



Grace Notes

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JULY 2020 - Special Edition

Special Return to Worship Issue

What's Inside

Once You Arrive.....	2
What to Expect.....	2-3
Frequently Asked Questions...	3-4
For Those Not Ready to Return to Worship	4
For Families with Small Children .	4
Final Notes	5
Happy Valley Hikers SC	5
Grace Church Office Hours	5
Women's Book Club for July	6
Vacation Bible School.....	6
Synod Office Hours	6
Children's activities	6-7

Grace to Resume In-Person Worship July 12, 2020

Four months ago, the COVID-19 pandemic forced Grace Lutheran and churches around the world to cease gathering in-person and to worship in other ways. Now, however, we are pleased to report that the time has finally come to resume in-person worship at Grace beginning Sunday, July 12. Worship will be very similar in format to what we have traditionally enjoyed in the past. It will indeed be *meaningful*. But the manner in which that worship is carried out will necessarily change so that it can also be *safe*. Full details are included in this special “Return to Worship” issue of Grace Notes.

Worship Times and Places

Beginning July 12, Grace will hold in-person worship at the following times and places:

- Each Sunday morning at 8:30 in the Miller Center;
- Each Sunday morning at 10:30 in the main Sanctuary; and
- On the First Sunday of the Month (beginning August 2) at 6 p.m. outside at the Columbarium.

Before Attending In-Person Worship

Public health officials confirm that we have “flattened the curve” of infections here in Pennsylvania, but we have not completely eliminated the COVID-19 threat. Cases are still being identified in Centre County, and older individuals as well as those with compromised health conditions remain at-risk. Moreover, scientists speculate that asymptomatic people may be inadvertent spreaders of the virus and that we could suffer a “second wave” of infections.

Accordingly, before we come to in-person worship to love our God, we must all commit to doing a few important things that will enable us to properly love our neighbor. More specifically, by returning to in-person worship, you are entering into a covenant with your Grace family and are promising that you do not have these COVID-19 symptoms:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| • Fever or chills | • Headache; |
| • Cough; | • New loss of taste or smell; |
| • Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; | • Sore throat; |
| • Fatigue; | • Congestion or runny nose; |
| • Muscle or body aches; | • Nausea or vomiting; and |
| | • Diarrhea |

In summary, *stay at home if you are not feeling well!*

Once you Arrive at Grace

- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth. If you believe your health makes it unsafe for you to wear a mask, please reconsider attending in-person worship because you are likely at high risk for COVID-19 infection. Note, however, that the Centers for Disease Control does not recommend masks for children under the age of 2.
- Practice safe-distancing at all times (6 to 10 feet from those not in your family).
- Use hand sanitizer (located in the narthex welcome center and in dispensers in the Miller Center) before entering the Sanctuary or Miller Center.
- For the Miller Center service, enter at the double doors nearest the Miller Center. To protect the unique floor in that space, *please avoid wearing stiletto heels*.
- For the Sanctuary Service, enter Grace's main entrance.
- For the outdoor service, park near the Miller Center and walk around the building to the columbarium area.
- Wait for ushers to seat you and dismiss you. Please understand you will most likely not sit where you normally do, as we will need to place you in an order that best avoids cross-contamination.
- Use the restroom before coming to church to minimize traffic to, from, and in the restrooms. Please be aware that to best encourage distancing, we are closing off every other stall and the middle sink and will have one urinal in use. Restrooms will be monitored to ensure a maximum capacity of three. We ask that children under the age of 8 be accompanied by a parent.
- There will be no nursery care at any of the services.
- Water fountains in the common area will be shut off, but the touchless water bottle filler will still function.
- Check in with the usher in the vestibule/hallway (Miller Center), outside the main entrance (Sanctuary), or in our columbarium courtyard (outdoor service). That usher will both direct you to the proper entrance and also note your attendance; the latter is solely to enable good contact tracing in case someone at your service becomes ill later.
- Contact us immediately if you become ill after attending a service so that we can notify others who attended that service. We will ensure your privacy while doing so.



