



## Safety Plan for Reopening

### Introduction

The global pandemic of COVID-19, also known as the novel Coronavirus, has changed our way of life at the present time and made social distancing an imperative response to slow its spread in the state of Tennessee and worldwide. These measures have proven effective in “flattening the curve,” and, as a result, the governor of the state of Tennessee, Gov. Bill Lee, began the process of reopening the state in late April 2020 in phases, while still maintaining many restrictions and social distancing requirements.

While federal, state, or local governments are unable to place mandatory restrictions on places of worship because of the protections provided in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America and Article I, Section 3, of the Constitution of the State of Tennessee, as well as the Tennessee Religious Freedom Restoration Act (T.C.A. § 4-1-407), in [Executive Order 30](#) and [Executive Order 38](#) Gov. Lee recommends that churches are “strongly encouraged to continue to utilize virtual or online services and gatherings” for the duration of these orders. In compliance with this recommendation and others, the Knoxville Grace Seventh-day Adventist Church (hereafter “Church”) will continue to utilize online services through the end of **June 2020** via Zoom.

Provided that the “curve flattens” and the risk of contraction of COVID-19 declines, the following safety plan for a phase I reopening of the Church’s facility will be implemented on **04 July 2020**. The governor’s aforementioned executive orders “strongly encouraged” churches to



follow the guidelines produced by the Governor's Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives in the document titled ["Guidance for Gathering Together in Houses of Worship"](#) when initiating a reopening process. The Church has decided to comply with these guidelines, as well as the ["Interim Guidance for Communities of Faith"](#) issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the ["Guidelines for Reopening Our Churches"](#) produced by Adventist Risk Management (ARM), as far as possible in this reopening plan.

## Phases of Reopening

To go about this reopening plan in a prudent and cautious manner, the Church has decided to reopen its facility for in-person gatherings and services in phases. Throughout all of the phases of reopening, the Church will continue to provide an online option via Zoom for all of its regular services and gatherings so that those who still may feel uncomfortable with attending in person may be able to continue to participate in the life of the Church.

### Phase I

The Church will reopen its facility at 9123 S Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37922-6326, on **04 July 2020** and begin holding a general combined Sabbath School and Bible lesson study at **09:30am EDT** and a Sabbath worship service at **11:15am EDT** on **Saturdays**. The following in-person meetings and services will continue to be suspended until a later phase of this safety plan for reopening:

- Break-out Sabbath School classes for lesson study,
- Mid-week prayer meetings,
- Fellowship meals,
- Communion services (i.e., the Lord's Supper celebrations),
- Weddings,
- Funerals.

Descriptions and guidelines of future phases of this reopening plan will be given when the Church is ready to implement each phase.



## Guidelines

The guidelines outlined below will be implemented during phase I of this reopening plan.

### General Guidelines

Areas of the Church's building not in use during this phase will not be accessible except by essential workers and volunteers. This includes the fellowship hall, kitchen, and all rooms on the lower level.

The sanctuary and the other rooms of the facility cannot be filled more than 50% capacity. Sanctuary pews will be marked in accordance with social distancing guidelines, providing six feet of distance between family units. Deacons/Deaconesses will serve as ushers, assisting attendees with spacing and seating in the sanctuary. If overflow space is needed, the classrooms along the sides of the sanctuary will be opened for seating with social distancing guidelines.

Arrows and other signposts will indicate the way attendees are to move throughout the building. Attendees should enter through the front central doors of the facility and exit out the front side doors. Attendees should access the sanctuary through its back central doors and center aisle and exit out the side aisles and doors.

Access doors will be propped open during transition times. This reduces the amount of "touch points" and allows more fresh air to circulate into the building.

No more than two (2) persons should utilize the restroom facilities at any given time.

### Guidelines for Services and Gatherings

Congregational singing should be limited.



No children story time will be provided at this time.

