

Dear People of Grace,

We are preparing to head into “Phase III” of the [Diocesan Covid Guidelines](#). This has been a long and challenging run, Grace Church. We began Phase I in March of 2020 and have dipped in and out and back into Phase II since then. I remain deeply grateful for all of you, your care for one another, your faith, and the prayers that have carried us all. Phase III, here we come!

Actual re-entry began a few weeks ago, but with the introduction of Phase III we will be able to move beyond Communion Pods, let go of capacity restrictions, resume office operations, hold meetings indoors, and let go of (most of) the requirements to mask. Entering Phase III in the summer months will allow for the stages we need in order to (God willing and Covid declining) be fully up for this Fall. It's also true that given travels and summer plans, crowding is unlikely to be an issue.

This Sunday, June 20 will be our final Communion Pod Eucharist. Moving forward, the 8:30am Sunday service and 9:30am Wednesday service will be open for all who would like to attend. The 10:30am service will open soon, once the tech installation that will allow us to continue to stream that service with people present is complete.

Masks are “recommended indoors” and “not required outdoors,” leaving it up to individual choice. Clergy and LEMs will wear masks when distributing Communion and when they make the individual choice to wear one. See protocol detail below.

As we celebrate these steps, we also recognize that this is not the end of the journey through Covid. The steps this summer will themselves be an unfolding as we grow back into being together in our space and also integrate some new learnings. While the vaccination rate at Grace is extremely high, we are aware that some Grace members and friends (all young children, for example) are not yet eligible to receive vaccines. There is also a range of comfort levels among us regarding handshakes, hugs, and indoor experiences in general. Listening and being patient with one another and ourselves will be crucial, as it always is. Continuing our individual and communal discernment, being honest about our questions and needs will remain vital to congregational wellbeing.

Kids and young family events, including a couple of side-yard Communion services, will be almost entirely outdoors. We will continue to distribute Communion outdoors after the second Sunday service every week for those who prefer to receive that way. Coffee hour will not happen immediately, but it will be back! Pizza Sunday is not gone forever and will likely make an August appearance. Watch the newsletter, Grace's FaceBook page, and other mailings for updates on all things Grace as we go.

The wonderful news is that we're moving in the direction for which we have longed. And I have no doubt that with God's help, we'll receive and walk through this phase with grace.

Our Worship Schedule is listed below, as are the protocols which we will begin to implement on June 21, going full Phase III by July 1. Note that the worship time schedule will be no different than it is now. It is just that starting June 21, we will no longer require Communion Pod Sign Ups. The 8:30am Sunday Service and 9:30am Wednesday service will be open to whomever would like to attend. The 10:30 Sunday Service will open soon after.

Stay tuned! And welcome, Phase III.

With thanks and love,

Rev. Jen