



New Berean Baptist Church

3600 Bamboo Rd.
Portsmouth, Virginia 23703

DeWayne Cason – Interim Pastor



Office Phone: 757.483.4821 www.nbbcMinistry.com nbbcMinistry@yahoo.com Fax: 757.483.1561

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Safe Fellowship Protocol Update – The Board of Trustees of New Berean Baptist Church have prayerfully considered wisdom and direction and recommend revising and implementing our Safe Fellowship Protocol effective **Sunday, May 14, 2023**, with the following guidance and instructions:

- a. Masks will no longer be mandatory inside the facility but will be considered optional based upon the user and their personal level of comfort and health. The choice to wear the mask or not wearing the mask will be equally respected.
- b. Surface body temperatures will no longer be taken or required prior to entry.
- c. Social distancing will be encouraged at all opportunities as a matter of consideration and respect for one another “personal space”.
- d. Everyone entering the facility will be encouraged to be aware of their own health conditions, associated risks and the need to take the most responsible actions to reduce those risks to themselves and others.
- e. The Trustee staff will continue to ensure measures will be maintained to ensure the facility is prepared for the various ministry events and gatherings.

Reason/ Support: The decision for these changes is based upon the prayers, the wisdom of God’s word and the advancement and continued effectiveness of the ministry and as well as the advice, recommendations and guidance of the medical subject matter experts. As our responsibility is, the ministry has been extremely careful in honoring and respecting the welfare and safety of all members, guests and visitors. The Lord has been gracious over New Berean and blanketed it with a high level of responsibility and prudence. We are forever grateful for the grace bestowed upon us and continue to pray for God’s direction, wisdom and understand the ever-changing dynamics of our world.

We pray the revision would be a blessing and an encouragement to us all as we continue to seek God’s guidance and understanding is carrying out our mission which will always be his “Commission”.

Yours in Christ

New Berean Baptist Church

Board of Trustees

Committed to The Commission of Christ

History/Background/Update – In December 2019, the WHO (The World Health Organization) received reports of an unknown form of pneumonia in China. Over the next three years, that unknown illness became what is now known as coronavirus. When SARS CoV-2 virus infects humans and causes disease, it is called COVID-19. COVID is short for "coronavirus disease." The number "19" refers to the fact that the disease was first detected in 2019, though the pandemic started in 2020.

Three months later (February 2020) the first death directly related to the virus was recorded. By the end of the pandemic, over one hundred-three million people have been infected resulting in 1.1 million deaths. One of those being the passing of our beloved Founder and Pastor, Leroy E. Ricks, Sr. The combined efforts of the Trump and Biden presidential administrations, the WHO, the CDC (Center for Disease Control) and the VDH (Virginia Department of Health) have acted and reacted to regain control of the fast-spreading disease through knowledge, education and medical research to stop the spread and saving lives. The WHO, based on current COVID-19 trends, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is planning for the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID-19, declared under Section 319 of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act, to expire at the end of the day on May 11, 2023.

Fact Sheet: End of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

Since HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra's February 9, 2023, letter to Governors (see below) announcing the planned end of the COVID-19 PHE, the Department has been working closely with partners—including Governors; state, local, Tribal, and territorial agencies; industry; and advocates—to ensure an orderly transition out of the COVID-19 PHE.

As of May 9, 2023, the HHS has released a Fact Sheet with an update on current flexibilities enabled by the COVID-19 emergency declaration and how they will be impacted by the end of the COVID-19 PHE on May 11.

What has been accomplished: Due to the Biden-Harris Administration's whole-of-government approach to combatting COVID-19, we are now in a better place in our response than at any point of the pandemic and well-positioned to transition out of the emergency phase and end the COVID-19 PHE. Over the last two years, the Biden-Harris Administration has effectively implemented the largest adult vaccination program in U.S. history, with over 270 million people receiving at least one shot of a COVID-19 vaccine. The Administration has also made lifesaving treatments widely available, with more than 15 million courses administered. And through COVIDTests.gov, the Administration has distributed more than 750 million free COVID-19 tests shipped directly to more than 80 million households. The Administration has also administered more than 50 million diagnostic tests in-person at pharmacy and community-based sites. As a result of these and other efforts, COVID-19 is no longer the disruptive force it once was. Since January 2021, COVID-19 deaths have declined by 95% and hospitalizations are down nearly 91%.

As we approach the end of the COVID-19 PHE: We have successfully marshalled a whole-of-government response to make historic investments in vaccines, tests, and treatments that are broadly available to help us combat COVID-19.

Our health care system and public health resources throughout the country are now better able to respond to any potential surge of COVID-19 cases without significantly affecting an individual's ability to access resources or care.

Our public health experts have issued guidance that allows individuals to understand mitigation measures, such as masking and testing to protect themselves and those around them.

We have the tools to detect and respond to the potential emergence of a variant of high consequence as we continue to monitor the evolving state of COVID-19 and the emergence of virus variants.

Still, we know so many people continue to be affected by COVID-19, particularly seniors, people who are immunocompromised, and people with disabilities. That is why our response to the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, remains a public health priority. To ensure an orderly transition, we have been working for months so that we can continue to meet the needs of those affected by COVID-19.

Letter to U.S. Governors from HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra on renewing COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE)

Dear Governor,

Thank you for your ongoing partnership throughout the COVID-19 response. I write today to inform you that effective February 11, 2023, I am renewing for 90 days the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) as declared under Section 319 of the Public Health Service Act. Based on current trends regarding COVID-19, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is planning for this to be the final renewal and for the COVID-19 PHE to end on May 11, 2023. Rather than 60 days' notice, I am providing 90 days' notice before the COVID-19 PHE ends to give you and your communities ample time to transition.

Thanks to the Administration's whole-of-government approach to combatting the virus, we are in a better place in our response than we were three years ago, and we can transition away from the emergency phase. Over the last two years, the Biden Administration has effectively implemented the largest adult vaccination program in U.S. history, with nearly 270 million Americans receiving at least one shot of a COVID-19 vaccine.

As a result of this and other efforts, since the peak of the Omicron surge at the end of January 2022:

Daily COVID-19 reported cases are down 92%,
COVID-19 deaths have declined by over 80%, and
New COVID-19 hospitalizations are down nearly 80%.

We have come to this point in our fight against the virus because of our historic investments and efforts to mitigate its worst impacts. Addressing COVID-19 remains a significant public health priority for the Administration, and over the next few months, we will transition our COVID-19 policies, as well as the current flexibilities enabled by the COVID-19 emergency declarations, into improving standards of care for patients. We will work closely with partners including state, local, Tribal, and territorial agencies, industry, and advocates, to ensure an orderly transition.

To help you and your communities in your preparations for the end of the COVID-19 PHE, I have attached a fact sheet to this letter that includes information on what will and will not be impacted by the end of the COVID-19 PHE.² In the coming days, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will also provide additional information, including about the waivers many states and health systems have adopted and how they will be impacted by the end of the COVID-19 PHE. I will share that resource with your team when available.

My team throughout the entire Department and I are eager to partner with you to ensure this process is as seamless as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact my Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs.

Sincerely,

Xavier Becerra