

A Statement from the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Baptist Association

We have been ordered to stay at home. Doing so is the best way to protect ourselves and the best way to reduce community spread of the coronavirus. **Each PBA congregation is autonomous and sets its own policy.** You have our firm recommendation that it is time for all staff and all members of every church to comply with the mandate of the Governor and remain in place at home. Essential entrance into the church building should require the use of masks and gloves.

It is time to be creative and to use electronic media and communication technology to stay connected to one another. Please use pre-recorded worship music from your church and combine current sermons and announcements recorded by the Pastor or worship leader from their home whenever possible. Live streaming is risky in this environment. Please practice extreme caution requiring social distancing, gloves, and masks if live streaming is your choice. We have reports of choirs being utilized in live streaming and a demonstrated lack of discipline in social distancing when members gather, even in small groups.

The habit of warm embrace among us is hard to break and we may be putting members at risk. We have recent reports of persons attending gatherings who died days later from COVID 19. We have reports of church staff testing positive for the infection. Be mindful of your witness if someone contracts the virus because your church put them at risk in any way! Be mindful of your witness if your church staff becomes exposed because of your policy and/or lack of safety precautions. Be aware that lawsuits have been filed against churches regarding social distancing and some may be filed by unscrupulous lawyers.

Please use electronic methods for giving your offerings and/ or mail in your contributions as designated. Please be mindful in keeping the continuing work of the church moving forward. Your staff, both administrative and clergy, are working diligently from home caring for the congregation. Let your church know of your needs with regard to employment, nutritional support etc.

We want you to be safe. Please remind your members to be extra careful and safe in providing care to the elderly and persons with medical conditions that place family members at higher risk of severe reaction to the coronavirus. If your congregations are among the racial, ethnic, or class groups experiencing disproportionate impact, be particularly deliberate in monitoring the recommendations of the medical experts.