I am excited that Grace is reopening for in-person worship on November 1. This is a phased plan which allows us to reopen in steps; giving us the opportunity to learn how to reopen affording us the opportunity to add elements of our Sunday morning experience as we grow forward.

Worship will be different in many ways. We will open under the guidelines of “Block 2” on the attached document. This plan was developed by the Reopening for Worship Task Force and approved by the Worship Committee and Administrative Council. It is ‘bare bones’ compared to your past worship experiences of Grace but is designed, first and foremost, with everyone’s safety in mind. I view Block 2 as the place we begin, with the idea that we add pieces of the “normal” Sunday worship service over time. The online worship service of the past several months will continue after we reopen in-person worship.

Here is a snapshot of what in person worship will look like when we first reopen:

* Worship in the Bullock Activity Center with an attendance limit of 80 to help with safe social distancing. (Ventilation in the gym is also good.)
* We will start with offering one service a week at 10:00 am.
* Weekly registration for worship will be required. This will help us keep the numbers in the room at a safe level. You will be able to register either online or by calling the church office. Registration for each Sunday in-person service will open on the Monday prior and will close on Thursday at noon.
* If you have any symptoms of Covid-19 on Sunday, we ask you to please stay home so you do not share anything with others.
* As you arrive, you will wait outside, maintaining 6 feet of social distance, to check in.
* You will enter the building through the door facing the church’s parking lot off Walnut Street (lower lobby door). As we first reopen, traffic in the building will be limited to the Bullock Activity Center, its lobby by the parking lot door, and the restrooms nearest the gym.
* Masks will be required to enter the building. Some masks will be available for those who need one.
* Once inside the lobby, your temperature will be checked. Anyone with a temperature at or over 100.4 degrees will not be able to enter .Also, people will be asked two questions: “Have you recently had a fever?” and “Have you recently been in close contact with someone with Covid-19?”To enter the worship space, the answer to both questions must be “no”.
* There will be a hand sanitizing station inside the door.
* You will be checked in using the registration information to verify name, phone and email. This is for contact tracing purposes.
* Food and drink will not be offered prior to the services. The water fountains will not be available.
* Once checked in, you will be escorted to your seat(s). The chairs in the Bullock Activity Center will be socially distanced from one another. Ushers will help families move chairs so they may sit together.
* Activities for children (nursery, Children’s Church) will not be open on November 1. These will reopen as soon as safely possible. In the meantime, we’d love to have children present in worship with their parents.

This list is a snapshot of what getting into the service will be like. Next week I will send out an email to share how the actual worship service will look.

These are a lot of guidelines to be sure. No doubt it will create a different feel regarding being in worship at Grace on a Sunday morning. But I would counter balance that with two thoughts:

1) these restrictions are designed to keep everyone who comes to Grace safe, and

2) this plan reflects where we will start, not where we will stay.

We want to add other pieces of the Grace experience as soon as safely possible.

When considering whether or not to return for in-person worship at Grace we encourage you to weigh your comfort level and personal risk factors. As much as we love seeing you present at worship, we encourage you to take advantage of Grace’s online worship service if that is the best option for you.

Excitedly looking forward to reopening,

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