

May 11, 2020

Dear Grace Family,

We miss seeing all of you in person and look forward to the time when we can be in each other's presence again! To that end, the Elders recently met to prayerfully discern steps toward re-opening our building for various activities, including our worship gatherings. We prayed from James 1:5, *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."* We believe God was faithful to give us wisdom as we plan and anticipate a gradual opening of public spaces again, including public worship gatherings, in the near future.

While it is the purpose of the government and medical experts to determine and establish criteria for re-opening, it is the responsibility of the Church and its leaders to implement the wisest strategy for re-instituting the gathering of God's people for worship and ministry. As safety restrictions are lifted, we will seek to provide for the needs of our church family in a way that follows Scripture.

"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." (1 Peter 2:13-17)

We want to do good, honor everyone, and love our church family as we do our best to provide for everyone's needs. We acknowledge those with higher risk factors and recognize that there are various comfort levels within the Grace Family when it comes to being in public spaces again for worship and ministry within our church building. Based on this reality, we are offering the following safety measures and opportunities:

1. We will continue to offer our Worship Service on-line and on DVD's every week, even after we begin to re-open for public worship gatherings in our church building.
2. Anyone of any age with underlying medical conditions, and anyone who otherwise feels uncomfortable gathering in public spaces, should consider staying home and continue to utilize the on-line services and DVD's for worship while the virus is a threat to at-risk people.
3. When the safety restrictions are lifted, and we can resume meeting at our church building for worship service, we plan to offer two worship service times in two different spaces within our church building. (Offering two services in two different spaces will allow more freedom for people to participate within their risk tolerance and at their comfort level.)
 - Worship services will be offered on Saturday evenings at 5:00pm and on Sunday mornings at 9:30am. (There will also be a prayer time on Sunday mornings at 8:30am.)
 - Depending on your comfort level, you can choose seating in either the sanctuary or the fellowship hall. Physical distancing will be practiced in both areas, however, the fellowship hall will offer more opportunities for people to control the position of their seating since it will have chairs instead of stationary pews as in the

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We are a family of missionary servants who are making disciples!

sanctuary. Those worshiping in the fellowship hall will have a big-screen television experience, which will be a live broadcast of what is happening in the sanctuary.

4. While we cannot guarantee complete safety from exposure to the virus, we will do our best to make it as safe as possible by taking the following precautions:

- Appropriate sanitization of all common spaces and high-traffic areas.
- Fully functioning and fully stocked hand washing stations in bathrooms.
- Physical distancing will be respected in all seating areas.
- There will be a greeter at each door, who will be the only one opening and closing the doors.
- Offering collections will occur at the end of the Worship Service, with worshipers placing their offering in plates as they leave.
- Other specific changes will include: No official greeting time, no bulletins, no hymnbooks or Bibles in the pews, and communion will be offered through individual containers without the passing of a plate.
- The building will be cleaned and sanitized after each service.
- Out of respect for the varying levels of comfort each individual may have, people may make their own choice as to the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) like face masks and gloves when we gather publically. Some people will choose to wear masks, gloves, and some people will choose not to.

We believe that these safety measures will allow us to resume meeting together again when the time comes. However, there may be times when re-evaluation is necessary, and adjustments made as we go along. These changes will be communicated with you as they occur.

The reality of economic impact, due to the “Safer at Home” restrictions placed on all of us, has caused us to re-evaluate some things and delayed our budget process. Due to these circumstances, we have put that process on hold until a better time to address the budget for the next fiscal year, as well as the creation of a ten-year maintenance plan for the buildings and property.

Remember that just because we are not meeting for public worship at our church building, our calling and mission remains the same. Let us take care not to be distracted by the culture or the government's response to this pandemic, but continue to submit ourselves to following Jesus. We will worship with others in our homes, continue to share the gospel, and make disciples - regardless of the current restrictions within which we are living.

After you receive this letter, an Elder or Pastor will be calling you at some point to get your input and find out if you have any needs or prayer requests. Thank you for your prayers and patience as we wait with great anticipation for the opportunity to reopen our church building for public worship and ministry.

Praying for you,

The Elders and Pastors of Grace Church