What to Expect at Worship

- The order of service will be very similar to our pre-pandemic style of worship, with a prelude and postlude, confession, Hymn of Praise, four Bible readings, sermon, three hymns, and communion.
- To minimize contact and reduce the risk of viral transmission, we will not pass an offering plate. Instead, plates will be positioned at easily accessible places where you can leave your offering.
- To protect ushers and worshipers, bulletins will be placed on seats in a physically-distanced pattern, accompanied by a pre-packaged communion gluten wafer. If you need a gluten free wafer, please advise an usher.
- When it is time to commune, the pastors will direct you to unmask and consume the wafer while you remain seated, and then quickly re-mask. For now no wine will be distributed. Rest assured, however, that Lutheran theology clearly holds that even when you only receive one element you receive all of Jesus.
- We will provide music during the reception of communion to enhance opportunities for prayer and contemplation.

- Though we will have hymns, public health officials have warned that public singing is a high-risk activity. Rather than eliminate singing, which is a treasured component of Lutheran worship, a cantor and the non-preaching pastor will sing the Hymn of Praise, the psalm, and the hymns while shielded behind Plexiglas and distanced at least 26 feet from parishioners (as recommended by public health officials) in order to prevent aerosol transmission.
- To avoid cross-contamination, no Bibles or hymnals will be in the pews. Instead, all Bible readings and hymns will be printed in the bulletin. If for any reason you wish to have a Bible with you in worship, please bring one from home and then take it with you when you leave.
- Parishioners will be dismissed by ushers from back-to-front to prevent traffic jams and inadvertent contact. Please take your bulletin and communion baggie with you and dispose of them at home.
- As a precaution against cross-contamination, the Welcome Center will not be staffed and we will discourage people from lingering in the Narthex.

Worship Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: Why can't all the services be held in the sanctuary like we normally do?

A1: It is not possible to adequately clean our worship spaces in time for a second same-day service. Safety of our worshipers is a paramount consideration.

Q2: Why is the first service at 8:30 when we don't normally have a service at that time?

A2: Our Return to Worship Team suggested an 8:30 a.m. service as a compromise for those that attend our normal 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. service. They also believed that an 8:30 start time will allow those at that service enough time to leave the building before people start to arrive for the 10:30 service, significantly reducing the chance of cross-contamination.

Q3: Can we occasionally swap where the services take place so that everyone gets a turn in the sanctuary?

A3: Unfortunately, no. The 10:30 service is broadcast on WRSC 1390 AM and 93.3 FM and the broadcast requires certain equipment that is only available in the sanctuary.

Q4: With all this masking, will I be able to hear what the pastors are saying?

A4: That is indeed our goal! In both the Miller Center and Sanctuary the pastors and the cantor will be amplified with mics. They will lead worship in designated spaces that are shielded with Plexiglas so that both you and they are protected from aerosol transmission. Because of the shielding, they will not have to be masked and so it will be much easier to hear and understand them.

Q5: How many people do we think can worship at all of these spots?

A5: It depends on how many family groups show up. They will be able to sit together without physical distancing, which will increase our capacity. At minimum we think at least 60 will be able to worship in the Miller Center, at least 75 (and likely more) in the sanctuary, and at least 50 outdoors. It is very difficult to know if that is sufficient, and so we will monitor this carefully. At other open churches, no more than 40%-50% of normal attendees have been showing up.



Q6: What happens to that first-Sunday-of-the-month outdoor service if it rains?

A6: Because the other worship spaces will not be clean, we will have to cancel outdoor worship in the event of inclement weather. To avoid you having to show up only to be disappointed, we will decide any weather-related cancellation by 5 p.m. on Sunday and post it on Grace's website (www.glcpa.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/GLCStateCollege). Additionally, we will change our answering machine message (814-238-2478) to note the cancellation.

Q7: Will we have coffee hour at 10 a.m.?

A7: Not for now, so that we can maintain safe physical distancing. We plan to restart coffee hour in the future when it is safe to do so.

Q8: Why all of these restrictions when I see far more people in places like Walmart?

A8: Public health officials tell us that worship is very different from shopping because, unlike shopping, worshipers are stationary for a longer period of time. The risks of viral transmission are simply higher, which is why our precautions must be more stringent.

