks are required in this option as well.**

2. FM TRANSMITTER STATION 87.9 FM.

If you are uncomfortable or unable to gather indoors at this time, but you still want to participate in worship but you don't have access to the internet, then we will have our FM Transmitter operating on frequency 87.9 FM. You can park in the upper portion of the parking lot in order to position yourself closer to the sanctuary to better receive the FM signal. If you are not parking to listen to the FM transmission we ask that you park along the white fence or the lower parking lot during this phase of the pandemic.

3. LIVESTREAM VIA FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE.

If you are uncomfortable or unable to gather indoors at this time, but you still want to participate in worship but you have access to the internet, then you can watch the Livestream of our service from the comfort of your living room. Watch our Facebook page for access to the Livestream beginning around 10:00am. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/ebspringhope>.

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- Have you been in an area outside our state or contiguous states in the last 14 days?
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- Have you had a fever, shortness of breath or been ill in the last 14 days?
- Are you a member of the more vulnerable or high-risk population?

We hope that we can provide you with the best possible worship experience on whichever of the previous platforms you choose to worship through. You, clearly, have many options to take advantage of. We can't wait to see you worshipping together again under one roof!

How have our cleaning and sanitization protocols changed to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

All common surfaces throughout the accessible areas of the church building are being cleaned with a chemical disinfectant approved to kill the novel coronavirus before services. After services the designated worship areas, hallways, and restrooms are sprayed with disinfectant again. Door handles are being disinfected before, during, and after services with disinfectant wipes. Hand sanitizer stations have been located at the entrance to the main worship area and the fellowship hall. Please use the sanitizer on the way in and on your way out of those areas.

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Only the main restrooms, located near the Main Worship Area and the Fellowship Hall, are open during this time. Restrooms are disinfected before and after the service. We request that you wash your hands upon entering and leaving the restroom. We ask that restroom usage be limited to one person at a time, and that each person disinfect the room after personal usage. There will be a bottle of disinfectant spray in each restroom. Hand sanitizer stations have been located at every entrance to the sanctuary.

In addition to all of these protocols, the buildings and ground team had the church treated with a hospital grade treatment called Enviro-Shield. It creates a barrier within the building that actually kills virus and bacterial germs upon contact and lasts between 6-9 months. We are doing all we can to keep our church family healthy and safe. With all of these defensive measures, the best weapon we have in this war is prayer. Please continue to pray for a hedge of protection to be placed around our worship gatherings.

What about Parking?

As was previously mentioned, we want to leave the parking area closest to the sanctuary's main entrance open for those who may want to park and listen to the service on their car's FM radio. Therefore, if you are not parking to listen to the FM transmission we ask that you park along the white fence or the lower parking lot during this phase of the pandemic. If you are younger and in good health, please consider parking farther away and walking in so that those who aren't in as good a health won't have to walk as far. We also encourage you to drop off family members by the breezeway going into the main foyer if they aren't able to walk as far.

Where do I enter the building?

We are going to restrict entry access to the building to only two entrances due to the pandemic protocols. If you are worshiping in the Sanctuary, we ask that you enter through the main double doors under the breezeway leading into the main foyer. If you are worshiping in the Fellowship Hall, please use the solid glass door that enters directly into the Fellowship Hall. All other doors will be locked to the outside before, during, and after our service.

What about nursery and childcare?

Children and infants are always welcome in our services. Unfortunately, we will not be providing our normal nursery services during the worship service. As an alternative, we are providing our overflow room at the very back of our sanctuary as a place for families with young children to be able to sit and still participate in our main worship service. Seating in this area is limited, but families with small children and infants will be given priority.

How has the worship service changed? What should we expect?

Expect us to gather to praise the Lord in a way that will be familiar and comfortable with a few logistical changes to decrease the likelihood for the transmission of infectious diseases. During our initial return to on-site worship, our service will begin promptly at **10:00am**. There will be no printed bulletin for the foreseeable future. All announcements will be on the screens and online at www.ebcspringhope.com.

Doors to the Sanctuary and building will be propped open to minimize contact with handles, unless adverse weather conditions exist. Bibles, hymnals, pens, and offering envelopes have been temporarily removed from the pew backs. Please be sure to bring your own Bible, phone, or tablet with you or read the passage from the screen.

What about seating? How can we social distance in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall? The Sanctuary has been marked for seating only in every other pew beginning from the second pew from the front and moving back. In order to maintain proper distances between families, we ask that you enter the Sanctuary and allow an usher to walk you all the way forward to the next available seat. ***Please do not attempt to find your usual seat as that will only make it harder for us to properly space ourselves.*** Sit at least 6 feet from the closest family or individual. It would be best for families to sit together. When a new row is started, please stagger your placement by not sitting directly behind another person, your usher will assist you in how and where to sit. Instructions for exiting the Sanctuary will be given at the service.

In the Fellowship Hall, we ask that individuals and families all sit around their own table facing the projection screen. The tables will be limited to four chairs per table and distanced safely apart. Please do not attempt to add more than four chairs per table. If you attend by yourself, then please sit at your own table and do not join others.

Will we be singing in the services? The short answer is yes, we plan to sing and are asking anyone who plans to lead songs in the service to wear a mask, if possible while doing so. Recently, there have been a number of articles written on the topic of singing and whether or not it places us at a greater risk for transmission. The consensus appears to be that we would be safer if we sing while wearing masks than the alternatives.

Since we are requiring mask wearing during the service anyway, you may feel free to sing along if you feel so led, as long as your mask is properly covering your mouth and nose.

The only place wear mask wearing will not happen is in the pulpit while the Pastor is proclaiming the Holy Word of God. The pulpit will be limited in usage to the Pastor only.

Final notes on the worship service: please refrain from all handshaking, hugging, and physical contact. Please enjoy talking with each other from your seats. Only the church staff, worship team, greeters and ushers should be up and moving around in the Sanctuary. When the service is over, please continue to fellowship with one another in the parking lot while maintaining social distance.

When the time comes, partaking of the Lord's Supper will require us to distribute the elements without passing the plates. The bread and the cup will be prepared into a single package which the Deacons will distribute as you enter to worship.

We recommend a casual, yet modest dress code for the remainder of the Covid Pandemic. Dry cleaning being what it is will cost more with increased need to sanitize dressier clothing. The Pastor will also dress more casually during this pandemic time to avoid increased dry cleaning costs. Overall, we will worship and enjoy our Lord together as His family!

How will we give our Offering?

We have four ways that you can give your offering securely. **First**, rather than passing the plate around like we did pre-Covid, we will be collecting the offering at the end of the service following our benediction. You can place your prayerfully given offering into a container that will be placed and designated for the offering on the table as you leave the service. If you have offering envelopes, we recommend you using those, otherwise simply drop your offering into the container. **Second**, you can give your offering online by going to <https://ebcspringhope.com/give>. **Third**, you can set up a regular draft through your banking institution. **Fourth**, you can mail your offering by writing a check to ***Ephesus Baptist Church, P.O. Box 489, Spring Hope, NC 27882.***
