

Phase 2 Reopening Strategy  
Black Oak Heights Baptist Church  
5/27/20

First we want to thank all of you for your prayers and patience as we have attempted to honor our local authorities while also following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. These are unprecedented times and we've had to make decisions we've never had to make before, but we're thankful for all the support and faithfulness you've demonstrated through this process.

Late last week, the Knox County Health Department released their guidelines for Phase 2 Reopening. While there was great detail in Phase 1 about "places of worship," there was much less detail provided in Phase 2. The Health Department has simply called our attention to a document produced by the Governor's Office – "Guidance for Gathering Together in Houses of Worship."

We have reviewed those guidelines and they are very similar to the guidelines we followed in Phase 1. The Governor makes one thing very clear in the document – "This resource is an aggregation of suggested protocols from various faith communities across Tennessee...these suggestions are not, and should not be construed to as, mandates or requirements."

That being said, we are encouraging the use of the following guidelines as our church family comes back to God's house, but none of the guidelines listed below are mandatory. Each person is encouraged to make the best decisions for his/herself and his/her family. We encourage you to follow the provisions we include in this strategy, but we support each person's privilege to make his/her own Spirit-led decisions.

We are still encouraging the following practices:

- We encourage all members to seek to maintain 6 feet of social distancing between yourselves and those who are not in your family.
- We also ask that families continue to sit with one another in the worship center during worship in order to maximize our limited seating capacity.
- Seating will continue to be limited to less than 50% in the worship center in our attempt to comply with local and state capacity guidelines. We will add additional worship opportunities as necessary. Please continue to sign-up for worship.
- We continue to encourage attenders to wear a mask while they're in the facility. We will continue to provide masks at the door for those who don't have them.
- According to the Governor's office, "vulnerable populations" are encouraged to continue worshipping online. The vulnerable include "everyone 65 years and older, people with disabilities, people with serious respiratory or cardiovascular conditions, people who are immunocompromised, and others."
- Those who are symptomatic are encouraged to stay home and worship online. Please consult the CDC for a full list of C-19 symptoms.
- It is likely that we will begin taking temperatures before attenders enter our facility. The process will be very quick and require no contact.

In addition to Sunday morning worship, the following services/ministries will begin again in Phase 2:

- Sunday School – Each teacher will communicate with his/her class and make the decision about whether or not to meet. Each class will be at liberty to use their classroom space in our facility.
- Wednesday Night Activities – In-person Wednesday night activities will resume on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. That includes nursery/Sprouts, KATO, Youth, Adult Bible Study, and Adult Choir. More than likely, Adult Bible Study will meet in the sanctuary and Adult Choir will meet in the fellowship hall. Wednesday night meals will not resume until the Fall.
- Sunday Night worship will not be relaunched at this time and probably will not begin until the Fall.
- KATO Kids will stay in their area throughout the entire morning worship experience (Sunday School & worship). To be clear, children will not be a part of “big church” worship at this time. We plan to take the temperature of each child with a no-contact thermostat when they are checked in. No child demonstrating C-19 symptoms will be permitted in the KATO area.
- Nursery/Sprouts will be open for all of our service times, but each child will have his/her temperature taken when they are checked in by a parent. Children demonstrating symptoms of C-19 will not be permitted in the nursery.
- **Please assist us by signing up for each Sunday event you plan to attend, whether the events are Sprouts, KATO, Youth, or AM worship. All signups are available on the church app.**

Others notes of interest:

- VBS is still postponed indefinitely. When a new date has been added to the calendar we will notify you as soon as possible. We are considering a back-to-school event in lieu of VBS. More details to come later.
- At this time, Mother’s Day Out (MDO) is still closed but has a tentative reopening date at the end of June. When a reopening decision is made, we will communicate that decision as soon as possible.
- Any questions can be directed to the church’s leadership by calling 689-5397 or emailing [blackoakheights@gmail.com](mailto:blackoakheights@gmail.com). Please take advantage of the church’s new website and app for much more information.

Finally, we understand that each person will have their own opinion of reopening and develop their own practices. We honor each person’s decision-making and we recognize the autonomy of each local church to make their own decisions. Let’s continue to join forces and keep pressing forward in Jesus’ name.