**St. John Baptist Church**

**Guidelines & Recommendations for**

**Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)**

**Reopening Sunday Church Service**

**Anticipated Reopening July 11, 2021**

**The doors of St. John are reopening. This is a blessed time to Worship together again in our Sanctuary and give praise and thanks to God for the great things HE has done. The utmost goal is to maintain the safety of each person in attendance as we give praise and thanks to our Lord.**

**Purpose**: To ensure that the public safety for every individual who participates in the Sunday Worship Services or special programs/events will:

* Follow guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the church.
* Maintain a safe environment by utilizing safety precautions while performing their duties or tasks on a routine basis.

In order to maintain the safety of each congregant, there will be a limit of fifty (50) individuals allowed to participate in Worship Services. This will be accomplished on a

first-come, first-serve basis. Program participants and staff will not be included in this number.

Everyone will be required to adhere to the following guidelines in an effort to alleviate and decrease the spread of COVID-19:

* Adhering to CDC/VDH/church guidelines, anyone who has been exposed to or tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days should not participate in any type of church service. If this does occur, the person should self-quarantine for 10 days and be free of symptoms before returning to church. If there are any questions or concerns, please consult with a member of the Health Ministry for assistance.
* “VDH is currently updating guidance for fully vaccinated people**.** As a reminder, until people are fully vaccinated, they should continue to follow all precautions recommended by public health (e.g., wear a mask, physically distance from others, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and wash hands often).”
* While there will be no inquiries concerning who has received the COVID-19 vaccine, you are encouraged to do your part in maintaining your health and the health of those around you. We have information available on the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines and the vaccination sites if you are interested and have not received your vaccine.

**Entry:**

* Parking of vehicles will be consistent with the same parking format used for our “Parking Lot” outdoor service to facilitate ease of exiting the parking lot at the end of service. Congregants with physical limitations will be parked in designated spaces.
* All congregants are requested to follow the directions of the Volunteer Parking Lot staff.
* Signs will be posted at each door entrance regarding social distancing, safety measures and handwashing. Signs will be updated as needed.
* Facial masks are required for **all** participants.
* All congregants will enter the church via the front doors. The wheelchair accessible entrance will be used only for congregants unable to use the front steps. Please follow the directions for entry to the church.
* All books, fans, bibles, etc. have been removed from the Sanctuary.
* Pastor, Associate Ministers, Deacons, Trustees, Ushers, Health Ministry and Staff may use the wheelchair accessible entrance and follow the proper protocols in preparation for services.
* Hand sanitizer will be available for use upon entering and exiting the Sanctuary.
* The church will provide masks and facial tissues for personal use throughout the service. Please self-dispose of any personal items.

 Congregants will be asked the following COVID-19 screening questions upon entry:

* Have you experienced any flu-like symptoms in the last 14 days?
* Have you been in contact with a Covid-positive person in the last 14 days?
* Have you flown in the last 14 days?
* Have you received the COVID-19 Vaccine? (Optional)
* Temperatures will be taken before entering the church. If above 99.0 F, an assessment will be necessary.
* Maintain social distancing (6 feet apart) unless the task requires closer interaction for those participating. Seating will be available on every other pew and only family members will sit together. Please follow the directions of the Ushers.
* Congregants with respiratory issues who cannot wear a mask will be assessed at the door.

**Worship:**

* Program participants are only to remove their masks while performing an assigned task, (Ex – singing or speaking).
* Masks and gloves should be worn throughout any special service, i.e., Baptism, Communion, Right-Hand of Fellowship.
* Music will be rendered by the musician with no more than three (3) vocalists; no choirs.
* The microphone on the pulpit will be sanitized between each participant. The Worship Leader will be requested to complete this task.
* There will be no more than three (3) ministers on the pulpit: The Worship Leader, Morning Speaker, and one additional minister.
* Congregants may pick up empty contribution envelopes upon entering the Sanctuary; envelopes with contribution enclosed may be dropped off when exiting the Sanctuary. NO MONETARY CHANGE WILL BE GIVEN DURING THE SERVICE.
* There will not be any overflow seating in the Fellowship Hall.
* Communion cups will be provided upon entry to the Sanctuary. Gloves should be worn when serving Communion cups. A receptacle will be available for disposal of used Communion cups when exiting the Sanctuary.
* Services should be limited to an hour to alleviate an increase in spreading COVID-19 and to decrease usage of the restroom.
* Children, grade 5 and under, must be accompanied by an adult to the restroom.
* Designated staff (Health Ministry, Ushers, Security and others) will be assigned to monitor the Fellowship Hall and surrounding areas during service.
* Areas not designated for use include the nursery and upstairs.
* All church pews, equipment and items used for the service will be sanitized thoroughly by designated individuals and/or professional cleaning service.
* All areas of the church being used should be cleansed and/or disinfected after usage. (Ex.: restrooms, doorknobs, light switches/plates, banisters, kitchen & Fellowship Hall).
* Restrooms will need to be self-cleaned after each use. Cleaning supplies will be accessible in both the men’s and women’s areas.
* If someone becomes ill or there is a medical emergency, a member of the Health Ministry should be notified if available. If a member of the Health Ministry is not available, someone should be designated to call 911 for assistance, then assist the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel as needed.
* Food and beverages will not be served after any program during this reopening phase. Water will be available for emergency purposes.

**Exit:**

* After service, congregants will exit the Sanctuary through the door by the Pastor’s Study, return immediately to their vehicles and exit the parking lot. While we anticipate that this will be temporary, we do want to ensure everyone’s safety. Congregants are to exit the parking lot without social gathering. The Parking Lot Committee will assist with directing traffic and provide additional assistance as needed.

**Summary:**

God has blessed us with the St. John spirit of love and cooperation that has sustained us for more than a year of obediently staying in cars for Sunday service. As we take the giant step of returning to in-house worship, we pray for that same support and love of working together. Still, it is important that for everyone’s safety, it is emphasized that everyone must comply with the guidelines and recommendations.

Please note that the guidelines and recommendations will be revised as we continue to see reductions in the number of Covid infections. This document is Phase 1, with Phase 2 to include guidelines for Sunday School and Children’s Church. Prayerfully, Phase 3 will be the complete return to all worship and fellowship activities.

These guidelines and recommendations will be posted on the church’s website. The Worship Service will continue to be broadcast on ZOOM, Facebook, and the FM Radio Station, 105.9 (subject to change).

Your support and understanding are greatly appreciated throughout this reopening process.

**“To God Be The Glory!”**

The Church Reopening Committee

Sister Wilma Bond, Chair

Deacon Curtis Lassiter

Deacon David Mack

Trustee Kenneth Haywood

Trustee James Lee

Rev. Carlon Lassiter

Sister Barbara Haywood

Sister Stephanie Stoutingberg

Rev. Mark Dickson

Brother Chris Mathis

Deacon Michael Lewis

Sister Vicky Thomas

Guidelines and Recommendations: Established June 15, 2021