



September 5, 2020

Sisters and brothers of Ardmore Baptist Church:

During this whole pandemic, I have been extremely grateful for the wise and prudent leaders at Ardmore Baptist Church who have journeyed alongside me in making difficult decisions. The Pastoral Staff continues to serve above and beyond their roles with creativity and grace. Our Support Staff has led with servant-hearts and compassion. The Deacons continue to boldly lead and care for the congregation with wisdom and stewardship. And our Re-Opening Team has engaged in prudent decision-making throughout this time.

One of the first decisions reached by the Re-Opening Team was to wait until North Carolina's gubernatorial administration moved our state to Phase 3 of re-opening. You all may have seen that this week Gov. Roy Cooper announced that North Carolina will be moving to Phase 2.5 beginning this Friday.

Because of the Governor's decision and coupled with wise dialogue with our Staff, our Re-Opening Team, and our Safety/Security Team, I am pleased to announce the following Covid-19 updates for Ardmore Baptist Church:

- **Resuming In-Person Worship.** We will be resuming In-Person Worship in our Sanctuary on Sunday, October 4. We will have our 8:15 AM and 10:45 AM services. Our 10:45 service will be livestreamed on both Facebook and YouTube. Each service will have a 100-person capacity for the time being. We are asking for people to register for worship. Registration helps us know how many to expect for worship and to assist in contact-tracing should the need arise. We will not be providing childcare for the time being, but are working towards safe ways to do so in the near future. More information on worship will be coming soon.
- **Increased capacity for Open Sanctuary Prayer.** The governor's re-opening plan now allows for larger indoor gatherings. Previously, we limited the number of participants for our Open Sanctuary Prayer times to ten people. However, we are now increasing that to 25 people at a time and are encouraging folks to engage in prayer and worship for 20-30 minutes. This increased capacity will take effect on Tuesday, September 8.
- **The Church Facilities will now be available for small groups.** We would like to extend an invitation for groups to use the church grounds to meet for fellowship and study. We are asking that each group limit their time together to one hour and that you call the church office to schedule the time to use your room. We are not currently scheduling groups for 9:30 AM on Sunday mornings, but that will likely change in the coming weeks. Rooms will be available for groups to use beginning on Monday, September 14.

Please keep in mind that for any gathering, we are asking that masks be worn by all participants. If you do not have a mask we will provide you with one as you enter the church. Additionally, this pandemic

has shown us that the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry! In the event that our community case numbers rise, these plans will be changed and the congregation will receive timely updates.

There is still much to deliberate about and we know that not everyone will be comfortable coming back to the building during this time. Our Staff is working very hard to ensure that we can continue to offer our services via streaming. We have livestreaming equipment that is being installed in our Sanctuary in mid-September and we will need time to connect the new technology, as well as train people to run the streaming. We know that you may have a lot of questions. Please feel free to reach out to me at my email: ttankersley@ardmorebaptist.org.

I know that some people have been frustrated that we have walked a cautious path during this pandemic. I am sure it has been difficult to see churches have such varied responses. Some churches took almost no precautions and others have called off any in-person gathering for the remainder of 2020. However, please continue to know that all of the decisions that have been made, and may have to be made in the future, have always been based in love: love for our congregation, love for our neighbors, and love for our God who calls us to be people of hope, peace, joy, and love in the world.

As we begin a congregational wide emphasis on the Sermon on the Mount, let's continue to reflect on these words from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord: *You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.* (Matthew 5:14:16)

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Tankersley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tyler" being more prominent than the last name "Tankersley".

Rev. Tyler Tankersley