For Those Not Ready to Return to In-Person Worship

We realize that once we re-open for in-person worship there will be many people who will not yet be comfortable venturing out in public. We respect that and want you to continue to make whatever decision you think is best for your situation and your health and wellbeing. Rest assured that you will not be forgotten. For the foreseeable future the pastors will continue to make available a video edition of worship plus their lectionary study podcast entitled "Pocketful of Grace." The 10:30 Sunday service will continue to be broadcast on WRSC 1390AM and 93.3FM too.

We realize that this creates a potential situation in which some but not all of our members will be able to receive communion. Accordingly, if you are not yet comfortable with in-person worship but want to receive communion, email Pastor Hetrick (pastorhetrick@glcpa.org) to be added to a list of people for whom no-contact at-home communion will be made available on an occasional basis thanks to a team of trained visitors. If you are already on our homebound list, you will be automatically added to our communion list and need not contact us to be included. *Please note, however, that if you are in a nursing home or other congregate care facility with restrictions on visitation, we will be unable to visit or bring communion until the facility lifts those restrictions.*

Special Considerations for Families with Small Children

Attending as a family will carry the same expectations as all individuals entering the church: free of COVID-19 symptoms, clean hands, and mask-wearing at all times. It is important to note, however, that the Centers for Disease Control does *not* recommend masks for children under the age of 2. Children are a blessing, and we love them; however, the health expectations for adults are the same for our children. We understand that restrictions can be challenging for young children. It is for the health of all people we ask all of us, regardless of age, to abide by the recommended guidelines.

Therefore:

- Expect to be seated as a family and remain together.
- Please plan to bring your own "busy-bag" materials (crayons, paper).
- Refrain from Cheerios or other snacks.
- Limit movement to your designated area.



Final Notes

- Thank you to our Return to Worship team for their very hard work in discerning best practices that seek to balance our desire for meaningful in-person worship with our responsibility to love and care for our neighbor. The members of the team are: Don Coine, Roy Evert, Sue Ferro, Pete Forster, Cindy Fritz, Peter Horn, Sally Keiser-Bankert, Ed Prince, Cathy Smarkusky, Dee Ann Wylie, and Lisa Wiedemer (chair).
- The team based their recommendations on the best scientific and public health guidance currently available, as well as recommendations from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other church bodies.
- As our understanding of the virus continues to develop, it is likely that best practices will evolve as well, and so our in-person worship protocols will continue to change as necessary.
- Though the team has tried to consider all issues, it is inevitable that unanticipated questions and situations will arise and that we will discover better ways to do things. And so we thank you in advance for your patience, understanding, and grace. *In all things we have endeavored to act in love.*

OTHER NEWS

Happy Valley Hikers State College

Happy Valley Hikers SC invites you to journey “in person or in spirit” in July and August. All hikers will be able to access a podcast with prayers, questions and reflections for your trek.

July 18th, we travel to R B Winter Park for a 5-6 mile hike. Meet at 8 a.m. so we can caravan our cars from Grace. Since this hike will fall during Grace’s virtual Bible School, the hike and podcast will have a Christmas in July theme.

August 8th, Knox & Kane Rail Trail is a 8.3 mile easy, lightly trafficked out and back trail located near Mount Jewett, Pennsylvania that features a great forest setting and is good for all skill levels. Includes the Kinzua bridge. This is a 2 hour 12 minute drive. We will leave at 7:30 a.m. from Grace. Need a shorter hike? There is parking at each end so a shuttle hike is possible.



THESE EVENTS ARE BYOM (BRING YOUR OWN MASK) AND WATER

For more information, visit Happy Valley Hikers SC on Facebook, or contact Pastor Hetrick, 814-251-2540 or pastorhetrick@glcpa.org. For hiking podcasts and more, check out “Pocketful of Grace” on Spotify, iTunes, and Tune-In/Alexa. On our Faith Formation website, www.glcfaithformation.org, look for the Pocketful of Grace icon. You can also click on “Hear Podcasts” under sermons at www.glcpa.org.

The podcast website link is <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1110440>.



