

When and How We Return FAQs

What is the risk of meeting indoors for ministry?

Covid19 spreads predominately via aerosols, tiny droplets. Like perfume, also an aerosol, in a store that you can smell a few aisles away from where it is sprayed, the virus is carried in the air beyond the person who has it. Whenever we spend time together in the same room those tiny droplets spread; especially when we talk, sing or cough. If someone has Covid they may or may not have symptoms but by spending time together in the same room, the aerosols move about and we inhale the virus. In addition to masks, limiting the time we spend together, the quality of the air circulation and the distance between us, helps mitigate the spread of the virus. However, that does not eliminate the risk. It also means that the more people, the smaller the room, the worse the air circulation, the more chance there is that the virus will spread.

What are our benchmarks?

We are taking into consideration the risk level of the virus spreading within our community. We are monitoring the spread of the disease via a number of modalities – number of new cases/day; number of new cases/day/100,000 populations as well as the “rt” value, a number that measures how easily the virus is being spread locally.

How will we measure these benchmarks?

As our access to data and our understanding of Covid19 has advanced, so have our tools. We will be using a site called Global Pandemics out of Harvard. It takes into consideration the benchmarks listed above. It then develops a metric number to determine the risk of the virus spreading. These numbers are then paired with a color: red means the virus is spreading quickly, orange is accelerated spread, yellow is community spread and green is on track for containment. Harvard, working with this Covid pandemic situation internationally, has made specific control recommendations based on these Covid metrics. We have taken this tool and created a system to evaluate risk as it relates to indoor and in person ministry. You can learn more at: <https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>

What community will we be tracking?

Grace is a community created from the quad cities. A community that crosses borders for shopping, health care, education, business, manufacturing and worship. As we track data and trends, we will be watching the status of the whole Quad Cities. In particular, we are focusing our attention on Scott County and will supplement that with information from Rock Island County as appropriate when we share the Covid Risk Color.

How will we use the benchmarks?

We will be using these benchmarks to shift from one Covid Risk Color to another.

How will it work?

Dr. Wiese will remain aware of the status of our county. Then, via our various means of communication, we will share our Covid Risk Color on the 1st and 15th of each month. This will allow groups to plan accordingly for the weeks ahead. It will remain at this color until the next Covid Risk posting date, with special exception to a spike in cases.

What if there is a resurgence?

If Dr. Wiese notices a consistent or concerning increase in cases, she will notify the When and How Team who will adjust the color until the next marking point (the 1st and 15th of the month).

How will we know when the church is transitioning to a new phase?

On the 1st and 15th of each month we will communicate the color we are in via our various means of communication (email, website, Facebook). Included in that notice will be a reminder of what safety measures are expected and what is open during that phase.

What if someone in our community, who has participated in church, has been diagnosed with Covid19?

If a member, guest or staff member was present at Grace while being a carrier of the Covid19 virus, Grace will follow Health Department recommendations and remain closed for two weeks.

What is a small group?

A small group is a group of people gathering outside of worship. For example, a group that is gathering as a Men's Group, Circle, Book Club, Bible Study or Committee. If you are wondering if your small group is able to meet indoors, be aware of the size of groups able to meet at the color stage we are in.

Where and how can small groups meet?

In order to ensure enough space for groups to meet and time between groups to clean, we will have limited access to the church, and you will need to sign up for a time to reserve a room with the office. Available rooms include:

- Pat Bell Hall
- Fellowship hall in the Basement

What if we want to run in for an errand?

If you or you and one other person want to run in for an errand or small project you are welcome to do so if you arrange it with the office and follow all visiting procedures and safety measures.

Who is included in the vulnerable population?

In general, members of the vulnerable population include those who are over 65 years of age and/or have underlying medical conditions. For more specific information, you may use the

following link to the CDC's description of people who are high risk and please be sure to check with your doctor if you are unsure.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

Why are other churches meeting and not ours?

