



# Grace United Methodist Church

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Pastor

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August 13, 2021

People of Grace,

We have been blessed and lucky to have such a beautiful summer for our outdoor Worship by the Water service. It has been a joyous time to gather together, sing praises to God, hear the Word, and enjoy our Lord's breathtaking creation. When we gather by the lake, we can sing without a doubt that "Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place."

As the Worship by the Water season draws to an end, **we plan to re-enter the sanctuary for worship on September 12, 2021.** This will be our 10:15AM service.

Many of us are excited and happy to be re-entering the building. Many of us may be apprehensive as we still have health concerns for ourselves, our families, and our community. And likely, many of us are a mix of happiness and anxiety. We want to do our best to create a safe worshipping space and allow alternative methods of worship and gathering. We will continue our thriving online ministry by livestreaming worship to Facebook and having a dial-in option. We also have plans to expand our online presence so more people will be able to more easily join us in worship and fellowship. At the same time, we believe there is something important about being together and think it is the right time to re-enter the sanctuary. And still, we know that the Covid-19 pandemic is far from over and we believe it is important to follow God's greatest commandments to love God and to love neighbor as self. Therefore, we will have health and safety measures in place, a full list of which can be found on the back of this letter. The main thing you need to know for worship on Sunday mornings is that **masks will be required for all individuals regardless of vaccination status.** We will have extra masks available. In making this move to require masks we are considering children who are unable to get vaccinated and the most vulnerable among us. Thank you for doing your part to protect each other. Wearing a mask in worship is a simple and effective way we can show the love and care of Christ to and for one another at this time.

The Safe Start team has plans to regularly monitor county COVID levels, CDC and health department recommendations, and cooperation of the congregation to keep our community healthy and our policies up-to-date.

We look forward to worshipping with you on September 12 - either online or in the building! I know that as we gather together in the sanctuary, we will be able to sing with confidence "Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place."

Sincerely,  
Pastor Allison & The Safe Start Team



## Full Covid-19 Health & Safety Measures for worship, August/September 2021:

- **Masks will be required for all individuals regardless of vaccination status. We will have extra masks available.**
- The pastor and liturgist may remove their masks while speaking.
- Choir will be postponed for the time being and we will offer special music in its stead.
- We ask worshippers to respect the social distance of others, leaving space between them and other households.
- The offertory will be collected on plates placed around the sanctuary. We will still recognize the offering and have a time of thanksgiving during the service. Thank you all for your continued generosity in supporting our mission.
- Holy Communion will be celebrated the first Sunday of every month and we will ask individuals to bring elements (bread/crackers, juice) for themselves and anyone in their household. Pre-packaged communion supplies will be available for those who forgot and visitors.
- As long as the weather permits, doors will be propped open to allow for fresh air flow.
- Children will remain in the pews during the Children's Moment.
- We hope to offer children's Sunday school during the service, outside in the pavilion or in the Fellowship Hall, weather dependent. Sunday school plans are dependent on the need to organize and enlist volunteers. If, for whatever reason, Sunday school is unable to happen or if a parent feels uncomfortable sending their kid to Sunday school, children's activity packets will be available every Sunday for kids in the sanctuary.
- Children's Sunday school will resume on September 19th.
- Coffee Fellowship will happen in the pavilion as long as it is not raining and 60 degrees or above. Masks are not required outside. If it is raining or below 60 degrees, Coffee Fellowship will be in the fellowship hall and we ask individuals to mask while not eating or drinking.
- Meetings will continue as they have been: encouraging meeting outside without masking for those vaccinated or meeting inside, masked. Zoom or hybrid meetings are also available options.
- We will continue to offer our livestream and call-in options for those unable to worship in-person.
- **As always, do not come to the church for worship or for any purpose if you are feeling ill, have a fever, or have recently been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19.**
- **If a church member does test positive for Covid-19, we request that they let the pastor or church office know as soon as they can so we can let everyone who was in worship know they might have been exposed to the virus and they can test or self-monitor as appropriate.**

