

***Layers of Consideration
for Congregations when
Opening the Church
Building for Worship and
Other Activities***

**THE AMERICAN BAPTIST
CHURCHES OF
PENNSYLVANIA & DELAWARE**



WHAT ABOUT THE **PHYSICAL** SPACE?

- Gathering for worship as the restrictions for COVID-19 are relaxed isn't as simple as letting folks know you'll be meeting at the worship center moving forward, and then unlocking the door. What specific kinds of cleaning needs to be done to assure your church family that the building is a safe place to come?
- Who can be recruited to help prepare the church for the reopening?
- What resources are needed for this cleaning—are they readily available or do they need to be ordered?
- What ongoing protocols need to be put in place to maintain the cleanliness of the space? **Once and Done is NOT an option.** How are you going to assure that people are vigilant in keeping the worship space clean?
- What procedures and supplies are you going to put in place to maintain a safe space while folks are present for face to face worship?
- Will you have hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray/wipes and masks available? Because these supplies are limited, how will you gather them?
- What practices can you put in place during the time people are meeting?
- In order to maintain social distancing, can you gather your entire church family in your worship space at one time or do you need to have multiple services to accommodate?
- Will you still have a greeter at the door or expect your pastor to greet people at the conclusion of worship, in light of the social distancing guidelines?
- How will you 'handle' the offering?
- How will you share the Lord's Supper? Baptisms? Your Church Choir?
- Will you continue to hold Children's Church and if so, how?
- Will you hold a coffee fellowship or any other fellowship meals?

WHAT ABOUT THE CONCERNS OF THE **INDIVIDUAL**?

- Perspectives and anxiety levels around COVID-19 are all over the map. How are you and your leadership going to navigate that challenge and present a unified, cohesive plan to your church family?
- You need to know that the anxiety around this virus may keep people from coming back to worship right away—both young and old alike. How are you going to address that concern?

- Perhaps there are some people who should stay away based on their health and age...are you ready to grapple with that?
- This crisis has caused many more people to be open to the LORD—do you have a plan to welcome these new persons, some of which may have found you in your online community?
- What are you going to do to fill the ‘void’ that might be created when some volunteers refuse to return in the near future?
- In the face of increased unemployment, have you considered how reduced giving from your members might impact your 2020 budget? Who needs to be looking at those realities?
- What about scheduling and holding memorial services, home goings and remembrances of people who died during the time of ‘stay at home’ orders?
- How will you address the personal and family struggles that may have surfaced among those experiencing marital strains, financial strains, emotional and physical abuse and loss of jobs?
- This period of isolation will certainly result in a number of heightened addictions: alcohol and other drugs, pornography, etc. Additionally, mental health challenges are on the rise...how will you respond?

WHAT ABOUT MINISTRY NOW AND MOVING FORWARD?

We need God’s perspectives on each of these layers, but especially this one, so we put it in the form of a Three-Fold prayer, because we DEFINITELY need God’s Help!



LORD, what would you like us to STOP?

- It hasn’t been ‘business as usual’ for a number of weeks now. Are there any ministry activities from before that just don’t seem to hold the same importance now, and if so, what should we let go to make room for the new?
- What meetings have not been held that have not been missed?
- What needs pruning?
- Is it time to celebrate and sunset ministries that have served their purpose in the past, so we can look with renewed energy toward the future?



LORD, what would you like us to START?

- What has your deep dive into technology taught you? What good habits has your church embraced in these past months that you can continue and enhance? Online care through small groups? Digital communication? Streaming worship services?
- We cobbled together a Facebook or Zoom stream, but if it’s here to stay, should we invest in the experience with better technology?

- Do we need some new staff or volunteers to help us with this?
- Are there other things God wants us to start?.....



LORD, what would you like us to STRENGTHEN?

- People have stepped up in new ways over these weeks, how are we going to honor them and engage their passion moving forward?
- We've had a small group ministry, but this has shown us we need more of that—how do we do that?
- Prayer for one another has been such a comfort. How do we strengthen the prayer life in our church moving forward?
- We had a feeding ministry, but we now see it's critical importance with fresh eyes. What can we do to enhance it for the glory of the LORD?