

# NHBC Campus Reopening Plan

May 29, 2020

The decision to reopen the church campus poses a series of important considerations and questions. It is understood that there will be disagreement about the details, but let us consider our unity on the big picture. First, we all desire to gather for corporate worship beyond the virtual experiences on Facebook Live and beyond the parking lot “drive in” worship experiences. Regardless of timing, everyone is ready and longing to gather with the family that is NHBC. Second, we all recognize the need to gather safely that must take into account new practices. Some of these practices will be common sense that everyone agrees with; others will be more restrictive than some like or even think necessary. But, it is clear that once we gather, it will look different from before to ensure the safety of the church family and larger community. And third, as we receive the best possible information from the State of North Carolina and from the scientific and medical leaders whose expertise *actually applies to the pandemic*, our ultimate longing is for the leadership of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, to guide our particular community to faithful and wise decisions.

As we move toward reopening, we strongly encourage each church member to discern whether or not to attend corporate worship in person. Some are ready presently. Many others are not. Some may choose to wait until there is a vaccine in place. **Please read this statement with both the love and seriousness in which it is offered: *No one will be judged negatively for his or her decision as we trust that each of us individually and all of us corporately seek to make Spirit-led choices.***

The following plan consists of three movements toward incremental, increased reopening. The plan is in outline form and does not include countless details that will be addressed within each movement. Along with NHBC specific concerns related to our congregation and our church campus, we will utilize general information from the CDC related to larger group gatherings and to faith communities. Consistent evaluation of the plan may lead to changes along the way.

## **Movement #1 - May 31 - June 27**

Key Components:

1. Worship - continue worship at home and worship at the parking lot; Facebook livestream continues for every Sunday services.
  - a. May 31 - Sanctuary (Pentecost)
  - b. June 7 - Parking lot drive in / outside seating
  - c. June 14 - Sanctuary (Graduate Recognition)
  - d. June 21 - Parking lot drive in / outside seating (Father’s Day)
2. Church office is open for staff and for the church as needed. We will continue to schedule all who come to the church to keep numbers low and to allow for folks to keep enough distance.
3. Open the church on Thursdays for groups to meet as needed and wanted. Small groups, teams, committees, classes or any other group can schedule through the church office to meet at the church from 8:30 am until 8:00 pm. One group per room will be scheduled on each Thursday taking into account the size of the group to allow for the group to give one another good space. Thursday has been selected because the cleaning company comes each week on Thursday nights. This will allow the building to be cleaned and sanitized very soon after different groups are in the building. We recognize that virus transmission is primarily person to person (and that the CDC has issued new information that suggests the virus is not as easily spread on surfaces as initially thought), but we will begin with this simple limitation and expand from here in order to limit the number of people at the building across the week.
4. The week of June 1, begin the work of preparing the sanctuary for in-person worship. Pastoral and administrative staff, Administrative Council, and Deacons will lead the way for the preparation and will invite other

groups/individuals who can participate. Communicate to the church what to expect and demonstrate practices for the reopening of the sanctuary for corporate worship.

5. We will coordinate with the other churches meeting on campus to establish complimentary timelines for their return to corporate worship and other gatherings.

NOTE: Why wait until June 28 for in-person, corporate worship in the sanctuary? Honestly, every date is somewhat arbitrary not only for the church but also for the State of NC. As we move into Phase 2 with the state, selecting a date a few weeks beyond 5/22 gives us the opportunity to see how the further opening of commercial and public activity will affect church members. We understand that opening workplaces, stores, and restaurants includes potential person to person contact. The nature of the contact as church is, however, typically more personal. Even with new physical distance practices in place, the person to person contact at the church will happen. We simply want to take wise, timely precautions as we move forward.

### **Movement #2 - June 28 - August 1**

Key Components:

1. Worship - Begin in-person worship services in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. We will determine further details about the start time for and the nature of the Sunday morning worship gathering. There will be one NHBC worship service on Sunday during this movement (no separate children's worship). The plans for opening the sanctuary will be completed in Movement #1 and implemented beginning Sunday June 28. Prior to June 28, we will send out information on physical distancing practices including written guidelines and videos demonstrating the plans. We will coordinate with the other congregations for the scheduling of their worship gatherings.
2. Church office - Continue the Movement #1 plan.
3. Continue to open the church campus on Thursdays for groups, 8:30 am - 8:00 pm, as described in Movement #1.
4. Develop plans for the children's worship service to begin gathering again in the next movement.

NOTE: In Movement #2, the obvious new element is gathering for worship in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. We will need to work on plans along the way, making adjustments as we see things not working or discerning areas where what is working can be improved. Much of the worship service will be different, and we will be asking the congregation for both patience and feedback at every step.

### **Movement #3 - August 2 - August 31**

Key Components:

1. All Movement #1 and #2 components will continue unless a drastic change in the church membership or in the state of NC requires the congregation to rethink the plans.
2. Reconvene the children's worship service. Implement plans developed previously for the children and leaders to gather safely.
3. Open the church campus for groups, teams, committees, classes, and others on Sundays from 8:30 am until 8:00 pm.

NOTE: This move will need additional consideration. If many groups/classes begin to meet on Sunday mornings, we will need to think about how we safely move folks through the building or move them from classes back outside and then into the Narthex and the sanctuary. We will need to consider group sizes and room sizes to continue with physical distancing in the rooms. We may have to ask some groups to move to other spaces temporarily. We will also have to give consideration to sanitizing spaces after use.

### **Movement #4 - Dates TBD - Moving toward additional opening and building usage.**

During the summer, the pastoral and administrative staff and the Administrative Council will convene regularly (via Zoom and when deemed safe, in person) to evaluate the incremental opening of the three movements outlined above with a view to September 2020 and beyond.