

# Preparation and Guidelines for Our Grace Family's Safe Return to Worship

We have spoken often of the day we would again physically gather for worship. There has been much speculation as to when that day would come, and what it would look like. With the permission and counsel of Bishop Bauerschmidt, and in adherence to state and local regulations, as well as guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), we have begun to take the first steps toward that day. They will be tentative steps initially, and plans will be subject to constant review. Please understand that any changes to our normal routine are done out of love and concern for the health and safety of you, the members of our Grace family. The following protocols provide a safe starting point. It is anticipated they will be subject to change by addendum as circumstances warrant.

## Preparation

1. The church facilities will be cleaned by a contract service to CDC recommendations.
2. Initially, there will be one service at 10:00 AM, limited to 24 congregants and clergy. Due to the demographic of our congregation and continued live streaming of our service, it is anticipated that will be sufficient as we commence.
3. Currently recommended social distancing of 6 feet will be maintained between congregants and individuals outside of their household/family groups. To facilitate this, some pews will be blocked off or marked as out of service.
4. Those serving as members of the liturgical team should take their temperature the evening before and on the morning of the service. If a fever is detected that member should notify the priest or one of the wardens so that a replacement can be found.
5. All congregants 65 years of age or older are strongly encouraged to consult their personal physicians before returning to public worship. Anyone in this age group who additionally suffers from chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, is immunocompromised, or is significantly overweight, is at an elevated risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 and should seriously consider not attending in person worship services at this time. They are reminded that we will be continuing our live streaming of services for the benefit of those who cannot be physically present.
6. Any congregant who has experienced fever, cough, muscle aches, shortness of breath, or chest pain in the past 48 hours should not attend. Updates on COVID-19 symptoms can be found at [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) | CDC](#).
7. Congregants who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days should isolate themselves at home and contact their healthcare provider

8. Before attending everyone attending should wash their hands thoroughly (20 sec.) with soap and water, or in the alternative, apply an appropriate hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizers will also be located at the entrances to the church facilities.
9. Masks or face coverings should be worn by all attendees. There are differing studies and opinions about the effectiveness of masks protecting the wearer from contracting the COVID-19 virus, but there seems to be consensus in their benefit for preventing its spread from an infected wearer. Wearing masks or face coverings is a minor inconvenience when view as an act of love and respect for our fellow congregants.
10. At present, no child care or children's church will be offered due to the difficulty of maintaining social distancing. For that reason, only children able to wear a mask or face covering, and mature enough to maintain social distancing should attend.

## **Worship**

1. Bulletins will be placed at entrances to the church and should be placed in receptacles provided for disposal on exit.
2. To assist in maintaining social distancing, ushers will direct congregants to available seating, working front to back as attendees arrive. All attendees able to navigate the steps should enter through the narthex via the front door. For those unable to negotiate the steps, access will be through Faith Hall and they will be escorted into the nave through the sacristy.
3. Lectors should sit at the front on the side nearest the sacristy
4. Household/family groups will be seated together and maintain the 6ft. social distancing guideline from other individuals.
5. At the Peace, all congregants other than household/family groups should acknowledge each other in a non-contact manner, such as a nod or wave.
6. There will be no passing of the plate at the Offertory. The plates will be located for your access on entry or exit. We encourage your use of our online giving process as a convenient alternative.
7. The Eucharist will, for the time being, be celebrated as we have during the live streaming services. The celebrant will bring communion out to the congregation.
8. For the present, the service will not include singing. We will enjoy instrumentals, and the Vicar is considering options that might add to the service.

## **Post Worship**

1. At the Dismissal, congregants should wait to be directed out, working back to front in reverse order of our entry. It is suggested the celebrant will, weather permitting, greet

the congregants as they leave from the front lawn, practicing social distancing and avoiding a bottleneck in the exit process.

2. There will be no coffee and donut gathering in Faith Hall after the service.
3. Congregants can greet each other in the parking lot as they leave, being mindful of social distancing.