

**Relaunching Your Congregation – The What and How – Not the When**

Notes Compiled by

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**Part One – ReLaunching/ReOpening**

**Three Big Questions about ReLaunching/ReOpening for Churches to Consider:**

1. **Criteria for Opening:** What are your criteria for relaunching/reopening your church? Not a date, but the criteria that must be met for your to decide to open.

1. **Phases of Opening:** What are the phases for relaunching/reopening your church? You will not go from zero to 100 in one Sunday but will likely phase-in your opening.

1. **Readiness for Opening:** What must you do to prepare your facilities, your staff, and your volunteers for opening? What is your marketing plan to your congregation and your community context?

***Draft Guidelines for Churches from CDC as of Monday, April 27th:***

*Churches should hold services through video streaming or at drive-in or outdoor venues as much as possible. They should also encourage everyone to wear cloth face masks,*

 *use a stationary collection box, and schedule extra services if necessary*

*to make sure church pews are not packed and congregants stay*

*at least six feet from each other.*

***For all three phases****, the CDC recommends that faith communities consider temporarily limiting the sharing of prayer books and worship materials, and consider using a stationary collection box or mail or electronic payment instead of the traditional shared collection trays or baskets; and avoid or consider suspending choir or musical ensembles during religious services.*

**Opening Up America Again**

(From White House and CDC)

There are actually four phases: 1. The readiness phase is called “Gating” and represents what should be done before proceeding to Phase One. 2. Phase One. 3. Phase Two. 4. Phase Three.

**Gating:**

1. Symptoms: A downward trajectory of influenza-like illness and COVID-like syndromic cases within a 14-day period.

2. Cases: A downward trajectory of documented cases and positive tests as a percent of total tests within a 14-day period, plus flat or increasing volume of tests.

3. Hospitals: Treating all patients without crisis care, and a robust testing program in place for at-risk healthcare works, including emerging antibody testing.

4. These gating criteria can be regionalized within a state and do not have to apply to the whole state before gating is met for every region of the state.

**Proposed Phased Approach:** Mitigates risk of resurgence, protects the most vulnerable, and is regionalized within the state based on governor’s discretion.

**Guidelines for All Phases for Individuals:** 1. Continue to practice good hygiene. 2. People who feel sick should stay home.

**Guidelines for All Phases for Congregations:** 1. Implement appropriate polices based on federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines. 2. Monitor staff and participants for indicative symptoms, and do not allow symptomatic people to be present working or in activities of the congregation until cleared by a medical provider. 3. Implement policies and procedures for staff contact tracing once staff is tested for COVID-19.

**Who Are Vulnerable Individuals?** 1. Elderly individuals. 2. Individuals with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those who immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.

**Phase One:** (Once Gating criteria is met.)

**Individuals:** 1. All vulnerable individuals should shelter in place. Non-vulnerable persons in the same household should take precautions to isolate from vulnerable individuals in the same household. 2. When in public maximize physical distance from others. 3. Congregational settings of more than 10 people where appropriate distancing cannot be practiced, should be avoided unless precautionary measures are observed. 4. Do not engage in non-essential travel.

**Congregations:** 1. Continue to encourage telework where possible and feasible. 2. Staff should return to work in phases. 3. Close common areas where people might naturally gather or enforce *strict physical distancing protocols*. 4. Do not engage in non-essential travel. 5. Make special accommodations for staff who are vulnerable individuals. 6. Camp activities should remain closed. 7. No visitation to senior living facilities and hospitals. 7. Congregations can only operate under *strict physical distancing protocols*.

* ***Notes from Robert Grant:*** **Phase One**: Phase One does not allow for any regular church activity. The church should continue to practice on-line/live-stream worship or parking lot/in-car worship until Phase One is lifted. The Governor will make that determinization and announce the time-line.

**Phase Two:** (No evidence of a rebound and satisfy Gating criteria a second time.)

**Individuals:** 1. All vulnerable individuals should continue to shelter in place. Non-vulnerable persons in the same household should take precautions to isolate from vulnerable individuals in the same household. 2. When in public maximize physical distance from others. 3. Congregational settings of more than 50 people where appropriate distancing cannot be practiced, should be avoided unless precautionary measures are observed. 4. Non-essential travel can resume.

