

Chapel COVID Philosophy & Response

8.2021

CHAPEL COVID PHILOSOPHY

Since the pandemic began over eighteen months ago, our elders and leadership team have worked tirelessly to stay up to date with the latest developments, protect you and your family's safety, pray for our medical professionals and community, and continue our mission to advance God's Kingdom. We have used these three philosophies as filters to help us make decisions regarding Chapel through the pandemic.

WE ARE PEOPLE OF FAITH. WE WILL SPREAD HOPE, NOT FEAR

Every need in the world is an OPPORTUNITY to share God's love and the hope of Jesus. That's why, as a church family, we're responding to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis, not by panicking or hiding out of fear, but by continuing to create an atmosphere of hope at our gatherings and serving the people of our community who are most vulnerable.

No matter how frustrating, confusing, or scary this crisis gets, fear doesn't have the final say. 1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." Our hope is built on the perfect love of Jesus Christ, so we've been called to share that love with the world. And that's exactly what we'll be doing in the coming weeks and months as more and more people in our community are in need.

WE ARE PEOPLE OF HONOR. WE WILL HONOR OUR GOVERNMENT BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF HONORING GOD, HIS WORD, AND HIS MISSION

As followers of Jesus, we are commanded to honor and submit to our governing authorities. This is clearly expressed when Peter tells the church, that was being persecuted by the government, in 1 Peter 2:13-17:

"Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you

should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”

Then Paul tells the church in Rome, that was also under persecution by the government in Romans 13:1-2:

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.”

At Chapel, we want to be a family of honor. We will honor our leaders and our government but not at the expense of honoring God and His mission. Jesus honored the government, but He never stopped honoring His Father and doing His Father’s business and fulfilling His will.

WE ARE A COMMUNITY. WE WILL ENCOURAGE PERSONAL FREEDOM BUT ALSO ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY.

As believers, we have amazing personal freedoms in Christ, as well as a tremendous responsibility to Christian community and our witness to our neighbors and surrounding community. This is a dynamic tension that we must embrace. The apostle Paul discovered this tension and embraced this tension in Romans 14. He taught that even though we have freedoms in Christ, we cannot allow those freedoms to become stumbling blocks to others. We also can’t celebrate our freedoms at the expense of others' wellbeing.

The world is watching the church right now to see what we believe and what we truly care about. We want to celebrate our personal freedoms while at the same time being responsible with them to not lose our witness and dim our light.

CHAPEL RESPONSE

GET HELP

For many people, the past eighteen months have been stressful and lonely. We understand and want to help as much as possible.

- Grocery Distribution (Shoals Dream Center at (256) 760-9759)
- Personal Support (256-767-1080)
- Prayer ([Prayer & Care Card](#))

GIVE HELP

Now is not the time for the church to hide away. Now is the time for the church to let our light shine. There are amazing opportunities and open doors for us to love our neighbors.

- Serve at the Shoals Dream Center
- Help us stay connected to the most vulnerable in Chapel family by making calls to check on our senior adults and those with pre-existing health conditions.
- Serve on our Online Campus team by serving with social media, online hosts, and online community group leaders.
- Become a Community Group leader or host a group to help people stay connected during this time of isolation.

STAY CONNECTED

The church is not a building — it's a community of people who love Jesus and love each other. If you are not comfortable or able to meet in-person at this time, you can stay connected with people who care about you in online community groups,

attending online, and letting us know how we can serve you through our digital Care Card.

Also, stay connected by following us on Instagram and Facebook and subscribe to our YouTube channel.

- Find a [Community Group](#)
- Serve on a Team
- Subscribe to our [We Are Chapel YouTube Channel](#)
- Submit a [Prayer & Care Digital Card](#)

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND SPIRITUALLY TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

The coronavirus (COVID-19) is yet one more reminder that we live in a fallen world. Ultimately, none of us is immune to this reality. But God has not left us alone. Jesus came to heal the sick and set the captives free. He has conquered sin and death and is coming again with a new heaven and a new earth, where there will be no suffering, no sickness, and no death. Our God sits on His throne and because we have hope in Jesus we can have peace in even the most challenging circumstances.

While you're trusting Jesus in this situation, here are some other ways you can respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Pray for mercy and healing for the sick, strength and endurance for medical professionals, insight for researchers, and wisdom for city and government officials.
- Look for opportunities to love and care for others with the love that Christ has shown to us. Check on your neighbors and pray for them.
- This is a time to strengthen our walk with God in personal prayer.
- This is a time for families to read the promises of God's Word together.
- This is a time to communicate with one another in the church family to pray, care, and encourage.

