



# Regathering Plan for In-Person Worship Services

Approved by the Grace and Peace Elders  
September 16, 2020

*Giving people repeated opportunities to hear the  
Gospel of Jesus, so that they may believe, follow,  
and worship Him.*

## Preface

The question of when and how to regather in person for worship services has been a complicated one for us, the Grace and Peace elders, to consider. We have tried to weigh (a) the importance of assembling as God's people, and (b) the dangers of physically gathering during a pandemic. After many hours of praying, researching, and discussing, we humbly put forward the following plan for regathering in person for worship services.

We encourage you to please consider a few thoughts as you read our plan.

Many of us feel differently, and more strongly, than others do about certain things in this unprecedented season. We should all acknowledge that there is Christian liberty in places where we are free to differ, but not be divided, as members of the one Body of Christ. Jesus Christ alone is the Lord of the conscience. He has given us our consciences, and we want to honor you as you follow your conscience. As a famous pastor once said, "It is neither right nor safe to deny your conscience." The decision to either attend in-person worship gatherings or to remain at home and participate online may be a difficult one for some of you. We do not want you to be motivated by guilt or self-righteousness, but by a clean conscience before the Lord. And as we consider others in the Body of Christ, especially those who may differ from us, we do not want to uncharitably condemn others, but extend a love that puts the most charitable spin on them and their views. In light of this, here are some Bible passages to keep in mind as you read our plan, consider it for yourself, and consider your fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord in light of it.

## Romans 14

*vv.1-5 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.*

*v.13 Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.*

*v.23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.*

## Ephesians 4

*v.1-3 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

## 1 Corinthians 13

*vv.4-8a Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.*

*I. When will in-person Sunday worship resume?*

**A.** We will resume in-person worship services on Sunday October 4<sup>th</sup>.

*II. How many Sunday services will there be, and at what times?*

**A.** We will hold 2 identical 1-hour worship services at 9:00am and 11:00am.

**B.** Worship services will be livestreamed so they can be watched online as an alternative in this season.

*III. What about those of us who are sick, immunocompromised, or high-risk?*

**A.** If you are sick, we request that you please (1) not attend our in-person gatherings; (2) ensure you are healthy before you do attend in-person gatherings again. We encourage you to pray against guilt that might arise from not being able to attend.

**B.** If you are immunocompromised or high-risk, we encourage you to (1) feel Christian liberty to attend or not to attend our in-person gatherings according to your conscience before God; (2) consider that it could be the better part of wisdom to not attend in-person gatherings; (3) pray about it so your decision is made in faith, and not because of guilt or legalism; (4) reach out to the pastors or elders if you have any questions.

**C.** If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, we request that you not attend our in-person gathering. This does not apply to healthcare workers who follow safety protocols and use personal protective equipment.

*IV. What should I do prior to attending an in-person worship service?*

- A. Please reserve seats for the Sunday worship service you plan to attend during the week prior to Sunday. You can reserve seats by going online ([www.graceandpeacecommunitychurch.org](http://www.graceandpeacecommunitychurch.org)) or by phone (484.483.5837). If seating is full, you will have the option to be put on a waitlist, or reserve seats for the following Sunday.
- B. Please do a fever screening at home. If you have a temperature above 100.4, please remain at home.
- C. Although our restrooms will be open, please use restrooms at home to minimize use at the property.
- D. Please bring a mask for everyone over 2 years old to wear (everyone over 2 years old will be required to wear a mask, properly, in the property at all times). If you forget to bring a mask, one will be provided for you.

*V. What should I expect as I arrive?*

- A. Please arrive between 8:30am and 8:45am for the 9:00am service, and between 10:30am-10:45am for the 11:00am service.
- B. Greeters will open doors for you to minimize surface contact. At the entrance you'll also see a hand sanitizing station; please use it as you enter. There will also be sanitizing stations throughout the property.
- C. When you arrive at the 17<sup>th</sup> street doors, please immediately turn LEFT to proceed to the sign-in table. Please observe the physical distancing stickers as you wait in line. We will have a sign-in table

for each service to enable us to do contact tracing if needs be, as well as to give you your seat assignment(s).

- D. At the sign-in table, you'll be asked if you or anyone in your household has any symptoms of illness (i.e. fever, shortness of breath, coughing). If you have been showing symptoms, we will sadly have to turn you away.
- E. We will also ask you if you have been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days. If so, and you have tested negative, we will let you in, but if you have not tested negative we will sadly turn you away. This does not apply to healthcare workers because of their protocols and use of personal protective equipment.
- F. We will have touchless thermometers at the table if you need your temperature checked.
- G. When you sign-in, you'll receive your seating assignment. Please follow the marked pathways to your seats in either the Assembly Hall or in the Fellowship Hall. Seats will be marked to help everyone identify their seat(s). Seating will also be physically distanced between individuals or households.
- H. Those without a reservation will be welcome, but seating unfortunately cannot be guaranteed. This is part of why we are asking you to please sign-up for the service you plan to attend each Sunday.
- I. The water fountains will be unavailable, but we welcome you to bring water into Assembly Hall.

- J. The coat racks will be unavailable, so please take all of your belongings with you.
- K. Chairs will be in clusters instead of rows, physically distanced from each other, and based upon sign-ups.
- L. All chairs will be replaced in between services.
- M. Our restrooms will be open, and there will be hand sanitizer stations outside each restroom. We will limit the number of people in each restroom (2 for the women's and 1 for the men's). Monitors will keep track of the number of people in each restroom.
- N. The hallways will be designated as one-way to reduce congestion.