**Congregations:** 1. Continue to encourage telework where possible and feasible. 2. Staff should return to work in phases. 3. Close common areas where people might naturally gather or enforce *moderate physical distancing protocols*. 4. Non-essential travel can resume. 5. Make special accommodations for staff who are vulnerable individuals. 6. Camp activities can reopen. 7. No visitation to senior living facilities and hospitals. 7. Congregations can only operate under *moderate physical distancing protocols*.

* ***Notes from Robert Grant:*** **Phase Two**: Churches should wait on directives from the Governor because there could be levels of opening for certain socialized situations that include/exclude churches.

**Phase Three:** (No evidence of a rebound and satisfy Gating criteria a third time.)

**Individuals:** 1. Vulnerable individuals can resume congregational interactions, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to congregational settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed. 2. Low-risk individuals should consider minimizing time spent in crowded environments.

**Congregations:** 1. Resume unrestricted staff at church sites. 2. Visits to senior living facilities and hospitals can resume. 3. Congregations can operate under limited *physical distancing protocols*.

* ***Notes from Robert Grant:*** **Phase Three**: Again, churches should listen for the directives of the Governor before opening the church activities.

**Strategies and Tactics Involved in ReLaunching/Reopening**

**Contingency Planning and Preparation:**

* Engage in planning for a ReLaunch/Reopen, prepare for the ReLaunch/Reopen, and practice the ReLaunch/Reopen.
* Do not set a date and then disappoint your congregation. Be mindful of the three phase plan that has come from the White House task force. When will Phase One start in South Carolina? . . . Phase Two? . . . Phase Three? Phase One could start by Father’s Day. Phase Two by the middle of July. Phase Three by early August. They could start sooner, but they could also start later.
* Survey your congregation regularly with an online survey as to when they are ready to return to a live worship service and small groups.
* Efforts and conversations must rise above partisan politics and what the government is saying, or it will negatively impact your ReLaunching/Reopening.
* As you prepare to ReLaunch/Reopening bring small groups of influential thought leaders back into the church facilities for dialogue and prayer. They can be advocates for you to their networks.

**Prayer:**

* ReLaunching/Reopening your congregation should be a spiritual experience.
* Engage in several weeks of a season of prayer leading up to the ReLaunching of the congregation.
* Sessions can be led online by pastor, staff, and key lay leaders and posted on your website and social media.

**Summer:**

* Realize that with summer coming, that churches may open before schools. Therefore, when safe and appropriate, what can churches do with virtual or physical/social distance events for children and youth/students?
* How can churches help prepare children and youth/students academically to go back to school in the fall? This can be done virtually – and when appropriate – on-site.
* It is possible that the window for summer events may only be July 6th to August 14th—a six-week period once Phase Three has started and before school starts back.
* How will you use that time? Will you have any of the traditional programming such as VBS, camps, trips? Or will you not?

**Physical/Social Distancing:**

* Phases of physical/social distancing: Strict during Phase One. Moderate during Phase Two. Careful during Phase Three.
* Some physical/social distancing patterns will continue, and some may even be permanent. There will be less handshakes, hugging, and cheek kissing, but there may still be standing and turning to greet one another.
* Post signs about not shaking hands and doing non-contact greetings. You can promote the hashtag ***#itsoktosmileandwave***.

**Virtual Church/Technology:**

* Use this time to raise the technical knowledge of your congregation. Teach them to use Zoom and other communication vehicles without fear!
* What new technology have, or will you invest in, and who does or will operate it? Just having the new technology is not enough. You need staff and volunteers who can help you reach the potential the technology offers you.

**Worship:**

* Plan a Comeback Worship Service when appropriate.
* Do not have printed worship folders. Project all information on a screen.
* Consider more/multiple worship services with smaller gatherings if there is a size limit on the number of people who can gather. Physical/social distancing will require a smaller attendance per service.
* Survey people to see which service they plan to attend and have a limit allowed for each service. Make the idea and number of the limit well-known to the congregation.
* Keep an online worship option at least for a while for those who are afraid or unable to attend in person.
* Continue online worship while phasing in live worship, and then decide whether you continue online worship. You might continue online worship as a choice, or even consider starting an ongoing, online “campus.”
* For churches who pass the elements of the Lord’s Supper/Communion the same issues of touching the plate or tray or the elements may be a concern. Self-contained juice and cracker cups may not solve the problem of anxiety as to who has touched them. Forget about the intinction method.
* While physical baptisms might need to be delayed, can some rite of passage ceremony substitute until the physical baptism can take place. To do physical baptism as usual may be a negative testimony to the need for physical/social distance.
* Skip every other row or space chairs out. Meet and greet times – if still conducted – will not involve touching, but words of kindness and expressions of joy.
* Your worship center capacity will decrease from the 80 percent factor to a 50-60 percent factor. How will this drive your decision about how many worship services you will conduct?
* First-time guests will particularly be looking for more space, safety, security, and cleanliness.