We have wrestled with the responsibility of how to care for Grace members and love our neighbor. We recognize the deep need to gather in worship and as a community. Like you, we desire to once again worship together. We weigh the need of the community with the risk of harming our members and the community at large. In doing so we consider a multitude of factors: our understanding of scripture and how we are called to be the church, serving God and our neighbor, expert sources knowledgeable in the coronavirus, denominational recommendations, the demographics of our community, and our resources both physically in our building and in our volunteers and staff. These are just a few of the things that we have in dialogue with one another as we consider how to move forward.

Each church is unique with different resources and contexts. Its leaders might arrive to a different conclusion or interpretation of how we are to be safe and love our neighbor. The When and How Team and the Council, believe this is the most faithful plan for us at this time. We choose to practice our faith at home, online, and in new and innovative ways until it is safe for us to gather together once again. If you would like to delve deeper into how we arrive at these decisions, you may reach out to Pastor Stephanie or Council President Ken Krumwiede.

Guidelines for Returning to In-Person and Indoor Ministry

This is a living document. If we have learned one thing, things will change. As our knowledge of the virus evolves and we begin to live this document, we may review and update it to reflect our shift in understanding.

Covid Risk Color

Using the Global Pandemics metric of Covid 19 risk, we will shift from one Covid Risk Color to another as the spread and risk increases or decreases. The following are the different in-person and indoor ministries available at each stage. Throughout all the stages we will implement the safety measures listed below.

Red: 13+

At this stage we are stage we are at a tipping point and the virus is spreading rapidly throughout the community.

- Outdoor Worship
- Outdoor Meetings

Orange: 9-12

- Outdoor Worship
- Office Staff will begin working in the office.
- Small groups with 1-5 members in attendance may meet in the designated small group rooms

Yellow: 4-8

- Outdoor Worship
- Small groups with 1-10 members in attendance may meet in the designated small group rooms.

Green: 3

- Worship in the Sanctuary: 1-50 people or 16 households gathering in accordance to our safety measures
- Small Groups may gather in our small group meeting rooms as they are able to social distance.

Special Gatherings

Out of a desire to care for our members pastoral care needs at the time of significant life moments while understanding it is often close family and friends who are gathering. We have made an exception for: Funerals, Weddings and Baptisms. If any of these life events occur while

in a Covid Risk Color other than green, we will put in place the worship and safety practices of Covid Color Green. Where they may gather up to 16 households (4 people/per household).

Safety Measures:

When gathering for in-person ministry we will plan on following the safety procedures listed below. We will also expect that those who are visiting Grace do so as well.

When in Worship	Small Groups	Church Business
<p>Social Distancing Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks Required • Sitting in every other pew. Opposite ends of pew. • One Family Per Pew • Temporarily remove Bibles, Hymnals, and anything else from the back of the pews • RSVP for Worship • Ushers to guide guests, as possible <p>Liturgy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Singing • Limited Congregational Spoken Liturgy • Touchless passing of the peace. • Offering plate at entrance of sanctuary <p>Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Doors – one entrance • All other areas outside of the sanctuary are not accessible at this time. • No use of watercoolers <p>We encourage those within the vulnerable population to remain home.</p>	<p>We still encourage small groups meet outside as possible.</p> <p>Small groups will be required to continue measures of physical distancing, including masks while inside.</p> <p>Before a group meets at church, they must meet with Grace Staff about the expectations of social distancing, meeting for one hour or less and reserving a room.</p> <p>They will be expected to sign-in and confirm the room they are using on the day they come to church.</p> <p>We encourage those within the vulnerable population to remain home.</p>	<p>Social distancing and safety measures continue for staff, volunteers and essential services.</p> <p>Daily cleaning of commonly used spaces.</p> <p>Arrangements made for any vulnerable staff.</p> <p>Train staff on guidelines and restrictions for the facility.</p> <p>Those with COVID-19 can't come back until Health Dept. approval.</p> <p>If an employee or volunteer is exposed, they must self-quarantine for 2 weeks.</p> <p>Guests and volunteers will do the following as they enter the building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check In • Temperature Checks