

Grace Covenant Church

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

The Leadership Team at Grace Covenant Church met on June 9th and approved regathering for a single service beginning June 28th. At this time there will be no Sunday School, nursery, or Children's Church. There will be no fellowship time or coffee provided in the church. There will also be no Wednesday evening activities or other activities in the church building as the church building will remain closed during the week. For this plan, workers include any staff or volunteer performing in an official capacity to execute a successful worship service. This includes worship team, sound room staff, ushers, and pastoral staff.

The focus of this plan is on Grace Covenant Church's preparedness for reopening for Sunday morning worship. It is our desire to create an experience that allows those who feel comfortable attending to have a safe place to worship. This plan will include policies and procedures designed to protect the vulnerable and provide information on how the church is responding to social distancing and sanitization guidelines.

This plan was approved by the Leadership Team on June 16, 2020 and will be updated as needed.

Protocols for Social Distancing

We ask everyone that attends our services to be mindful of following social distancing protocols.

- Entrance and Exit
 - Workers (staff and volunteers) will park in the lower lot and enter the back door.
 - Congregants will park in the upper lot and enter through the front doors at the canopy.
 - Doors will open 30 minutes prior to the start of the service.
 - When entering the church, everyone will be asked to enter the sanctuary and be seated, following the guidance of the ushers.
 - If there is a line that forms, please use the marks on the floor to keep a 6' separation between households.
 - After the service, the ushers will dismiss rows from back to front.
 - Everyone is asked to immediately exit the church, beyond the concrete around the canopy to allow people to get to their vehicles and to allow for any pick up that is needed.
- Seating
 - Ushers will guide you to your seat and will fill the pews from front center to back, and then utilize the side sections.
 - There will be at least three ushers to guide people in and out of the building: one at the front door, one at the sanctuary door, and one in the sanctuary guiding people to the new open row.
 - The Fellowship Hall will be used for overflow seating, if needed.
 - Every two pews will be skipped to allow for social distancing while singing.
 - Ushers will ensure separation of 6 feet between households sharing a pew.
 - Ushers will fill the center section first, front to back, then the outside sections.

- Markings
 - Marks on the floor will be provided as reminders of social distancing in the front hallway.
 - The canopy and the concrete under the canopy will mark the boundary for where people need to clear beyond after the service to allow people to exit without impediment.
 - Areas of the church will be blocked off to minimize the need to sanitize the entire church.

Building Protocols

In order to maintain a safe environment, the following building protocols have been put into place.

- The front doors will be propped open to minimize contact, as weather allows.
- The nursery will be closed and there will be no Children's Church during the service.
- The bathrooms by the front door will be open and limited to two people per bathroom.
- The Welcome Center area will be closed off, including the mailboxes. The Welcome Center will be removed, and all mailboxes will be emptied and personal items will be stored in the church office for the time being.
- All portable walls will be drawn shut, and some hallways will be blocked off to prevent people from entering closed off sections of the church.
- Tables in the Fellowship Hall will be removed and chairs will be set up in rows, 9 feet apart, facing the TV.

Occupancy

- Sanctuary occupancy is set at 80 and the fellowship hall at 40. This keeps us under 50% occupancy and allows for social distancing.
- The usher at the front door will manage building occupancy.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

- A hand sanitizer station will be available in the front hall.
- An usher will sanitize the bathroom common touch points - flush handle, sink handle, door knobs, towel dispenser, counters, at the half hour - 10:30, 11:00, and 11:30.

Sick Workers

This includes up front volunteers, sound room staff, ushers, and pastoral staff.

- All workers will be asked to self-check before entering the church.
- Any worker experiencing the following symptoms will be sent home¹:
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Headache
 - Sore throat

¹ MN Dept of Health Self-Screener: <https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/get-tested/index.jsp>

- Muscle pain
- Loss of taste or smell
- Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Any worker who has been in close contact with or lives with someone known to have COVID-19 or has been told by a healthcare provider that you may have been exposed to COVID-19 will be sent home.²

Communications and Training Protocols

- The Leadership Team is responsible for development and implementation of this plan.
- Pastor Greg and the Office will communicate this plan through proper channels before the first service.
- MDH posters will go up at the entrances as reminders of best practices.
- Connect Team will train ushers before the first service.

What You Can Do to Minimize Transmission

These are things you can do to protect yourself and provide an inviting space for others to enter into worship with you. Please follow these guidelines and the direction of church workers on Sunday mornings to allow everyone to feel welcome and safe.

- Anyone who feels sick should stay home.
- If you are at high risk, you are encouraged to stay home.
- It is recommended that everyone entering the church wears a mask.
- We will have disposable masks on hand for those that need.
- Workers will be required to wear masks. Those speaking or singing up front will be allowed to remove their masks on the stage.
- You are encouraged to wash your hands before attending church or utilize the bathroom sinks or hand sanitizer station in the hallway.

Giving

- In order to minimize risk to our ushers and staff that handle donations, we ask that you consider giving online - www.gracecov.net/give
- After the service, one usher will collect the offering by the front door as you exit - we will not pass a plate during the service.
- Our financial policy requires at least two ushers count donations. This will continue. Ushers will count, deposit, sanitize the desk area, and wash their hands when complete.

² MN Dept of Health Self-Screener: <https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/get-tested/index.jsp>