**Restrooms:**

* You must decide whether you will allow restroom usage.
* If you choose to keep your restrooms open, be sure to post signs about washing hands in restrooms with appropriate guidelines to do so.
* If your restrooms are open, have greeters monitor the restrooms to ensure hands are washed and social distancing is followed.

**Staff:**

* Staff responsibilities may change. During this time people may have figured out they need staff doing different things than they were doing. Perhaps less programs, and more staff-led individual, family, and small group interaction.
* The number of full-time, permanent staff may decrease in favor of bivocational and covocational staff who can relate more intimately to a small segment of the congregation.
* Thus, some full-time staff positions may go away.
* Will a higher level of digital literacy be a new criterion for staff hiring? Will you need to dismiss staff who are not digitally literate and cannot/will not increase their capacity in this area?

**Small Groups:**

* Many closed-end small groups will become permanently digital. This is a group with a beginning point and an ending point. For example, a new member orientation, a multiple week study of a subject or book, a coaching or mentoring season for leaders, etc.
* Will small groups continue meeting virtually for a while even after live worship returns? Perhaps there will be a phasing in of live small groups at the church facilities. Perhaps other venues will be used for small groups to gather with physical/social distance that is needed during various phases of the ReLaunch.
* Online small groups need to meet for a shorter time, so they do not get Zoom Fatigue. (Note: This refers to the “formal” meeting length. Informally people may want to stay online longer just to fellowship in the virtual “parking lot.”)
* Small groups that start once again meeting live in the church facilities may need to be divided into smaller groups, and a limit placed on how many small or smaller groups can gather in the available space and rooms at the same time.
* Online community can nurture existing small groups but may have trouble creating community among new small groups.

**Finances/Generosity:**

* Will your church need to write a contingency budget if giving does not rebound in a few months?
* If your church received a PPP loan will you need to repay it if giving does hold up or rebound?
* Budgets will experience small changes in some cases to dramatic changes in others.
* Churches will spend money on new and different things. More will be spent on digital equipment, licenses, and Internet-related access.
* Online giving patterns will continue the increase they are experiencing during this time away from live church.
* Less people will place cash or a check in an offering plate that is passed down their row.
* Passing the plates may become a thing of the past. People will not be sure whose hands have touched the plate. (Already in many worship services where offering plates are passed, the percentage of people who place anything in the plates is dramatically declining.)
* Ushers may need to stand by the reciprocal where offerings can be placed as people enter or leave worship.

**Marketing/Communications:**

* Advertise the ReLaunching of the church and make it a big day like Easter.
* Connect with as many people as possible virtually, and through both mass media and targeted marketing.
* Even place messages of hope on billboards and social media sponsored by your church.
* Over communicate about cautions being taken as people come back. Communicate that “This is the safest place people can gather!”
* Tell your congregation through flyers on the church doors, email, and social media about how you have prepared the church facilities for their arrival. Be sure to use words like “clean, safe, and mindful of health needs and issues in preparation for a non-touch experience” or something similar. Also say that if they are sick, then they should not be present and can join online instead.

**Cleanliness/Safety:**

* Consider a temperature check on all staff and volunteers. Some may even want to check everyone who enters for a while.
* Deep clean your entire church. Where will germs be transferred? Consider shampooing carpets, sanitizing pews, bathrooms, doorknobs, light switches, and microphones.
* Personal sanitizing will permanently increase. Wipes and solutions will be all around open areas, in restrooms, and in education areas for all ages.
* The smell of clean will be the new understanding of “Muzak.” A whole new set of cleanliness standards and practices and frequency must be in place.
* Provide new, clean masks for anyone who needs one as they enter. Making these could be a great project for volunteers in a church with clear specifications for the material and design.
* (See the Appendix for a document prepared on cleanliness by Robert Grant.)

