

April 22, 2021

Grace and peace to you all!

Last week we took an important step forward in our gradual re-opening process at Grace. For the first Sunday since March 8th, 2020, we offered an in-person worship service in our sanctuary. The worship service went smoothly and it seemed that all of our safety protocols helped to ensure that folks felt safe when gathering.

As previously promised, we began worship in the most limited of ways with the hopes of slowly adding back more parts of our regular worship as we go. Because of the success of the first Sunday, the Council felt good about adding a few more things to the limited, in-person worship services.

Starting in May, we will be including the words to the hymns, though we are still asking folks not to sing. We will also experiment with doing the Sharing of the Peace, but ask folks to remain in their seating areas and simply wave, make a peace sign, or do an air hug as we greet one another. We also will be working with our Lectors, and those who are comfortable will be invited to read the lessons in worship.

At this point in time, we are still asking individuals and families to pre-register to attend worship by the Thursday prior to each Sunday. Everyone will continue to be required to wear masks and maintain 6 feet of physical distance. We also will ask folks to continue to arrive a little early for worship so that the usher can seat each person in their assigned seating area.

Looking ahead to our May meeting, the Council will continue to discuss the timing and methods for serving communion safely, inviting congregational singing, and relaxing the pre-registration and seating area assignments.

Just by way of reminders, the digital worship services will continue to be available by 8:30am each Sunday morning on our YouTube channel and Facebook Page. We have committed to offering this online worship option through at least the end of August. And, we will plan to offer at least one more of the **live Communion Worship Services on May 19th at 7pm.**

As we look toward May, we can be excited about all that we have to celebrate in our ministry and lives even during this pandemic. Check out the schedule below and make plans to worship either online or in-person each of these Sundays:

May 2nd — LSA Graduate Recognition Sunday

May 9th — Mothers' Day and Pillowcase Dress Ministry Celebration

May 16th — Special 'Thank You' for all who help create our online worship services

May 23rd — Pentecost Sunday and Confirmation Sunday

May 30th — High School Graduate Recognition Sunday

Overall, I believe we are encouraged by what we are seeing and hopeful that the vaccination efforts will continue in our community and throughout the world. This has certainly been a challenging year for everyone, however, it has also been a time in our congregation of experimentation and a willingness to try new ways of doing ministry. For this, I give thanks and pray that the Spirit will continue to inspire our ministry moving into the future.

In Grace,
Pastor Steve