M thru Th 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. and Fridays 8 a.m. - 12 p.m., July 6 thru August 27. The church office will be closed Friday, July 3 for the Independence Day Holiday.

BOOK CLUB FOR JULY

The July meeting of *Garden of Readin'* (women's book club) will be Tuesday, July 21 at 10:30 a.m. remotely via Zoom. The next book is *Educated: A Memoir* by Tara Westover. The facilitators will be Susan DeMetrick and Lois Lynn. Contact Laura Pauley (llp1@psu.edu) or Lois Lynn (loissteve@comcast.net).

Vacation Bible School - Christmas in July

You're not too late to join our ALL AGES VBS! Virtual VBS Christmas-in-July is up and running but you can still join us for the last few weeks. Bring some more joy to your summer by learning the Christmas story anew! The final week of VBS is the week of July 19th. You will receive and email weekly with a lesson and tasks to do and we will share those online. Each week is stand alone and you can join the Facebook group to share with other members from Grace who are participating.

No you don't have to have kids to be a kid, as the Christmas song says "to kids from 1 to 92." Go to the Faith Formation Website at www.glcfaithformation.org and sign up on the home page to join in the fun!



The Allegheny Synod Office will reopen on June 22 with regular hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Staff will be in the office Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (22, 23, 24) during regular business hours and working remotely on Thursday and Friday (25,

26). We will see people on an appointment-only basis for the time being. If you need to come to the office, please call ahead to make an appointment. We respectfully request that when you come to the office, you wear a mask and practice social distancing. If you serve on a committee that is meeting in the Synod Office, we ask the same—masks and distancing. If there is not enough room in the conference room for distancing, please make arrangements for a Zoom meeting or a larger space off-site in which distancing can occur.

As always, the staff is available via e-mail:

Bishop Rhyne: bishopmichael@alleghenysynod.com

Pastor Paula: paula.schmitt@alleghenysynod.com

Pastor Becca: becca.ehrlich@alleghenysynod.com

Michelle Bossler: michelle.bossler@alleghenysynod.com

We will post our in-office time for the week of June 29 by June 25.

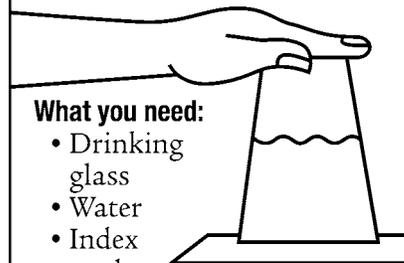
Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work toward safely returning to the office and hosting you.

Peace be with you+

The Allegheny Synod Staff

UNSEEN BUT active

This experiment illustrates that although God is invisible, we can see his work all around us.



What you need:

- Drinking glass
- Water
- Index card

What you do:

1. Practicing over a sink, fill the glass halfway with water. Then press the index card snugly atop the glass with one hand.
2. With the other hand, hold the base of the glass and carefully flip it over.
3. Remove your hand from the card. It should stay on the glass, without spilling the water! The invisible air in the glass creates a suction with the card, preventing the water from spilling out. Research air pressure to learn more.
4. After perfecting the trick, amaze others with it. Then talk about how God, like the air in the glass, is unseen but active.

Here is an activity on page 6 and a coloring page from the first week of VBS for the children in your family.



Grace Notes

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Grace Lutheran Church is energized by the Holy Spirit and nurtured through God's Word and Sacrament to gather, feed, and send people in the name of Jesus Christ.

Gather • Feed • Send

faithformation@glcpa.org

• Faith Formation Ministry

glpk@glcpa.org
814-238-8110

• GLC Preschool and Kindergarten

churchoffice@glcpa.org

• Grace Lutheran Church

The Rev. Scott E. Schul, Senior Pastor
The Rev. Carolyn K. Hetrick, Pastor



6 p.m. • Outdoors on the first Sunday of the month
(beginning August 2) at the Columbarium.

Radio Broadcast on WRSC 1390 AM and 93.3 FM is active

10:30 a.m. • Worship with Holy Communion in the sanctuary
Organ accompaniment

8:30 a.m. • Worship with Holy Communion in the Miller Center
Piano accompaniment

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE