

## Phase 1

According to Texas Governor, Gregg Abbot, churches in Texas may meet using social distancing protocols. You will also find this information on our website and social media platforms.

Our on-site and online schedule will be on Sundays at 9 A.M. and 11 A.M. Starting May 17th.

**If you are sick, have a fever, present any signs of cold, flu, or COVID-19 symptoms, or if you have been in contact with anyone who has had COVID-19 in the past 14 days, please stay home. We care about your health and safety as well as that of others in our church. If you are in a high-risk group, we encourage you to continue attending online during Phase 1.**

**Our sanctuary has been re-set to allow for social distancing.** We will tape off certain pews each service to make it easier to follow the 6 foot guidelines between family unites.

**During phase one, we will only have main Sunday services.** There will be no on-site classes, kids ministry activities, nurseries or childcare. We are hopeful that during Phase 2 we can include Wednesday nights on-site.

Practically, that means kids will be sitting with you in service. Don't stress. I understand there will be more noise and activity. I am normally oblivious to anything while I am preaching. I also believe because of the season we are in that anyone that would be close to you will have grace. Feel free to bring a blanket and toys for your toddlers and babies to be comfortable on the floor. We will have areas that can be used for nursing mothers and a wiggle/ giggle areas for very active children. Those areas will have limited occupancy due to the size of the rooms.

To help ensure that you have a place to sit in the service you choose. Please either call, email, or message us on social media. We must do our best to evenly distribute our attendees between the two services. To notify us is not a requirement, but it is helpful.

The outside doors will be locked while we disinfect between services. For the the 11 A.M. service the doors will be reopened at 10:45 A.M.

When you enter the building, you will be directed to a seating area for your family. We will seat people from the front of the room to the back of the room. After service, we will dismiss people from back to front to ensure a quick, safe exit. I know – you have a place where you always sit! **This is going to be a good opportunity to practice flexibility!**

**We have a number of safety measures that will be in place per the request of Governor Abbott, CDC, and Health Department. Please know – these are not done as the result of**

**fear! Instead, we are doing everything we know to do to protect the most vulnerable among us and prevent transmission of the Covid-19 virus. Our motivation is not fear, but love for others in our church family.**

1. We encourage the use of masks, but it is not a requirement.
2. Common areas and gathering spaces of the building will be closed. That includes the coffee bar, playground, and any place where people might congregate.
3. Before every service, the sanctuary, seating and all high-touch surfaces will be disinfected. We will only allow people in the room after that procedure is complete.
4. Hand sanitizing stations are set up throughout the building. We encourage their frequent use.
5. If you need to sneeze or cough, please cover your mouth and nose or sneeze into your elbow or tissue.
6. We will be continually wiping down surfaces in the rest rooms and other high touch areas.
7. We will not distribute any bulletins or printed materials. Offering envelopes will still be available in the pews. Offerings can be placed in the offering boxes in the back of the sanctuary. We also encourage online giving at [www.odessafirstassembly.com](http://www.odessafirstassembly.com).
8. Ushers will be wearing masks. We will not shake hands, hug or high five. **Instead, we will air hug, wave and smile.**
9. Finally and perhaps most importantly – if you are high risk because of age or underlying health conditions, I encourage you to stay home and continue watching online during Phase one. While I would love to see you in person, **I love you – and want you to stay healthy!**

**There is a lot of tension in our country – some want everything to open, others passionately believe everything should stay closed. Some think everyone should wear masks, some think it is pointless. We are going to approach Phase 1 in the light of scripture. We will respect the thoughts and preferences of others and not make anyone feel lesser or non-spiritual because they have a different approach. Romans 12:10 states, “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”**

Scripture also states:

- Live in harmony with one another (Rom. 12:16)
- Have the same care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25)
- Be servants of one another (Gal. 5:13)

- Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2)
- Comfort one another (1 Thess. 5:11)
- Build one another up (1 Thess. 5:11)
- Be at peace with one another (1 Thess. 5:13)
- Do good to one another (1 Thess. 5:15)
- Be kind and compassionate to one another (Eph. 4:32)
- Submit to one another (Eph. 5:21)
- Forgive one another (Col. 3:13)
- Love one another from the heart (1 Pet. 1:22)
- Be hospitable to one another (1 Pet. 4:9)
- Meet one another with humility (1 Pet. 5:5)

Please know that attending in person is not a sign that you are more mature, more godly, or more committed than the person who chooses to stay at home. Staying at home does not make you smarter or more caring than the person who attends in person.

**You've done a beautiful job of loving and caring for others in this season. Let's keep that same attitude of love and concern as we transition into another new way of doing church.**

We are not going to be the social distancing police. We will post the guidelines, communicate them often and encourage you to follow them. However, we are not going to walk around with a giant ruler to make sure you are six feet away from others. I am asking you to follow the guidelines out of love for each other.

Like you, I can't wait for life and church to be back to "normal" – whatever that new normal will be. Many of these things feel like a hassle and extra work – because they are! But, this is just one phase. **It is going to get better!**

We look forward to worshipping with you soon. In the meantime, we love you, we miss you, and we're praying for you.