

# GROVES MINISTRIES

Union Grove UMC | Willow Grove UMC

## Important Update regarding Groves Ministries Worship Service Plan

March 10, 2021

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. –Psalm 84:1-3*

*Dear Church Family,*

It has been a long time since we last met in-person. Like many of you, I have been longing for the day when we can gather again and worship together. I'm happy to tell you that day is not far off! As our state continues to open up, the church leaders and I have discussed and agreed in the church council meeting on March 9 (Tue), 2021, that ***we will reopen our church on this upcoming Sunday, March 14, 2021***. Our plan continues to follow the guidelines and recommendations made by the State of NJ and the Greater NJ Annual Conference. We will adapt our policies as these mandates change.

### *Changes to the Worship Services*

We will continue to celebrate Jesus Christ as we always have but the some changes may make Sunday worship feel unfamiliar. These necessary changes will not be permanent. They reflect our needs for right now and they include:

The 9:30am service at Union Grove UMC | The 11:30am service at Willow Grove UMC

Both services will take place in each sanctuary but seating will be limited (50% of building capacity);

Once we have reached capacity, we cannot let any more people in;

Greetings, passing of the peace, and other contact activities are on hold;

An offering plate will be available as you enter but no offering plates will be passed;

Prepackaged communion will be taken in your pew/seat, not at the altar;

Hymnals and Bibles have been removed and only digital bulletins will be available;

The orders of worship have been shortened;

Only the sanctuary and restrooms will be open. All other rooms/building will be closed;

Children are welcome but there will not be any nursery/Sunday school during service.

## ***Our Responsibilities to Each Other***

Our primary goal is to keep our congregation, staff, volunteers, and visitors as safe as possible from exposure to COVID-19. We cannot do that unless everyone abides by these policies and procedures. I urge all of you to view following these measures through the lens of love, honor, and respect for one another. For the time being, we ask you to commit to:

Wearing a mask at all times if you are over two years old, even when singing;

Maintaining a six-foot distance from one another at all times;

Socializing only outside, not in the narthex or sanctuary;

Monitoring your health and **STAYING HOME** If you feel sick or think you might be or, if you believe you were exposed to the corona virus;

Notifying the Pastor or the church leaders if you become sick or test positive for COVID-19. Your name will be kept confidential but, we will notify that service's attendees of possible exposure, if necessary;

Using your best judgement as to whether you and your family can attend safely or should continue worshipping with us online.

## ***Praising God, No Matter What***

Our church has weathered this pandemic with patience, ingenuity, and grace. We have endured self-quarantining, isolation, and the changes to so much in our day-to-day lives we take for granted. When we could not meet together anymore, we swiftly transitioned to online worship and ministry. We have continued reaching out to one another with care and compassion, especially to our “offline” sisters and brothers. Pastoral teams and committees have adapted many of our current and future plans with creativity, hope, and a passion for the Gospel. Thanks to our online worship service and those who keep our Sunday services going, we have reached new people who would not normally come on Sunday and old friends who have moved away.

I praise God for you, our whole church family, and our ministry together. As we prepare for the day we reopen, I ask for your prayers, your patience, and your participation. Pray that we would have the people and resources we need in place.

We are all in this together and God is with us. Let us lean on him together and show his love to one another so that through all this, Jesus Christ may be glorified and his love be revealed through us.

In Christ, Peace and Grace be with you,

Sanggeun Jo, Pastor

Groves Ministries

