

PROPOSED
PHASED APPROACH



OPENING GUIDELINES

COVID-19 has been a challenge to us all. First and foremost, our trust is in the Lord. While this virus and its impact was unforeseen by us, it was not a surprise to God. Our confidence is in him.

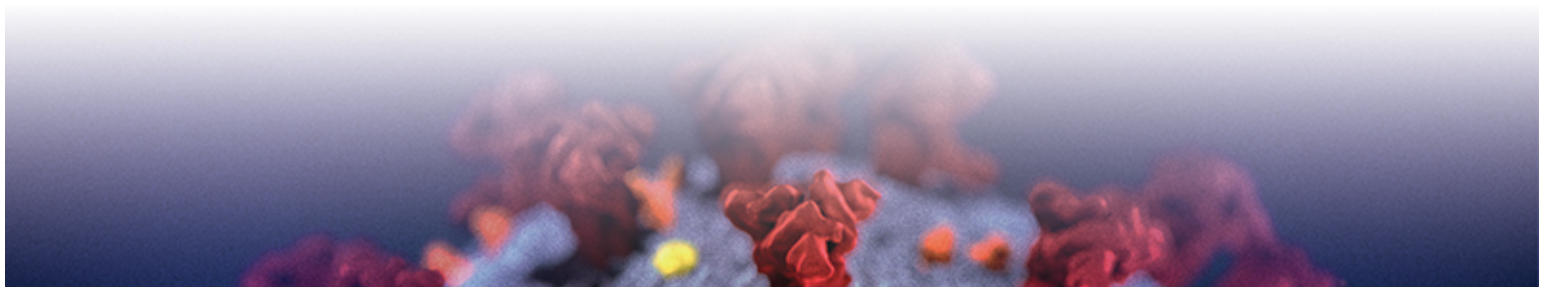
COVID-19 has also not been without varying philosophies, politics, perspectives and varied opinions on the origins, best practices, and the way back to “normal.” Given the vast array of opinions, emotions, and the impact each decision has on millions of people, it leads us to pray for our leaders. Every decision they make for the good of some creates potential difficult or harm for someone else. These are not easy decisions, and so wherever possible, we want our leaders to feel our support.

As elders and leaders at Metro Life Church, we do not ascribe to the assortment of conspiracy theories that exist. The overarching set of principles that have informed and will continue to inform our decision making are the following:

God gives government for our good.

Romans 13:1-7 guides us in our response.

- Our starting point is not to assume the worst or worse case scenarios as it relates to our governing officials.
- While we will not blindly stick our heads in the sand, we will also not be quick to project conspiracy and overreach. We will, whenever possible, believe the best.
- We believe our officials want this virus and its implications to come to an end as soon as possible. We believe they are working for the greater good, even if eventual evaluation and assessment reveals better decisions could have been made.
- We believe our officials are trying to provide the best counsel and guidelines in real time with the information they currently have. We understand that as more is learned, this can change the counsel or guidelines we receive. This does not unequivocally mean our leaders misled us; it means they made the best decisions they could with what they knew at the time. We will give them the benefit of the doubt wherever possible as a way to show the respect to our leaders Romans 13 calls us too as Christians.



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Temporary (be it a day or even months) interruptions to normal life are not necessarily an infringement of our personal rights or liberties.

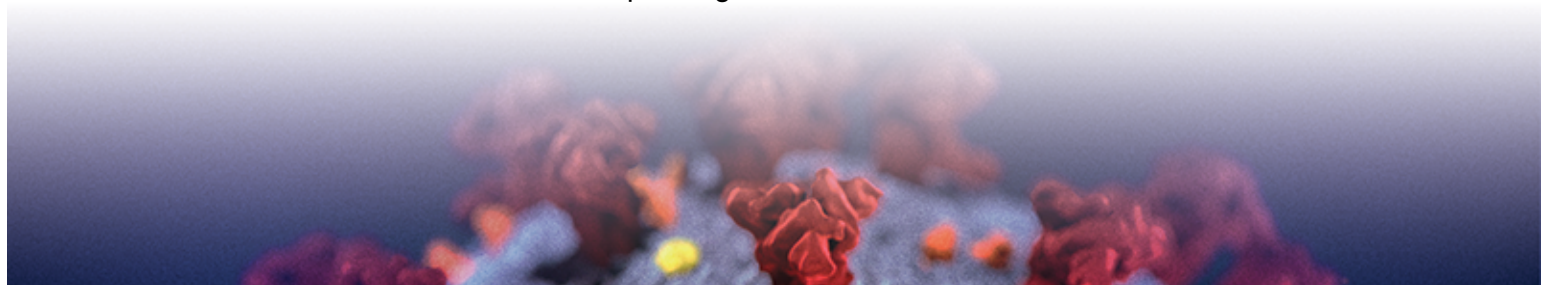
- Anything that curtails our liberties goes against the grain of most Americans. Under normal circumstances we all more or less agree with this, but a pandemic (the word itself draws immediate responses across the spectrum of opinion) is not normal circumstances.
- From federal government down to state and local officials, government does have a limited but real authority to reserve the right to impose emergency steps in a time of crisis. One of the unique challenges in our country is that the state has more authority to do this than federal government, which is why we see different responses in different states.
- Our responsibility is to engage with our state and local officials so that we can discern how best to respect our leaders without blindly giving assent to whatever advice is given. But we recognize the state does have authority.

