

PASTOR'S COLUMN

HALLELJUAH: GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES PHASE 1 REOPENING OF BUSINESSES ON MAY 15

I watched the Governor's News Conference on Monday, May 11 and rejoiced as he announced the Phase 1 Reopening of Louisiana Businesses, including Churches, this Friday. We can have a maximum of 25% of our Church seating capacity. I took notes as I listened to all the provisos and regulations (see below). We have measured the Church to figure exactly how many seats we can use with 6-foot distancing and other requirements. See the Pastor's Column for details. Thanks, Lord, that Louisiana's Covid cases are declining, but with 9,000 active cases statewide, we can't let our guard down.

KEY POINTS FROM GOVERNOR'S NEWS CONFERENCE ON MAY 11, 2020

1. The Stay-at-Home Order is lifted effective Friday, May 15, and the Phase 1 Reopening of Businesses begins. Louisiana has met White House Protocols for Phase 1 by our decline in Covid cases and hospitalizations. The State now can test 200,000 people for Covid per month, and protocols are in place for 'contract tracing.'
2. The Governor thanked Louisianians for their sacrifices in staying home, but said with 9,000 active Covid cases statewide, we must remain vigilant and continue to practice social distancing.
3. Businesses/Activities that can reopen in Phase 1 include churches, hair and nail salons, fitness centers, museums, zoos, aquariums, restaurants (indoor seating), theaters, individual and non-contact sports, and stores in malls with outside entrances. Businesses can only have 25% occupancy (including staff) and must have 6 foot spacing; all staff must wear masks.
4. Businesses/Activities that remain closed in Phase 1 include amusement parks, spas, children's museums, bars (without takeout service) and contact sports.
5. Those age 65 and older and those with health/immunological issues are strongly advised to shelter in place. Those who are actively ill should not patronize businesses until they are well.
6. Families and related groups can be together inside businesses, but non-related groups must observe 6-foot distancing. The Governor's Medical Advisor strongly recommended wearing masks indoors to help prevent the spread of illness to those who are most vulnerable.
7. For further info, go to www.opensafely.la.gov. Next Major Governor's Conference: June 1.

God Bless,
Fr. Joe