**Committees/Teams/Boards:**

* Many committee or team meetings can now take place online using Zoom or the connection capacities of many other vendors.
* Do online continually for many gatherings. Attendance is better. Gatherings are shorter. Travel is not required.

**Community Outreach/Missional Engagement:**

* Reconsider how your congregation will engage in missional engagements that involve regional, national, and international travel.
* How can virtual missional engagements have an impact on a community context, or people group?
* Will volunteers be willing to take the risk to travel and temporarily live in the places they had intended to go – particularly given the possibility of a second and third wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic?
* Community outreach will more often take place in the actual community rather than meaning that community people come to the church facilities for some activity or ministry. The church will go to the community.

**Community Life Within the Congregation:**

* For at least a while, the in-person church will be more important to people.
* For a while, when people return to live church, they will come more often than they did before. It will be like it was post-9/11/01.
* In the long-term attendance may settle back to the old patterns. It more depends on how well we reconnect people with God and our congregation.

**Facilities:**

* The experience will cause congregations to rethink the need to expand their facilities.
* Their facilities may need to be retrofitted, but not expanded.
* It will also cause congregations to consider becoming location partners with other congregations – especially new church plants.

**Refreshments:**

* For the foreseeable future churches should not offer coffee, juice, water, and food openly laid out in fellowship areas.
* They should invite people to bring their own coffee, etc. in a closed top container.
* The church might even give away or offer at cost branded drink containers that meet the church’s guidelines for safety from spills.

**Pastoral Care/Mental Health:**

* Dealing significantly with the emotions of your congregation.
* Mental health will be a major concern for years. There will likely be a COVID-19 brand of PTSD. Therefore, congregations need to be prepared to help people debrief.
* Deaths where a formal funeral did not occur may – for some people – create an inadequate grieving process.
* How will you address alcohol and drug abuse that may have worsened during the crisis?
* How will you address other health issues such as weight increase that happened during the crisis and aggravated other health issues?
* Will you welcome people who were or are infected—even asymptomatic – with the coronavirus? How? Under what circumstances?

**Preaching:**

* Shift the preaching schedule and topics to address issues and emotions with which congregational participants return to live church.

**Volunteers:**

* It is possible that some volunteers will not be willing to engage in their program and ministry leadership for a while due to their concerns about safety.
* What adjustments need to be made if volunteer teams do not have enough participants?
* Perhaps this is a time to consider the essential, simple church pattern rather than seeking to keep all the programs, ministries, and activities of church that existed pre-COVID-19.

**Partnerships Between Churches:**

* Some smaller membership churches may really be struggling by the time churches can go live.
* Medium membership and larger membership churches need to be ready to partner with them as a Kingdom approach to ministry – particularly within associations like CMBA.
* There could be a season of congregations fostering or adopting other congregations like a big sister or brother fostering or adopting a sibling.

**Preschool/Children:**

* Pay attention to the preschool and children’s areas. Consider removing everything nonessential from the rooms to limit surfaces for potential contamination and do a thorough cleaning in between uses.
* What can you guarantee parents that has been done, is being done, and will be done to assure them their children are safe at church?
* The agenda has shifted from a primary concern about security to a primary concern about safety.
* Clear standards and practices must be in place, and assertively monitored not because workers will not follow the standards and practices, but because it is just that important to parents.
* How will you change programming for children as parents will be anxious with what is going on with their children if they are not in worship with them?
* Will you increase the activity or involvement for children during worship?
* Pre-register preschoolers and children to limit how many are in any room at a time.
* Limit leaders in the preschool and children’s areas to those who do not have pre-existing conditions and/or are not over 65 years old.
* Have extra volunteers to help in the preschool areas where some children may suffer from separation anxiety after only being with parents for a long time. (When parents return to work, some preschoolers may particularly have separation anxiety.)
* Do not let parents in the preschool area. Check in the preschoolers at the entrance to that area.
* Have a written checklist of what has been cleaned in the preschool and children’s areas and when.
* Develop a list of procedures for your volunteers. Train them on this list through an online gathering prior to the first live church weekend.

