

Cross Creek Church

Planned Phases for Resuming Physical Meetings

NOTE -This document has been updated subsequent to Governor Ivey's press conference on April 28th and will continue to be reviewed at least every 14 days to take into account any new information or policies. Many thanks to our church COVID-19 Committee – Brian Gross, Charlie Culp, Jim Freud, Dr. Marty VanderNoot, Garrett Greer and Chris Peters – for the time and thought they have invested, as well as for all our church officers and staff for their input.

Introduction

THREE GENERAL PRINCIPLES – S-P-F

S - Safety - To date, our church has sincerely endeavored to observe all reasonable precautions (governmental and otherwise) both to protect our congregation and to do our part to love our neighbors. The church always has the right and responsibility to take steps to fulfill our Gospel mission even if the state authorities seek to unreasonably curtail biblically commanded actions. Our church leadership has thus far determined that we can both comply with the state's directives and fulfill our mission. We plan to continue in the same posture, moving ahead with physical meeting opportunities as recommended by governmental authorities, but also drawing from prayerful wisdom and other information resources, as we do our best to maintain safety.

P - Proactively - Along with many other churches, we have aimed to apply the most current information available to take proactive steps to operate within the COVID-19 guidelines. By the same token, we plan to be proactive going forward, recognizing our quarantine is not an indefinite scenario. With the announcement of Alabama's new "Safer at Home" policy effective on April 30th, we will continue to make thoughtful, prayerful decisions while we, along with the rest of our society, take phased steps to emerge from quarantine to more "normal" lives.

F - Flexibility - Our processes and decisions will not be one-size-fits-all nor necessarily one-way. As we see how things evolve in the coming weeks and months, we will hope to keep moving forward through the phases, but will also be prepared to adjust in the opposite direction if needed. We may also add some protocols and relax others. Many of us like structure and consistency, but in this situation, we may have to learn more flexibility than we are used to. God will give us grace. We will also need to show grace with one another as we may not see eye-to-eye in every situation. We all have viewpoints that flow out of our individual temperaments, life experiences, age, health and political perspectives. This will present many opportunities for us to demonstrate loving Christian community as we apply the Gospel to daily situations!

SPF – In summary, and illustration, think "sunscreen" - Not to compare COVID-19 directly but as an analogy of our mindset. (S) - Sunscreen is designed to be applied for safety in the sun, to avoid short-term sunburn, and long-term skin cancer. (P) - We should be proactive, realizing that we have to, want to, and can do things out in the sun, but also staying inside if we are prone to skin issues. (F) - We also need to be flexible in deciding what areas need application, how much is needed and with what strength.

Our Planned Phases

The announcement on April 28th by Gov. Ivey takes Alabama into “phase one,” replacing “stay at home” with “safer at home”. Our church staff, officers, and volunteers are meeting to prepare for it and will communicate results of these meetings with the congregation. We will continue to use the language of the Federal / CDC “phases” document since this is what it is most familiar to us and gives a useful framework for moving forward. However, for the sake of extra precaution and out of deference for the varied perspectives among us about “pace”, we may in some instances aim to go slower than what is permissible as we move forward.

We ask all church participants to read the Federal / CDC “Opening Up America Again” document (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/#top>), taking particular note of the caution provided for those deemed as “vulnerable” (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/#vulnerable-individuals>). Directives for the “vulnerable” should supersede any church plans. We realize many with COVID-19 are asymptomatic, but also would remind any who feel sick, or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay at home until fully recovered. You may also refer to Gov. Ivey’s “safer at Home” order at <https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2020/04/governor-ivey-issues-safer-at-home-order/>

Phase 1 - Effective May 1 - Strict Social Distancing and Precautionary Measures for Physical Meetings and Ongoing Streaming From our shared Church Building

This will be our attempt to follow Alabama’s “Safer at Home” guidelines

Worship Service: Still Online only

- We will not yet resume physical worship services but will begin May 10 to live-stream a full service from Lake Crest with as many musicians and staff on hand as reasonable, permissible, and comfortable.
- We will do our best to take precautionary measures for those present for strict social distancing
- The congregation will continue to participate by viewing on Youtube, in a manner similar to our Easter Service.
- This will allow us to prepare for resuming physical meetings in our worship space when permissible.