We are called to love one another and consider others more important than ourselves.

- Much debate and dissension can arise in a time like this. Five minutes of web surfing the news and social media will display that clearly.
- But what is our responsibility and calling as Christians? It is to love one another.
- Our first responsibility isn't to look for fault or insist anyone feel and think the same way.
- We ask ourselves, "How do we demonstrate love to our whole church family, while knowing the impact of COVID-19 is not the same for each one? What does love for one another call us too?"

With these three principles in view, below is our present plan.¹ We are grateful to have a fellowship of believers who are eager to gather together again as soon as it is advisable to do so. The measures below have that goal in view.

¹ Subject to change as updates and new information dictates. This is also not a forecasting of response for any future outbreaks of COVID-19. This is how we are responding now.



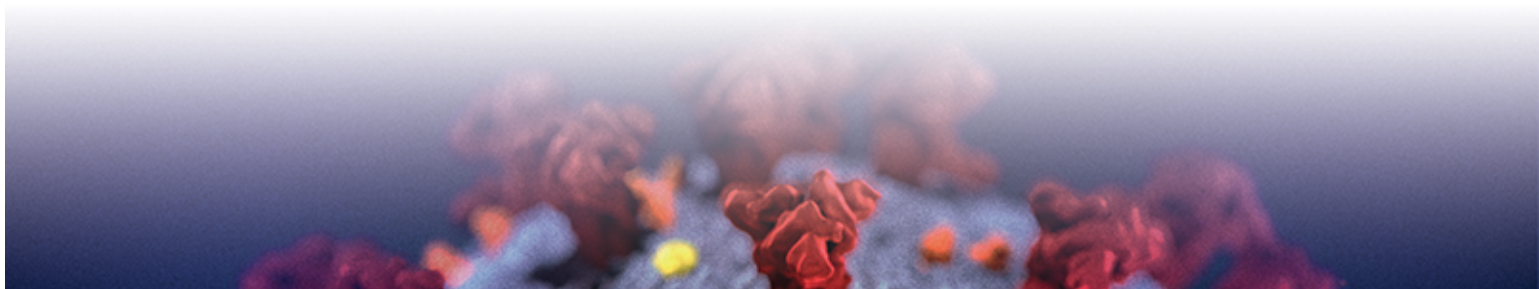
OPENING GUIDELINES

When and how do we open our church?

- Metro Life Church consists of over 400 members. This means we will likely need a phased approach to include social distancing guidelines.
- We may begin our services in our building again by having multiple services. This will include a suggested breakdown based on community groups, families and possibly utilizing the alphabet to encourage people to participate in specific services so that we can ensure we adhere to the suggested number of people to gather in our facility.
- We will adjust the number in keeping with recommended guidelines. For example, if 100 people are permitted to gather, we will offer 2-3 services based on member engagement. We realize not all members will want to return immediately out of an abundance of caution. We respect their decision to continue social distancing should they deem it best for their situation.
- Based on present suggested guidelines we anticipate being able to open our facility to a limited number of people at a time in late May or early June.
- Disinfectant and sanitizer will be utilized in the lobby, auditorium and restrooms.
- Signage will be placed throughout the building to remind people of our protocols.

How do we handle close physical interactions?

- We will encourage all social distancing recommendations. A seating plan will be devised to keep families and individuals at a safe distance.
- We will advise all people to respect the social distance requests of others. In other words, no uninitiated hugs or hand-shakes.
- Our coffee service and seating area in the lobby will be temporarily suspended.
- Our baptismal allows for social distancing where a parent participates. In the case where an elder or non-family member is needed, a pre-screening will take place prior to proceeding.
- We will continue with communion with a revised format. Disposable, prepackaged communion cups will be purchased. Ushers wearing sanitary gloves and a mask will place the cups on tables and direct members to pick one up on entry. Ushers will oversee social distancing at those tables. No one will come in contact with anyone else's communion elements. No one need feel obligated to take the elements if they are uncomfortable doing so.