**VI. *What will Sunday worship look like?***

- A. There will be no paper bulletins, kids' sermon sheets, or prayer guides. We hope to make those available prior to Sunday via email, the website, and our app.
- B. There will be no church Bibles on the seats. Please bring your own Bible. Bibles will be available as you enter, but if you take one please also take it home with you.
- C. We will continue to have a nursing mother's room during each service.
- D. We will not provide childcare, but the Garage space will be available for parents and guardians to use if necessary. The service will be streamed in the Garage.
- E. Masks must be worn, properly, for the duration of the service.

- F. Although we will not have congregational singing for now, we will have a vocalist and a pianist upfront playing worship songs during the service. Feel free to hum or clap along.
- G. During the congregational prayer, only the pastor up-front will pray.
- H. During Communion, gloved and masked servers will come to you and serve you prepackaged Communion elements. The pastor will lead us in taking the elements together. Please discard the packaging as you exit the service.
- I. The options for financial giving will be online, sending checks through the mail, or by using the collection box near the exit in Assembly Hall.
- J. We will ask you to exit the property immediately after the conclusion of the worship service. This will minimize physical contact and expedite the cleaning process. Ushers will open doors for you to minimize surface contact. Those seated in Assembly Hall will exit via the side ramp door in Assembly Hall. Those seated in the Fellowship Hall will exit via the Emergency Exit Only door in Fellowship Hall.
- K. As a general rule, during your time in the property please observe 6 feet of physical distancing at all times. Please refrain from physical contact with others (i.e. hugs, handshakes, high-fives, fist-bumps). Please wear your mask, properly, at all times and make use of the hand sanitizing stations.
- L. We will not have any food or fellowship time in the property for now.

VII. *What will happen if someone who attended a Grace and Peace worship service is found to have COVID-19?*

A. In the event that a person attended a Sunday service while COVID-19 positive, we will immediately inform the congregation, and encourage everyone who attended that Sunday to get tested. We will trace that person's contact at the property for extra cleaning. We will also immediately consider closing in-person Sunday gatherings, and returning exclusively to online services for a minimum of 14 days.

## FAQ

### 1. Pastor Jonathan said that when we regather in person, we'll be able to serve 90 people in-person. Why 90?

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health currently recommends that no more than 25 people congregate indoors for worship. However, we confirmed with the department that it only applies to a single enclosed space. If we use the Fellowship Hall (which can hold around 20 people physically distanced) in addition to the Assembly Hall (25 people), we can safely increase the number of people we serve each service to 45 and still be within the recommended limits. Across two services then, we can safely hold 90 people.

Of the responses we received from our most recent survey, over half indicated they would continue to worship online when in-person gatherings resume. Although we do not know exact numbers, that puts us in the same ballpark as 90. Everyone who wants to attend should sign up freely without fear of potentially preventing others from coming.

### 2. How will the online sign up work?

Each Monday, online registration for the following Sunday's worship services will open. You'll find the registration form on our website ([www.graceandpeacecommunitychurch.org](http://www.graceandpeacecommunitychurch.org)). You'll need to provide your name, email, and the number of members in your group to be seated together. Those without internet access can reserve seats by calling the church phone (484-483-5837). If you try to sign up for a service which is full, you will be given the option to either go on the waitlist for a service, or reserve a spot at a service the following week. There will be some walk-in seating, but it will be extremely limited, so we encourage everyone attending to reserve seats online.

### 3. Have you considered gathering outdoors?

Yes, but given that (A) it would be weather-dependent week to week, (B) we're only weeks away from colder outdoor temperatures, and (C) it would be more challenging to livestream and record the service for our many online viewers, we thought it seemed better to plan worship indoors.

### 4. What is being done about the indoor air quality at the property?

The city's Department of Public Health has given recommendations about ventilation to reduce COVID-19 risk in buildings. You can find that guidance here: [https://www.phila.gov/media/20200812203201/COVID-19\\_Ventilation\\_Recommendations\\_081320.pdf](https://www.phila.gov/media/20200812203201/COVID-19_Ventilation_Recommendations_081320.pdf). We are working on it now, and we expect to be fully compliant with these recommendations prior to regathering in-person.

### 5. Why will we have music but no singing?

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health strongly recommends against congregational singing indoors until there is better understanding of its public health risks. However, we can have a music leader sing from upfront, provided 20 feet of distance to the 1st row of congregants, as well as the use of a protective shield. Music in the service would give those worshipping online the ability to sing at home. Congregants worshipping in-person may feel free to hum and clap along in the service.

### 6. How will the online worship experience be different once we begin regathering?

You'll still be able to watch our worship service online, beginning at 9am on Sundays. Our worship service will be live-streamed from 9am-

10am. That service will also be recorded and will be available to view at any time beginning 9am. You can watch our services online at our website.

Thank you for your love, prayers, and commitment to God's work in and through Grace and Peace. Please continue to be in regular prayer for our congregation. And please reach out to us if you have any questions.

God bless you,

Ji Kim

Sherwin Kwon

Mike Miller

Jonathan Olsen

Andy Owens

Griff Price

Dan Salazar

Wasył Semkiw

Ben Shackleton

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