Other Ministries:

- Sunday School for all ages will remain online only
- Physical youth and children’s events - TBD
- Small Groups and Life Groups may want to continue meeting only by video conference, but could resume physical meetings, as long as the “vulnerable” are not put at risk, at the discretion of leader, as long as they are no larger than ten persons, keeping at least a six foot distance apart. The wearing of masks is encouraged but not mandatory and meeting outside is recommended.
- All groups having physical meetings are asked to continue providing digital options for those remaining at home.

Phase 2 - Date TBD - Moderate Social Distancing and Ongoing Precautionary Measures, Resuming Physical Worship Service Meetings well as Live Streaming From our Shared Church Building

Worship Service: Resume physical meetings at our shared church building

- No one should feel pressured to attend unless they feel comfortable doing so.
- The sick or “vulnerable” should definitely stay home.
- We may offer multiple worship service times to make sure we can keep social distancing
- Doors would remain propped open at the beginning and end of the service.
- Adequate hand washing/sanitizing stations will be provided.
- We may encourage those in attendance to wear a face mask
- The chairs will be arranged with every other row removed from our standard setup to maintain six foot social distancing at minimum for every family unit.
- Hospitality tables, passing of the offering plate and worship registry will be temporarily suspended
- Nursery and Children’s church - TBD.
- Paper worship guides and communion in prepackaged single-serving portions will be provided and likely be placed in chairs in advance.
- Live Streaming will remain in place for those who choose not to attend physically, and we may offer FM localized broadcast so any who prefer to assemble in their vehicles in the church parking lot and listen, may do so.

Other Ministries:

- Sunday school for all ages - TBD
- Physical youth and children’s events will likely resume.
- More Groups may resume physical meetings at their leaders’ discretion while practicing safe social distancing protocol.
- All groups with physical meetings would be encouraged to continue providing digital options for those still at home.

Phase 3 - Date TBD - Resuming All Customary Physical Meetings but still Advising Caution for those Vulnerable and Maintaining Some Precautions and Distancing

Worship Service:

- No one should feel pressured to attend unless they feel comfortable doing so.
- The sick and “vulnerable” will likely still be encouraged to stay home.
- We will likely maintain many of the protocols listed in phase 2, but details will be re-evaluated by our church staff and officers before entering this phase as we receive additional information about COVID-19.

Other Ministries:

- We will likely maintain many of the protocols listed in phase 2 but details will be re-evaluated by our church staff and officers before entering this phase as we receive additional information about COVID-19, by this time.

Next Phases - TBD

Discussion Questions

FOR ALL THOSE WHO ARE PART OF OUR CHURCH BODY TO RESPOND TO AND TO DISCUSS THROUGH LIFE GROUPS ON MAY 3 – Those who cannot participate in these groups may submit responses to their Life Group leader or to info@crosscreekchurch.net.

1) What are your current feelings or thoughts in general related to the Covid-19 situation and the process of phasing out of quarantine toward careful physical interaction?

2) Given what you have read in our “Planned Phases for Resuming Physical Meetings,” what questions do you have or comments do you think might be helpful for our church leadership and staff to consider?

3) To help us plan, and certainly not to apply any pressure, as far as you know presently, based on the understanding you have of the COVID-19 situation, your health, and the health needs of our society, when would be the earliest date you would plan to resume physical Sunday morning worship, under the social distancing and precautionary measures described for our phase 2? How about for Life Group/Small Group as described in our phase 1?

4) Many households have been affected in a variety of ways by the COVID-19 situation. Hopefully, for many this has been a season of repentance, humbling, and growing dependence on the Lord’s sovereign loving rule. However, this may be a season where the following have arisen or other challenges not listed. What, if any of these, can we help you or your family address?

- Job loss
- Income reduction
- Loss of presently needed retirement funds
- Unresolved or disruptive marriage tension
- Unresolved or disruptive parenting challenges
- Return or emergence of substance abuse struggles
- Return or emergence of disorders, pornography or other addictive patterns
- Elevation of anxiety challenges
- Depression due to loneliness or isolation
- Conflict with extended family, friends, coworkers, or fellow church members related to COVID-19 perspectives or actions.