IMPORTANT CHAPEL INFO

Chapel is currently hosting in-person worship experiences on Sunday mornings in compliance with state guidelines for houses of worship. Your safety is our priority and we'll be ensuring you and your family feel comfortable and safe while attending. You can learn more about all of the safety measures that are being implemented by reviewing our FAQs below.

I'M NOT COMFORTABLE RETURNING TO CHURCH YET. CAN I BE A PART OF THE ONLINE EXPERIENCE?

Of course! We encourage you to continue joining us online each weekend until you feel comfortable attending in person. Our weekend worship experiences will continue to be streamed every Sunday at WeAreChapel.org, Facebook, and YouTube. If you need anything let the online host know, call the church office at 256-767-1080, or email hello@wearechapel.org.

DO I HAVE TO WEAR A MASK?

Masks are optional at all our congregations. You've likely seen or heard about the CDC's updated guidelines around masking.

From now on, masks are recommended but optional at all in-person gatherings. For those who don't feel quite comfortable in a mask-optional setting, we will continue to offer top notch online experiences for you and your family to worship with us!

Please note, if the state mandates masks for indoor gatherings, we will continue recommending and encouraging wearing masks but will not mandate masks. We will have our pastoral staff wear masks when interacting with church members and ask our First Impressions team members and Chapel Kids team members to wear masks for their own safety and the safety of those they serve.

DO I NEED TO RSVP TO ATTEND IN PERSON?

No. Seats are first-come, first serve.

HOW IS CHAPEL PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING?

Our ushers are seating people spaced out to keep a safe distance between families within the sanctuary and giving you options on where you are most comfortable sitting. We ask that every individual practices social distancing while in the lobby or common areas.

HOW IS CHAPEL CLEANING ITS FACILITIES?

We are conducting regular cleanings of all public areas, doors, and seats to ensure proper sanitation. Additionally, hand sanitizer stations will be located throughout Chapel.

WILL RESTROOMS BE OPEN?

Yes, all restrooms will be open and will undergo routine cleaning.

WILL WE SHUT DOWN AGAIN?

Our philosophy has been to honor and partner with our community and state officials as they work diligently to eliminate the pandemic but not at the expense of our honor for God and His mission. We partnered with the government shutdown in 2020 by going online only. We believe this was the right decision to serve our community and protect the health of our church.

With that being said, we will do everything in our power to keep our doors open to give you and your family an opportunity to gather, worship, and pray together. In the

case of another mandatory shutdown, we will move to multiple services or outdoor experiences.

WILL CHAPEL KIDS BE AVAILABLE FOR MY CHILDREN?

Yes. Our goal is to provide a safe environment for your children while you attend the worship experience. You can pre-register your children for check in using our FAST PASS each week. Here is a link to the [FAST PASS](#).

WHAT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AND PROCEDURES CAN I EXPECT FOR MY CHILDREN?

Chapel Kids is taking several precautions to keep your kids and our volunteers healthy and safe:

Masks and temperature checks are required for all eKidz volunteers.

Hand sanitizing will be encouraged before entering the Chapel Kids area.

Room capacity limits will be set to provide adequate spacing.

All non-essential items from home (like toys and blankets) will need to stay in the hallway or in your vehicle.

We're sanitizing surfaces and toys frequently.

Our volunteers are washing their hands and/or sanitizing often and we'll encourage your child to do the same.

We will allow one parent into the Chapel Kids area for drop-off and pick up to limit traffic.

IF I CHOOSE NOT TO ATTEND IN PERSON, WILL THERE BE AN ONLINE EXPERIENCE OR CURRICULUM AVAILABLE FOR KIDS?

Yes, you will still be able to find resources for your child online. Subscribe to Chapel on Facebook to receive the resources. If you would like more resources to disciple

your children please email mlowery@wearechapel.org. We would love to partner with you in discipling your children!

IS THERE AN EXPERIENCE FOR MY JUNIOR HIGH OR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT?

Chapel YTH, our weekly experience for the youth of Chapel, will continue each Wednesday at 6:30pm.

I'M NEW TO CHAPEL, HOW DO I GET CONNECTED?

If you haven't already, we encourage you to fill out a [I'm New Here](#) card or, text "Hello" to 256-670-2860 and we'll be in contact with you. You can also stop by the Connection Point in our Main Lobby.

HOW CAN I CONTINUE GIVING?

During this time, we will not pass offering buckets; however, we do encourage digital giving. You can give online at WeAreChapel.org/Give or through the Church Center App. You can also give by cash or check in the giving boxes at each door or mail them in to 3051 Cloverdale Road, Florence, Alabama 35633.