**Senior Adults:**

* 90% of all deaths have been among people 55 years old or older. Yet, they only represent 30% of the population. (According to CDC.)
* Senior adult ministry may change significantly. They may be among the last to return to live worship as they are considered to be among the vulnerable.
* Many senior adults who did not know how, have now become digitally literate and will be willing to use that for a while, or even periodically, after they return to live worship and small groups.
* **Senior Adult Anxiety:** (A conversation with a group of 22 senior adults.)
	+ They are positively anxious to get back to live church, but they want to be very careful.
	+ They are missing the fellowship with one another and want that restored.
	+ Although they do their weekly small group by Zoom and they enjoy it, it is not enough.
	+ Please do not ReLaunch until you can prove to us that it is fairly safe.
	+ Explain to us how we will do physical/social distancing.
	+ Will we need more worship services on Sunday as we cannot “pack the pew” anymore?
	+ You will need to sanitize the building and explain to us how you did it.
	+ Cut out the handshaking, hugging, and cheek kissing!

**Part Two – Innovation and the New Normal**

**Two Big Issues about ReLaunching/ReOpening for Churches to Consider:**

*Consider the Continuum from Output to Impact to Capacity Building to Sustainability*

**Continue Innovating.** This may be the best opportunity you will ever have to innovate and engage in adaptive change in your congregation. You know those things you have always wanted to have a chance to do? Now is the time! This is the opportunity! You may not have an open door for transition and change like this for another decade. Take full advantage of it.

As you ReLaunch/ReOpen your congregation, stop doing those things that are no longer working, and start doing the new things God is showing you. Embrace the new technology you have learned, and the new way to connect with people.

**The New Normal:** Building capacities for sustaining the “New Normal.” Work on the continuum from Output to Impact to Capacity Building to Sustainability.

Output is about counting people and money. Impact is about having a greater impact on the spiritual formation of people. Capacity Building is about raising up leaders for the new innovations. Sustainability is about building new or renewed systems in your congregation that support the new innovations.

The “New Normal” is waiting for you to create it under God’s empowering vision for your congregation.

**Sources Reviewed, Noted, and Perhaps Their Insights Modified or Inspired Other Observations**

(The resulted insights are those of George Bullard and express opinion and not authority.)

* *Opening Up American Again*. Guidelines from the CDC released approximately April 16, 2020.
* Various news sources
* *The Blank Slate: 8 Steps for Churches to Prepare for the Post COVID-19 World* with Thom Rainer and others related to ChurchAnswers.com. A video conference on Friday, April 17, 2020.
* *An Opportunity for All Churches to Relaunch Post-Crisis* by the Church Multiplication Network of the Assemblies of God.
* *Vanderbloemen – Reopening the Church: A Discussion on Leading After COVID-19*.
* *Reopening the Church: 4 Phases for an Orderly Return*. Kenn Braddy, Jr. April 22, 2020
* Georgia Baptist Mission Board – *Basic Guide for Returning to Your Church Building after COVID-19*.
* *Reopening Your Church*. Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.
* *Gathering Together Again: Questions That Guide Moving Forward*. Tennessee Baptist Mission Board.
* *Churches should Not Be the Frist to Reopen*. Ryan P. Burge. Posted on *Christianity Today* April 23, 2020.
* *What Relaunching the Church Might Look Like Over the Next 3*-*12 Months.* Ed Stetzer and Josh Laxton. Posted on Christianity Today April 22, 2020.
* *Now What*? Some Thoughts About What’s Next for the Scattered and Gathered Church. Bill Wilson. Posted on Baptist News Global, April 23, 2020.

**Appendix**

**COVID-19 Church Re-Entry Procedures to Consider**

**Cleaning Tips and Space Utilization**

Churches are faced with the three phases introduced by the President of the United States and the CDC last week and the roll-out of those instructions by the Governors of the states. The article is known as: “Opening Up America Again”.

**Givens:**

1. This Phase process is going to take time and patience.
2. Distancing is going to remain a norm for a longer time than churches want it to. Handshakes and hugs will be a long time coming back.
3. Masks are the new church attire for the future.
4. Church cleanliness is about to reach a new level of importance before congregations feel comfortable to enter a large occupancy space again knowing it is sanitized for their protection.
5. Because of distancing church seating/occupancy may have limitations. Churches will not want to intentionally crowd or obstruct distancing causing the congregation to become uncomfortable. Multiple services offered at other days or times, Electronic communication through live-stream or re-streaming the services at one or more times will become a major support to over-all church existence, giving congregations options to attend in person or not, due to their vulnerability and distancing feelings.
6. Sunday School, Small Groups, Children’s activities will possibly resume in Phase Three.

