

May 27, 2020

Dear People of Grace,

Greetings to one and all. I do hope this letter finds you and yours safe and healthy. It has been a long two months plus since we have been together...and we are not yet at the point where all can regather. As we do regather, worship will be **very different** from what we remember pre-Covid-19.

The Vestry and I applied last week to Bishop Michael to be allowed to reopen our building for **Sunday worship only** in our Nave, beginning May 31, and for the next three weeks which designates Grace Church's Phase I. Here is the reply I received from him on May 26:

Dear Betty+:

Grace and Peace to you this day. Thank you for the care and attention you have put into designing a plan to reengage your Church building for in-person church services. This is good and holy work and we pray that it will be a good move that will bring joy and comfort to your people while also keeping everyone safe.

You are hereby notified that your plan is approved and you may begin to reengage your building and in-person worship according to the plan you have created.

God's joy and blessing be with you all this day.

+Michael Hanley

Bishop of Oregon

So...stop, give thanks, shout "Alleluia! Thanks be to God." Smile, cry, laugh, run around, jump, hug yourself. Celebrate!

OK...now, settle down and read on. We have a plan...and there is not much (if any!) flexibility in it. If we do not follow the plan approved by the Bishop, we will have to close our doors once again; more importantly, not following the rules could cause illness or possibly death. This will take everyone following the rules to make this work. Please read, mark, and inwardly digest these rules. ***And call/text/email me if you have questions or concerns.*** Thank you in advance for helping the people of Grace Church worship together once again.

I ask you to read over the rules and guidelines that follow and see if you can apply them to your own situation. If so, then you will need to register for one of two worship services. I will tell you how to register at the end of the rules. These rules are to be in effect for at least 3 Sundays...through June 14. Hopefully after that we can enter Phase II with a different set of rules and regulations and possibly Phase III by mid-summer. This movement will only occur if we all take care of one another and ourselves; those we love and the stranger in our midst. We are in fact, living out Christ's second great commandment "Love your neighbor as yourself."

For Phase I, we are only open for Sunday worship. The church office, mid-week services, feeding ministries and all other gatherings will still not be allowed. In addition, the church building will only be open on Sunday mornings.

Your Vestry and I are taking the lead in getting Grace Church open in Phase I. I say this, because as your elected leaders, we will be enforcing the rules and regulations and ask that you graciously comply. Thank you.

These rules and guidelines may seem long and unwieldy, so I encourage you to read them slowly and more than once. They will also be posted on the doors of the church.

Now to the rules and guidelines:

Who can attend worship during Phase I? Anyone who registers for a particular service after agreeing to follow the rules below:

- 1) Anyone who is ill; has a temperature, cough or sneeze; has a compromised immune system **shall not** attend worship. Please stay home and join us in our live broadcast at 10 a.m. via FaceBook Live.
- 2) People over the age of 60 are encouraged to stay home during Phase I; however, if you meet the rules in #1, you will not be turned away **if you have registered.**
- 3) A mask must be worn at all times while in worship. If you should forget your mask, the church will supply you with one.
- 4) You must register for one of two services being offered. This will be the service you are to attend while we are in Phase I: May 31, June 7 and 14. "How to register" appears at the end of this letter. **There will be only 25 people allowed for worship at each service;** #26 will be turned away. Please register to guarantee your seat for these three weeks.

To help you make the decision about whether to attend worship during Phase I, here is how the liturgy will take place.

- 1) No Eucharist. Only Morning Prayer.
- 2) No singing; Vincent will play at the 10 a.m. service.
- 3) No hymnals, prayer books or bulletins will be available. The liturgy will be displayed on our wide screen tv. A link will be sent if you care to download the liturgy on your cellphone or Ipad before Sunday and bring with you to church. We will broadcast the 10 a.m. service via FaceBook Live; it will also be recorded and available to you at your convenience. The printed liturgy will be available on our website prior to Sunday.
- 4) No cushions in pews.
- 5) No Nursery or Sunday School.
- 6) No coffee hour.
- 7) No paraments (Liturgical hangings), no holy water, no flowers.
- 8) No acolytes or Eucharistic ministers.

9)No Passing of the Peace; no hugging, touching or handshaking with anyone outside your family.

10)The offering plates will be at the entry to the church and will not be passed.

11)Hand sanitizers will also be available throughout the church.

12)Vestry members, with perhaps others, will serve as Ushers. They will be out front of the church, making sure everyone has a mask and checking off the names of people who have signed up and are attending. This is not for taking attendance but for tracing should we need to do so.

13)Sitting in church: Pews are roped off so that every third pew is available. Families may sit in one pew together. Otherwise, individuals may sit in a pew, one at each end. Couples may sit together in a pew.

What to do when you arrive at church:

1)Maintain social distancing.

2)Wear your mask.

3)Read the signs out front to refresh your memory as to who may enter for worship.

4)Check in with the Usher/Vestry person on duty.

5)We are encouraging people to come up the outside front steps. The inside stairs and elevator will be available, but please just let us know if you use them as these spaces will need to be cleaned after each service if used.

6) Only the handicapped bathroom will be available for use. All others will be roped off. Please let me know or the Vestry members serving if you or a family member use the bathroom as it will need to be cleaned.

7) At the end of the service, the congregation will be dismissed by pews, starting at the back. Please wait until your pew is dismissed.

What happens after each service?

1)The areas used will be cleaned and readied for the next service. On Saturday, Armando Vargas will deep clean the church.

How can YOU help make Phase I a reality and move us all towards Phase II?

1)By following the rules and guidelines.

2)Volunteer to help at a service by ushering or cleaning as we may need more volunteers to assist the Vestry.

3)Volunteer to read at a service. We need two readers for each service. The readings and instructions will be sent you prior to Sunday.

OK...so now...how to register for a service...or not?

You may register you (and your household) in one of two ways. **The deadline is Friday noon** and you will be notified of acceptance no later than Saturday noon. Remember...this is for **Sunday, May 31, June 7 and 14. If we do not have a minimum of 5 people registered for a**

service, we will not offer a service at that time. This is not because we are concerned with "numbers" but rather the work required before and after any service.

Reply by email to rector.graceastoria4691@gmail.com or call and leave a message at 503 325 4691 with this information:

- Your name and the number of people in your household planning to attend.
- Indicate your first preference for a service: 8 a.m. or 10 a.m.

Not planning to attend during Phase I?

Then, please let us know by replying to the above email or phone number. We want to make sure everyone is being notified and in some way is able to worship with the people of Grace Church.

Thank you, one and all for your cooperation. In your prayers, please continue to give thanks to God for the Grace Church community of faith and service.

Blessings and peace,

Betty+

The Reverend Betty McWhorter
Interim Rector