Plates for tithe and offerings collection will not be passed around the sanctuary. Instead, a box will be placed in the foyer where tithe and offerings can be placed. Alternatively, attendees may choose to give online via AdventistGiving at <https://adventistgiving.org> or by post mailing tithe and offerings to the treasurer's home address. Those performing treasury duties should wear protective gloves and face masks, especially when handling currency.

Worship leaders on the platform should comply with social distancing guidelines, including cleaning the microphone(s) with a disinfectant wipe after each use.

No more than two (2) persons are permitted in the audio-visual room at a time and should practice social distancing.

Only one (1) mother and her accompanying children are permitted to use the mother's room at a time. The furnishings of the mother's room should be disinfected after each use.

There will be no sharing or distributing of food or drink of any kind among attendees at this time. This means no communion services or fellowship meals will be held during phase I of this reopening plan.

## **Guidelines for Attendees**

The Church warmly welcomes all who wish to attend our phase I services and gatherings. It should be remembered, however, that anyone who attends in-person gatherings and services on the Church's campus do so at his/her own risk and should not hold the Church liable if he/she contracts COVID-19 or any other illness.

Those who are considered a part of populations that are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 (i.e., everyone 65 years and older, people with disabilities, people with serious respiratory or cardiovascular conditions,



people who are immunocompromised, and others) are strongly encouraged to forego the aforementioned in-person gatherings and services and to continue to make use of the provided online services via Zoom. Additionally, those experiencing any of the physical symptoms associated with COVID-19 (i.e., a cough, shortness of breath, a sore throat, a fever, loss of taste or smell, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) should seek immediate medical attention and not participate in the above in-person gatherings and services.

Those who choose to attend the aforementioned in-person gatherings and services are urged to comply with the following guidelines while on the campus of the Church.

- Cooperate with an initial health screening process before entering the facility of the Church.
- Abide by all signposts.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds regularly.
- Apply hand sanitizers with a 60+% alcohol content when transitioning from one space to another in the facility.
- Wear a protective face mask at all times.
- Maintain a distance of six (6) feet between themselves and other attendees.
- Avoid all physical contact with other attendees, including but not limited to shaking hands, hugging, kissing, and touching.

### Initial Health Screening

Attendees wishing to participate in the above in-person gatherings and services will undergo an initial health screening as described below.

The attendee will be asked to answer the following questions:

- Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last two weeks?
- Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
- Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
- Have you recently travelled by public transportation (plane, bus, etc.) outside of the US?



If an attendee responds positively to any of the above questions, he/she will be advised to seek medical care immediately and asked to make use of the provided online services via Zoom in place of attending the in-person gatherings and services held in the Church's facility.

During the initial health screening, the temperature of each attendee will be taken at the door using a contactless digital thermometer before entering the facility.

## **Cleaning & Hygiene Protocols**

In addition to social distancing efforts, the current pandemic of COVID-19 also requires greater vigilance in cleaning and hygiene. The Church will implement the following safety and wellness measures to increase the sanitation and hygiene of the church facility in an effort to decrease the risk of spreading COVID-19 to attendees.

Signs will be posted throughout the building that encourage the practice of social distancing and good personal hygiene among attendees.

The Church will continue to have the whole facility professionally cleaned once a week by a company that specializes in such work.

A sufficient supply of disinfectants (e.g., liquids, wipes, etc.), hand sanitizers with an alcohol content of 60+%, anti-bacterial hand soap, gloves, face masks, paper towels, toilet paper, and other miscellaneous cleaning implements will be kept on hand. Cleaning cloths will be replaced with new ones after use.

Hand sanitizers with a 60+% alcohol content will be placed at each entrance/exit with sign posts that encourage their use when attendees transition from one space to another in the facility (e.g., at main entrance/exit doors as well as those of the restrooms, sanctuary, kitchen (when in use), fellowship hall (when in use), classrooms (when in use), etc.).



## Conclusion

Thank you for your understanding with the above reopening plan and your compliance with the guidelines expressed therein. We pray that God will richly bless you and our local Church as we do our best together to worship him and perform the mission of the Church, all the while attempting to keep our community safe and well.

