

Union Grove UMC | Willow Grove UMC

Summary of Plan for Reopening

Our vision of Groves Ministries as a Christ-centered community Experiencing Jesus, Serving others, Abiding in relationship of love, and Developing disciples of Jesus does not change whenever we return to our building. Our mission to “Welcome all to come and experience the beauty of Christ” continues to be our primary objective as we determine what we will do, what we could do, and what we can leave undone in the future.

As Groves Ministries seek to fulfill its mission, we covenant together to uphold Wesley’s three general rules for Methodists:

1. **Do no Harm** (to the Body of Christ, to others, or to self)

What practices ensure the safety and well-being of all?

What practices build up the body of Christ and the repute of the Christian faith?

2. **Do Good** (to others, as we would have them do to us)

How will we be a good neighbor to those in our community? How will we ease suffering, and care for those in need?

How will we offer Christ to others?

3. **Attend upon all the ordinances of God** (so as to strengthen our relationship with Christ)

Worship and Holy Communion

Personal and Corporate Prayer (A prayer guide and mid-week prayers)

Searching Scripture (Classes for all ages)

Christian Fellowship (Groups for all ages for encouragement and accountability)

Groves Ministries faces difficult decisions as we seek to do no harm. If our behaviors are not planned and well-executed, a new wave of infections and deaths will likely occur. If we reopen our buildings and resume gatherings prematurely, we will surely force our more vulnerable members to choose between keeping themselves and others healthy and participating in life of the congregation.

Reopening Groves Ministries Buildings will occur in three phases (Red – **Yellow** – Green). The decision to enter each phase will be made by the Pastor and Lay Leaders (church council). Experts suggest that it is possible that we could move back and forth between stages should subsequent infections begin to increase. The advice of public health officials may change as more becomes known about COVID-19.

Church council meeting will be held to determine all implementation strategies and procedures. The meeting may discuss for worship, staffing and administration, building use, small groups, youth, and children as well as any other areas as deemed necessary.

YELLOW Phase

The shift from Stage One to Stage Two is based on a re-evaluation of the situation, and will be considered only after an additional two to four weeks of decline in the number of new infections in Salem County are reported. Careful observance of physical/social distancing recommendations will be necessary and ongoing.

- **Worship:**
 - [INDOOR]**
 - One service in each of Groves Ministries can be held. Each assembly will be limited to 25 persons or less than 25% of building capacity (whichever number is lower), and appropriate distancing protocols must be followed and face masks will be worn.
 - Congregational and group singing will be prohibited.
 - Online worship will continue.
 - Communion: Will continue to be offered monthly online.
 - No greeting time, passing of collection plates or use bulletins.
 - Bibles and Hymnals will be removed (using digital).
 - Beverages and food will not be served, so as to discourage mingling.
 - Children/nursery should not be offered. Difficult for young children to abide by social distancing guidelines.
 - Church leaders would need to track those in attendance if someone were to become sick or exposed

[OUTDOOR] Drive-In / Chair Set-Up

- Each vehicle is limited to only household members (no carpooling).
- Park vehicles with at least 6 feet of spacing or skip every other parking space.
- Keep windows completely closed if feasible (may open windows a quarter of the way if necessary).
- All those in attendance are required to stay in their vehicles.
- Staff and volunteers conducting service are required to be kept under 5 people and to adhere to the physical distancing guidelines of at least 6 feet of physical separation.
- Staff and volunteers must wear face masks.
- Staff and volunteers must follow proper hygiene protocol such as hand washing and disinfecting items.

- Children/nursery should not be offered. Difficult for young children to abide by social distancing guidelines.
- Church leaders would need to track those in attendance if someone were to become sick or exposed
- Distribution about bulletins, inserts and communion.
 - Bulletins are NOT distributed for safety issue.
 - Sealed cups and breads will be prepared for holy communion.
 - Church staff distributing communion are required to wear a mask and disposable rubber gloves. Gloves are to be disposed of immediately after distribution is complete.
- Collection of Tithes and Offerings
 - Church staff will collect offering/tithes with a mask and disposable rubber gloves.
 - Standard policies and practices must be followed for the handling, counting and depositing of the church offering.
- Building Use
 - Portions of the building may be locked or blocked from use.
 - Entrances will be locked except for worship service hour.
 - Restroom availability may be limited.
 - Weddings and Funerals may take place with careful attention to limit attendees to 25% of building capacity, maintaining appropriate distancing. Also, masks will be worn. Scheduling of weddings and funerals will depend upon the church's ability to clean and disinfect all areas used before next use.
 - Pastor may meet with persons in small groups to plan weddings and funerals. All will wear masks.
- Small Groups and Faith Formation:
 - Groups of children younger than 6th grade will not be permitted on site—including children's classes, groups and nurseries.
- Pastoral Care
 - Phone and online methods (email, social media like Facebook and church website) will continue to be the primary ways pastor will provide care for the ill, those convalescing, seeking medical treatment, or living in care facilities.
- Church Business
 - Regular office functions continue. (Mon, Wed and Fri 9am-3pm)
 - Church councils and leaders may meet in person while wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. (online / offline)
 - Options to include those unable to participate in person should be available. (Zoom, telephone, etc.)

- Building users/renters may resume operations on a case by case determination, with each responsible for the cost of cleaning and disinfecting spaces used. Church council must agree to observe gathering and distancing protocols in this document.

****High risk individuals** (people over 60 and those with underlying conditions), whether staff, volunteers, or program participants, will be asked to consider sheltering at home.

After Worship Service / Program

- Prepare the worship space and the congregation
 - Clean all surfaces before worship/gathering.
 - Make sure that cleaning products are effective against the coronavirus. Alcohol based surface cleaners are considered adequate.
 - Have a plan in place to clean all surfaces between services. This may require a change in scheduled worship times.
- Post signs with seating instructions at the entrance to the worship space.
 - Use every other or every third pew. If possible, rope off pews to maintain appropriate distance between worshipers.
 - Allow families to sit together but maintain distance from others
- Provide a no-contact method of receiving the offering.
 - Place a plate at the back of sanctuary for people to leave offering
- Do not offer nursery as it would create a high-risk situation. Plan for families to
- together.
- Do not have the choir sing at in-person worship; it's difficult and risky to do with social distancing standards. (Indoor worship service)
- Remove Bibles, hymnals and other materials from the pew racks to eliminate surfaces where germs can be passed.
 - Encourage people to bring their own Bibles to worship.
 - Avoid use of printed bulletins.
 - If projection is available, use it for the order of worship (prayers, hymns, etc.).
 - Microphones should not be shared by participants.
- Develop a method to track worship attendance. This is especially important in case someone gets sick and contact tracing must be done.
- Consider limiting restroom usage to one person at a time in the space. Post signs to notify people of this practice. Make adjustments in the space to keep health guidelines in place.