



January 11, 2022

Dear People of Grace;

This letter is to inform you that based on recommendations from the Grace Reopening Committee January 6, 2022 and approval of the Church Council, the Church is transitioning to virtual services only due to the Omicron Variant of COVID that has reached our area and is becoming rampant. This will take effect immediately as of January 9, 2022, to mitigate risk of infections in our valley. The committee will be diligent to monitor hospitalization and testing positivity rates before entertaining reopening. This change is in effect for at least five weeks and communication will be sent to you when another update from the Council can be given.

Factors that contributed to this decision include:

- Increased testing positivity rates (higher than the peak of COVID last year)
- Increased contagiousness (regardless of vaccination), though milder symptoms
- Spikes of people getting infected and overflowing hospitals. For example, Saddlerock Presbyterian Church is now being used as a covid ER triage site by the hospital. It is important that we limit opportunities for the virus to spread.
- First responders and health care providers becoming infected and creating significant problems with medical staffing.
- Recommendation by Dr. Jason Lake, to scale down community events in order to reduce exposure for the next 4-6 weeks to allow exposure numbers in the Chelan/ Douglas County area to wane. (Dr. Lake is the Chief Medical Officer of Central Washington Hospital and member of Grace Lutheran Church).

While Omicron isn't necessarily more deadly, the risk of allowing this to spread is too great a factor for Grace to enable worship in house.

We understand this will impact our budget forums as well as the Semi-Annual Congregation meeting January 30, however it is imperative we make this action now to keep our Church family safe.

In Christ,
Pastor James Aalgaard

Chad DuLac, Congregation President

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