



May 21, 2020

Good Morning Grace Family,

We are excited to tell you today that we will be reopening this coming Sunday—May 24th. In reopening, we will be following the recommendations and guidelines that our county administrators have suggested at this time and will make appropriate adjustments along the way as the county plans adjust as well. We ask for your patience and flexibility during this time. This is uncharted water for all of us. We are seeking though to be considerate of people's health, obedient to the Lord as we submit to the governing authorities, and a testimony before our community. Below you'll find our recommendations, procedures, and important information for Sunday and for each of us spiritually as we continue to deal with the situation.

Recommendations: the following are based on Sheboygan County's plan and resources we've consulted over the last week about local church gatherings amidst the crisis.

- Those 65 and older or with underlying health conditions are encouraged to continue to participate via our online worship service option. If you decide to attend the onsite service, it is completely your decision, any health risk is your responsibility.
- Those that feel ill or have a fever we ask to remain home.
- Continue to practice good hygiene through hand washing, sanitizing, and covering coughs/sneezes.
- Masks/face coverings are encouraged. Please make those wearing such feel comfortable.
- Please continue to practice social distancing. In that light, we are encouraging those attending services onsite to refrain from handshakes and hugs. Please greet one another with a friendly smile and enthusiastic wave.

Procedures: Based on the guidelines/recommendations, we will be doing the following and/or encourage you:

- To minimize touch points, the Fellowship Room, Library, Nursery, and Lower level will be closed. Please use the front or gym entrances. Please use hand sanitizer located at the entrance as you enter.
- Commonly touched areas throughout the building will be disinfected thoroughly.
- Greeters will be stationed at the doors to open it for you.
- Offering plates will not be passed. Instead, we'll have a box near the fire extinguisher in the gym to place donations/offerings. You can continue to mail in your offering/gift if you would prefer.
- Seating will be arranged per recommendations. We ask and encourage those sitting in the rows to allow at least three chairs between you and the next single/couple/family unit.
- Communion services and meals onsite will be put on pause temporarily. We will be making a communion service video to use personally or with your spouse/family on the first Sunday of the month.

Sunday Morning/Weekly: Our onsite services will look a little different for a while. Here's what to expect:

- Onsite Sunday services will be simple with a couple of songs to meditate on (we are discouraging singing at this time) along with prayer and a message from one of the pastors. Newsletters and prayer sheets will continue to be emailed or mailed only presently.

- Watching the online service with your small group on Sunday morning in your home or with a couple of individuals is an option to being onsite on Sunday morning. Small groups may resume as those involved are comfortable with doing so.
- No nursery or childcare will be provided presently. Sunday School is on break for the summer.
- If weather permits, we encourage fellowship times to be held outside on the lawn or in the parking lot.

Please Remember as Believers and as a Church:

1. **[Don't] Rebel** – We are first and foremost citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20) and called to be ambassadors for Christ. Let's use this time to imitate our Savior and be witnesses before our community as we obey the Lord by submitting to those in authority (Rom 13:1; Titus 3:1) and cooperating with our local government guidelines and recommendations (1 Pt 2:12). Let's be salt and light in our community by doing what we must to promote the cause of the gospel and the name of Jesus (Mt 5:13-16).
2. **[Don't] Resent** – It is easy in these days to harbor resentment toward businesses and organizations that may not be held to the same standards or are not following the guidelines that our county has recommended. Please choose not to harbor resentment toward them. As believers, it is harmful and damaging to our spiritual health and relationship with God (James 3:14). We are called to be peacemakers (Mt 5:9; James 3:18) rather than turning toward jealousy and allowing that to affect our thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions which express it before a watching world (Col 4:6). Let us find our satisfaction in Jesus our Savior who will meet our every need (Phil 4:19).
3. **Realism** – Even though the WI Supreme Court has allowed business and organizations to reopen again, there are still guidelines and recommendations we've been encouraged and are encouraging you to follow to prevent as much as possible transmission or contraction of the virus while we are gathered together. Onsite services will not be like they normally were for some time yet, and we need to be realistic about that. It is possible that guidelines and recommendations could change in the future which will require us to adapt. Please be patient with us. We, just like you, desire to return to normal but need to act responsibly to protect all those who call GBC home and be a testimony to our community.
4. **Risk** – While the virus does present some physical risk to all of us, there are other risks we face as a church, specifically dissension and division. As individuals, we all have different thoughts and opinions not only about the virus but also what actions should be taken and how leadership should respond. Our enemy, the devil, uses situations like this to cause disunity and division in the church. This is the reason we are told to live in unity (1 Pt 3:8-9), to be completely united (1 Cor 1:10), to bear with one another in love (Col 3:13), to live in harmony with one another (Rom 12:16), and to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Eph 4:3). This is a time to show that our common bond in Christ overcomes any obstacle we face, is paramount to our differences, and is the reason we are united as a body of believers. Please pray for our body that we might navigate these times successfully with the Lord's help, growing in our unity, and bringing greater glory to his name.
5. **Response** – Everything above may sound quite negative, but these remarks help prepare us as a church. Jesus told his disciples at the end of John 16 that they would scatter and face trouble and suffering. Yet positively, he told them these things that they might be at peace and be encouraged since he had overcome the world. What is positive about our current situation? We serve a sovereign God who is not limited by present circumstances. He is still at work and has afforded us as a church new opportunities to connect online with and pray for people who may have never visited GBC, new opportunities to

encourage believers across the United States, a renewed emphasis on caring for one another creatively in this time that we've been isolated through phone calls, texts, letters, and emails, and opportunities to get to know our neighbors and coworkers better and serve them in this time. Are we ready for the new opportunities and new ministries that God may have planned for us and ready to be flexible in how to serve one another and minister to our community? Are we ready to be all the more useful to him that these new days have and may continue to afford us?

I encourage you to keep on keeping on. As things begin to return to some sense of normalcy in the coming months, please don't give up on continuing to care for one another as you have. Don't give up on serving your neighbors as you have. Don't give up on the time you've been able to spend and invest with family and friends online, over the phone, over email, and over the fence in recent days. Continue to pray for one another that we might continue run this race in the Lord's strength so that his name might be lifted up and praised through our lives no matter what we face in the coming days. May the Lord bless Grace Bible Church in these days.

On Behalf of the GBC Elders & Deacons,



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Numbers 6:24-26

PS: We need to give the fine print to keep it legal: Statement of Waiver of Liability and Assumption of Risk Related to Coronavirus/COVID-19. COVID-19 is highly contagious and is known to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. By attending Grace Bible Church (the "Ministry"), you agree to abide by the procedures established by the church to protect attendees and staff, and you voluntarily assume the risk that you and/or your family may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 either at the church, in the church worship service, or at a small group site. You agree to assume all the risks of attendance and participation for you and your family, and you waive any liability against the church and any other parties. You can find the Sheboygan County Health Department guidelines and recommendations [HERE](#).