**Church Cleaning/Sanitizing/HVAC**

COVID-19 is mainly spread from person-to-person. When someone who is infected coughs or sneezes, they send droplets containing the virus into the air. The coronavirus can live for hours to days on surfaces like countertops, doorknobs, pew/chair backs, restroom facilities, water fountains…etc. It is still uncertain to researchers as to whether exposure to heat, cold or sunlight affects how long it lives on surfaces. Right now: Metal surfaces – 5 days, Wood-4 days, Plastics- 2-3 days, Cardboard – 24 hours, Glass- 5 days, Ceramics- 5 days, just to name a few. Coronavirus does not seem to spread through exposure to food, nor found in drinking water.

***Hard Surfaces (non-porous) – Most common EPA registered household disinfectants should be effective to kill the virus on surfaces. Additionally, diluted household bleach solution can be used if appropriate for the surface, mix one to five tablespoons / 1/2-2 oz bleach to one gallon of water. Do not mix soap with bleach. Best practice -clean the HVAC system, air purification and solid surfaces as close together in time as possible.***

**What to do:**

1. Clean pew/chair backs and handrails and end caps, all door handles/knobs.
2. After each worship service wipe these surfaces.
3. Change HVAC filters to electrostatic filters with fibers to collect all dust and recirculating airborne particles.
4. Install air purification system that continuously creates good clean air to the entire area.
5. Close off all water coolers.
6. Have hand-sanitizer stations at multiple locations and at each entrance/exit door.
7. Open ONLY the parts of the church facilities you need or willing to re-sanitize.
8. Provide ample hand-washing areas with soap and disposable towels.
9. Keep clean all interior and exterior stair handrails with the disinfectant.
10. Constantly clean restroom facilities.

**Church Seating/Distancing**

The hardest part of the COVID-19 situation for the church is the exercise of physical distancing. However, this is the one action besides washing your hands and wearing a mask that has been most effective in keeping the virus at bay. To exercise physical distancing at church is not impossible but will require some unique strategies for the future which at first may be unusual but functional for other health issues too.

**What to do:**

1. Determine that your Worship Center will never be “full” again, at least until physical distancing and the threat of this virus is over. So, get creative!
2. Consider live-streaming to be a permanent value to reaching your congregation with worship.
3. When Worship Spaces are opened by the Governor during Phase Two or Three consider these options:
4. Fill the pew/chairs with only 4-5 members of the same household sitting together. Families will be sitting together again! Since the pew/chairs are 32-36 inches apart already this sets up the ideal physical distancing needed. Fill the pew/chair from the center-isle, then skip to the other end of the next pew/chair from the outside isle. This uses every pew/chair from opposite ends and gives a 6 feet physical distance between persons seated in the pew/chairs. The center areas of the longer pew/chairs would be unusable because people would have to pass over too closely to get in or out.
5. Fill pew/chairs from the front to the back in an orderly way. Try to avoid overcrowding of folks in the isles. Ushers may need to help show how far down and which pew/chairs were available.
6. Empty pew/chairs from the back to the front to avoid congregating in the isles too closely after worship. If side doors are available to us as EXITS, they can help the front pew/chairs empty faster.
7. Do not pass the offering plates – use ushers at the EXIT doors to take the collection. As an act of worship use music to EXIT the building and that the exit is a part of worship and giving.
8. Discourage Congregations from “visiting” until they are outside the facilities and exercising physical distancing in an appropriate space. You do not want to crowd someone in or delay their save distance exit.
9. Ushers/greeters/door monitors need to wear masks and gloves – it is OK!
10. The invitation to join the church needs to be done with physical distancing in mind. This may require a decision card in the pew/chair rack that could be handed to the minister with the information completed for baptism or transfer of membership. Follow-up by the staff could satisfy the acceptance procedure or a second introduction at a later time. No hand shaking line should be considered.

Prepared by Robert Grant for the Columbia Metro Baptist Association on April 20, 2020.

**Disclaimer:** This document has been prepared at the request of the Columbia Metro Baptist Association (CMBA) by Robert Grant, an independent contractor with CMBA knowledgeable in church architecture and the appropriate use of church facilities. This piece is an opinion based on review of factual information and four decades of experience by Robert in working with churches on their facilities and their use.

CMBA and Robert Grant present this as an informed opinion. We advise anyone who is unsure about this opinion

to consult their own legal and health experts in this area of law, health, and practice.

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