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What about normal facility use?

- Due to limited staffing and limitations on numbers, many outside groups will be unable to rent or use the facilities.
- Decisions to open the facility to outside groups will be determined on an as needed basis and in conjunction with recommended guidelines.
- All secondary church meetings within the facility have been postponed through the end of May.
- All outside group meetings within the facility have been postponed until further notice.

Should we live stream services after re-opening?

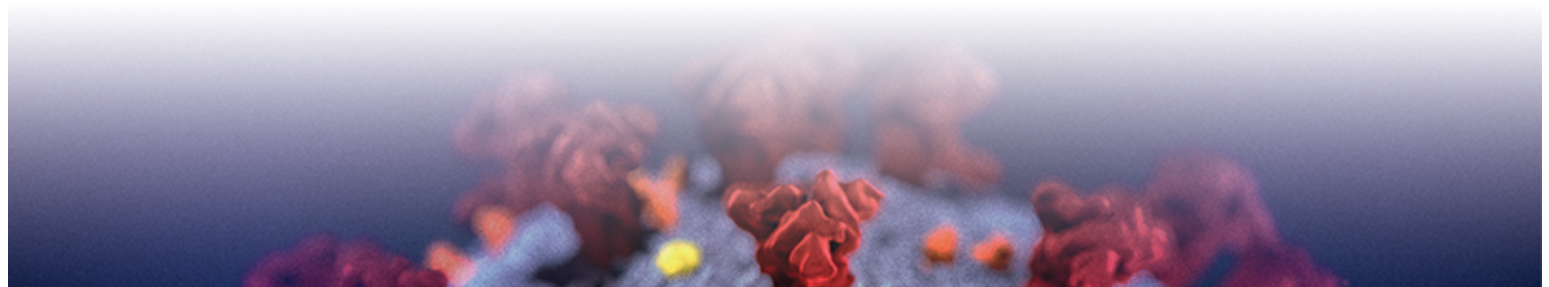
- We intend to continue with live streaming our services beyond re-opening.
- We will engage our congregation as to the intent of this, and why this is not to be viewed as a preferred practice. It is to acknowledge the shut-ins, sick and others who are providentially hindered from gathering with us in person. It also enables people who may be in other locations to get acquainted with Metro Life Church.
- It will allow for our members who sometimes have work shifts during our service to benefit.

Ministry to Minors (ages 18 and under)

- We have cancelled our Vacation Bible School for this year.
- Middle school and High school events and meetings are being evaluated in conjunction with recommended guidelines for gatherings.
- Our Alive youth ministry currently connects on Instagram Live each Wednesday night.
- Our Truth Quest children's ministry will also follow all recommended guidelines for number of children present as well as all disinfecting and sanitation recommendations. Any pre-screening recommendations will be encouraged.

Social Distancing and Worshipping Together (In a Variety of Contexts)

- A floor plan to include social distancing measures has been created for our Sunday services.
- Community Groups, Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry, Metro Young Adults and our GROW classes are all contexts which are much smaller than our Sunday meeting in terms of numbers, but which will require thoughtfulness and care in how we serve one another. Examples include:
 - Number of participants



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- Social Distancing
- Personal beverage containers
- In phase one we are discouraging arriving too early and lingering in the lobby.
- Ushers and signage will assist in managing social distancing during the church service.
- We urge all members who have any symptoms of COVID-19 to refrain from publicly participating in any public services. We need to emphasize caring for others in this crisis.
- We as individuals must do our part.

Property Management

- Throughout March and April, a deep cleaning of the entire facility and furnishings has taken place.
- Any rooms and furnishings utilized during a meeting must be cleaned and sanitized before the next use.
- Any unused rooms and areas of the facility will be locked off to prevent unnecessary waste of cleaning supplies.

The Church Assembled

- Nothing of this current situation is ideal, but we acknowledge that the church is not a facility.
- These current practices do not reflect any theological shifts or a disregard for biblical instruction to gather. We understand the principles of Scripture that are combined with other principles of Scripture to guide us in times like this.
- We look forward to seeing the whole church assembled together as soon as possible!

We may be growing tired of hearing this word, but friends, these are unprecedented times. Let's pray for our leaders and let's pray this virus comes to an end. Accent love and unity in these days. Dissension and division flourish only where people place their own perspective and opinion above everyone else's. The reality is this crisis has humbled us all. Strive for unity. It's ok to have questions and differing perspectives, but let's make love our aim and the focus of our conversations. God bless you all!

