

Genesis Church Gathering Summary Sheet
September 2020

Remember: These are the principles that **MUST** guide our moving forward:

***MISSION.** Jesus told us to “go and make disciples” who “love the Lord... with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength... and love their neighbor as themselves.” Decisions must be prayerfully made in light of our mission. Our mission does not depend on a building or a program. How are your relaunching plans “going” into the community to reach people? How are they transforming people to be more and more like Jesus?

***NURTURE NEW FRUIT.** During the “stay at home” time, new ministry is bearing fruit. The Lord is using live-streamed services, Zoom prayer meetings, new small groups, food distribution. What is most fruitful of this “new” ministry season that is important to keep as we move forward?

***TAKE NEW TERRITORY.** Whether we like it or not, our world has changed. Just like the Israelites on the edge of the promised land (territory where they had never been before), we have a choice: Are we going to forge ahead, trusting the Lord to take this new territory? Or are we going to want to go back to where we used to be? (To “Egypt”). Connected to “nurture new fruit”... future plans need to take into account how our mission aligns with our new cultural realities.

***PROTECT THE VULNERABLE.** We will follow the most up-to-date health guidelines in order to protect others. **At this time, strict social distancing and masks are required in any gathering.**

STEWARDSHIP RESOURCES, including pastors and pastoral staff.** Whether recognized or not, pastors and staff have been on the “front lines” in this pandemic. They have been on a huge learning curve, reaching out to new people, ensuring needs are being met. As we move ahead, pastors and staff CANNOT be expected to keep doing all that they have been (online services, etc) plus add back all they had been doing. ***We cannot increase the work load of our already exhausted pastors. We must instead carefully line up our new realities, new fruit, and new territory, and ask how best move forward on the mission of Jesus. Laypeople must also be empowered to lead ministries, new and old. This will take careful time and planning.

Rather than “reopening” we have an opportunity to RELAUNCH in this new territory.

Requirements for gathering:

*We understand that people have varying feelings about physically gathering. We extend love and grace to all.

*We will follow local, regional, state & federal guidelines, believing that they are intended for good. In NY and PA, reopening (and closing) phases are now determined by regional (not county) metrics. Know your region.

*Currently ALL regions of Genesis are in Phase 4. More information below.

*Online opportunities to connect remain vital.

*We ask all those in the “vulnerable” categories to take special care to protect themselves, and wait to return until a later time. (As of today, vulnerable categories include: those with asthma, kidney disease, chronic lung disease, hemoglobin disorders, immunocompromised (including those in cancer treatment), liver disease, those 65 years and older, those with heart conditions, and those who are severely obese).

*We ask that anyone not feeling well choose to stay home.

*All public services must have space to welcome visitors within distancing guidelines. (We do not hold services only for members).

*We ask that, out of concern for others, **all wear masks** (except children under 2), and stay **socially distanced** (6')

*Pastors and leaders must read through the state & CDC reopening guidelines (links below) in order to have plans in place with best practices.

Practices in place for buildings:

***Masks are required when entering, exiting, and moving around.** For those up front, wear your mask until ready to speak or lead. (In addition to this being a state requirement, this tangibly demonstrates care for others).

***Masks must be worn during singing** (unless socially distanced at least 12 ft. from others - if a worship leader is at least 12 feet from others, they may remove their mask to lead).

***Hand sanitizer** available throughout the building.

*Regular **cleaning and disinfecting** of the building / bathroom according to CDC & state guidelines.

*Temporary **removal of shared** books or screens (hymnals, pencils, pew bibles, touch screens).

***Strict social distancing** to be adhered to (including in bathrooms, lobby, offices), with the exception of family members who live together. Any seating must be separated at least by 6 feet.

***No food or coffee stations.**

***Maintain a continuous log of employees and volunteers** (but not attendees). Implement mandatory health screening assessment (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) for employees and volunteers, asking about (1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. If there is a positive response to any of the above questions, that person should not enter the building. If someone contracts COVID19, health officials must be notified immediately.

***Post safety plans on site.**

*Offering in a box or basket at the back of the church or online. No plates passed.

*No programs passed out (unless placed on chairs by a gloved and masked individual ahead of time).

*Gathering areas (lobby, fellowship hall) closed or used as hallway space where people cannot gather. (Have a one way traffic flow, with separate entrances and exits).

*No communion elements passed or shared. (Individual and sealed communion cups distributed on a table where they can be picked up is an option, but these must be put on the table by an individual with mask & gloves. See: <https://www.cokesbury.com/081407011585-fellowship-cup-communion-wafer-juice-100-pack> for purchase of these).

***Greeters must remain six feet from all they greet.** No hand shaking, hugs, etc.

Children's Ministry:

***Children over 2 must wear masks and stay socially distanced.**

***Volunteers must be screened before serving** (see above)

*As much as possible, coordinate with your local school district to keep children separated and in the rhythm as what they are experiencing at school.

Resources:

New York Reopening Guidelines for Communities <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/ReligiousandFuneralServicesSummaryGuidance.pdf>

CDC guidelines for faith communities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/faith-based.html>

FMC Guidelines from the Board of Bishops: <https://fmcusa.org/covid19>