



GUMC Covid Policy

As the global pandemic of Covid-19 affects every aspect of life around the world, the leadership of Grace United Methodist Church strives to address the questions and uncertainty of what this means for the Church.

As we all know, the Church is not the building, but rather the people. As United Methodists we are charged with the responsibility to, “Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God.” Even during times such as now with Covid-19, we must keep these principals in mind while continuing to support the needs of all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

This policy is not set in stone, but rather a working document that may need to be changed as new information and guidance continues to come out from reputable sources such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC), state and local Health Departments, our United Methodist Conference Leadership, and other local health officials.

Our goal is always to keep our Church doors open, but in the safest ways we know possible. The following outlines our levels of re-opening. The colors of these opening levels should not be confused with other color coding systems used to rate travel advisories, or various county metrics maps published to show Covid-19 data. While this data may impact our decision to move between our own color coding system, it does not dictate it.

GUMC has five levels of opening summarized below and detailed on the following chart.

GREEN-The Church Building and Offices are fully open. All services, programs, activities, and missions are up and running. This would be considered a return to “normal”. We recognize that our ‘normal’ may not ever look identical to life before Covid-19, but at this level the Church is fully open and functional.

YELLOW-The Church Building and Offices are open, but some preventative and precautionary measures are in place. Group sizes may be limited to a percentage of 50%- 75% of a room's designed capacity, social distancing is encouraged, some activities and programs are modified, masks are recommended, and extra cleaning and sanitizing measures may be put in place.

ORANGE-The Church Building and Offices will strive to be open in a much more limited fashion. More preventative and precautionary measures are in place, social distancing is required, masks are required (with few exceptions), and group sizes may be limited to 25%- 50% of a room’s designed capacity. Office hours will be shortened, staff will work a mix of on-site and remote hours, small groups must follow recommended precautions, and a blend of in-person and virtual options will be encouraged for groups, services, and meetings.

RED-The Church Building is only open for Sunday Worship. The sanctuary will be limited to 5%-10% of its designed capacity. Office staff is working remotely. All other programs, activities, groups are put on hold or encouraged to use online and remote platforms. More restrictions are in place during Sunday worship. Social distancing and masks are required, temperature checks are implemented, and corporate singing does not occur.

BLACK-The Church Building and all functions are closed as directed by our state or local government and/or our United Methodist Conference. At this level the choice is not ours and we model respect of the rules or regulations placed upon our community. At this level however we continue to serve God and reach our congregation and community in different ways--online, phone calls, e-mails, social media, porch drops, etc.

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH REOPENING LEVELS

GREEN	YELLOW	ORANGE	RED
Groups—100% room capacity	Groups—50% -75% room capacity	Groups-25%-50% room capacity	5%-10% capacity allowed in sanctuary
Nursery and children’s program fully open	Nursery open with some preventative measures, children’s programing open	Nursery open with preventative measures; children’s programing closed or limited	No nursery or children’s in-person programing
Building is fully open and all programs and activities are in place	Open for worship and other activities with precautions	Open for worship and some activities with precautions	Only open for Sunday worship
Socialization is encouraged-Handshakes and hugs are good	Social distancing encouraged	Social distancing required	Social distancing required
Fellowship time is open with drinks and snacks	Fellowship time with coffee/water only	No organized Fellowship time	No organized Fellowship time
Worship is filled with all types of music and singing	Singing is allowed--precautions encouraged	Singing allowed—social distancing and masks in place	No corporate singing—choir of up to 8 and/or special music
Masks are not needed	Masks recommended	Masks are required with few exceptions	Mask required with few exceptions
x	x	x	Temperature checks as congregations enters
No limitations to services, programs, ministries	Online services are available; Congregational care is mostly in-person as able	Online services are available and more encouraged; Congregational care is a blended	Online services are available and encouraged, congregational care is virtual
Office is regular office hours and regular volunteers	Office is open as long as staff is healthy	Office will strive to be open but in limited fashion (example: 50% onsite and 50% remote) Limited volunteers	Office closed and working remotely
	Office visitors—face coverings and hand sanitizing encouraged	Office visitor restrictions—hand sanitizing, office worker records visitors, limit two in office lobby	Office is closed
Weddings, Funerals, Events as “normal”	Wedding, funerals, events allowed at 75% capacity	No wedding, funerals, parties, or events	No wedding, funerals, parties, or events
	Small groups meeting—social distancing and face coverings encouraged	Small groups may meet with social distancing and masks but are encouraged to explore online options.	No small groups
	Meetings may be a combination of face to face and virtual	Essential meetings may be face to face as needed; other meetings should be virtual	No face to face meetings

*A 5th level of BLACK is recognized meaning that Church Building and all functions are closed as directed by our state or local government and/or our United Methodist Conference.

**Church leadership and pastors reserve the right to cancel and change activities/events/programs and restrictions as needed to meet the guidelines of our state and local governments, along the CDC recommendations.

In addition to establishing levels of reopening, GUMC leadership recognizes that education related to health and safety with Covid-19 is a part of the Church's responsibility. The colored levels chart will be shared with the congregations as well as other resources related to the prevention and response of Covid-19. It is important members and visitors to GUMC understand our expectations related to social distancing, masks, hand washing/sanitizing, etc. This may be done during Sunday worship, but also through newsletters, emails, social media, and signage at the Church and Office.

Additionally the entire congregation must do their part to monitor their own health, stay home if experiencing any symptoms, follow the isolation and quarantine recommendations from the CDC and Health Department, and report any positive cases of Covid-19 to the pastors for congregational care and contact tracing purposes. Questions related to Covid-19 symptoms, recommendations, and expectations should be directed to the pastors, or their designees. These expectations will also be shared with the congregation and visitors through a variety of ways including verbal and written communication.

Last updated-January 19, 2021