



# Grace United Methodist Church

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Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior!

Last Thursday night we had a virtual Church Council meeting focused on planning for reopening Grace church and getting back to in-person worship. With our county moving to the Green Phase this Friday and many of us anxious to return to worshipping in the Sanctuary together, we are taking these steps toward that end. While considering our next steps, our top priority is the health and well-being of all of us who call Grace Church our home.

We have put together a task force of church leaders, led by Dr. Keith Price, who will be setting in place the procedures and mobilizing the volunteers it will take to make this happen. We absolutely must do this right, taking into account the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable members. These first weeks in the Green Phase are critical as we watch for any “uptick” in the number of positive cases.

Some of the details to think through are: how do we manage appropriate social distancing? Do we sing? How do we limit the “touches” on doorknobs, handrails and... what about bathrooms? How do we sanitize these areas between services? Do we have bulletins? If we do, we can't pass them out...right? What about coffee? Should we discourage people from standing and talking before and after the services? What about fans and air circulation? And the list goes on. We need people who will be willing to serve in these areas, and others, before we can rejoin for in-person worship.

While the task force works through this time of making difficult decisions, we are still the Church. We are still ambassadors for Christ, as Paul calls us in 2 Corinthians 5:20. We are still called and gifted and grace-filled people who show our love for God by how we love each other. Somebody said to me, “If we stop being the church because we aren't in the building, we have much bigger problems than the fear of contracting a virus.” Those are powerful words. We are the church everywhere we go. Everything we do and say can be an act of worship.

For all of us who miss being together Sunday mornings: make a call, do a front porch visit, send a card, an email, a text. Facetime, Zoom, Google Meet, and on and on. No, it's not the same. But it's connection, it's compassion, it's being the Church.

We want to be sure that we are considering everyone in our Church Family when we make any decision. Know that we are working on plans and contingency plans and that we will roll out our intentions in writing, via another letter, on social media and via email. If you have any concerns or any suggestions, please get in touch with me: via email ([pastorbill@graceumcwarren.com](mailto:pastorbill@graceumcwarren.com)) or on my cell (412-715-1642) or a voicemail at the church.

Stay safe and tell someone you love them.

Blessings in Christ,

*Pastor Bill*