

The Grove

OPENING

June 7, 2020

On May 19, Governor DeWine officially lifted the remaining mandatory restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus. He said, “*We are now moving from orders to strong recommendations.*” The orders that restricted mass gatherings have been lifted as well.

Originally, the governor had said these restrictions would stay in place until the end of the month. As a result of that statement, the elders at The Grove felt that reopening the church could occur on June 7th. We were surprised when the reopening date was moved up. However, the elders feel it is best to keep the plan in place for June 7th.

We know that many of you are wondering what the church will look like on June 7th. The staff and elders have been talking about that very topic. Now that we are confirmed to open, it is time to share the plan.

1. We will be opening in stages

A. Stage 1: WORSHIP CENTER, COMFORT ROOM, & NURSERY – June 7

The only part of our building that will be open during this first initial phase is Lobby A, the Worship Center, Cry Room, Nursery, and restrooms. All other parts of our building will be closed and not accessible.

During this phase:

- We encourage children to sit with their parents in the service.
- We will provide each child with a “Blessing Bag.” The bag will be filled with themed activities to work on during the sermon (coloring pages, word-search, Scripture scavenger hunts, memory verse, etc.).

For those who so choose, the Nursery and Comfort Room will be available for children under 2 years of age.

- We will have one of our Children’s workers present to supervise the Nursery.
 - We will require a parent to accompany their child in either of these rooms.
- As much as possible, we will maintain social distancing.
 - If necessary, we will open up the Fire Side Room for any overflow.

B. Stage 2: GROVEKIDS PHASE I & GROVESTUDENTS – Tentative Date: July 5

We will open up our B Wing and officially reinstate GroveKids the first Sunday in July. During this phase, our kids will be divided into their appropriate age groups and will stay in their classrooms (there will be no rotations). All activities will abide by social distancing standards.

Our GroveKids Nursery workers will begin to staff the nursery. Parents may leave their children (2 and under) or keep them in the Worship Center. Parents will not be responsible to stay with their children.

Our GroveStudents will resume their meeting time on Sunday evenings from 6-8 PM in the Worship Center. All games, activities, lesson time, and small group discussions will abide by social distancing standards.

C. Stage 3: GROVEKIDS PHASE II, THE GATHERING PLACE & CAFÉ – Tentative Date: August 2

Everything is back to the pre-coronavirus schedule.

We are hopeful to reopen The Grove Café in Lobby “B”.

Grove Kids will return to their “normal” rotations where the children move from class to class for worship, teaching, small groups, and crafts. We will abide by any guidelines that continue to be in effect at that time.

The dates for Stage 2 & 3 are tentative. We want to make sure that we have all of our ducks lined up and are taking good care of every member of our church. As we move through Stage 1 the elders and staff will be evaluating our ability to take the next steps. We will keep you informed of what the next steps look like as we move to those dates.

2. As we gather, be sure to check your attitude

A. Be SENSITIVE

It has most certainly been a long 3 months! As we open up on June 7th you may feel the desire to hug, shake hands, and slap the backs of everyone with whom you come in contact. However, not everyone is of the same mindset. As fearless as you may feel, others are still feeling uncertain about their health and well-being.

We desire to not drive anyone away. So, to protect our entire church, we ask everyone to maintain social distancing and refrain from any physical contact. We

will be filled with love and grace for every one of our brothers and sisters in Christ whether they are wearing a mask or not.

B. Be SPIRIT LED

In Galatians 5:19-26, the Apostle Paul encourages us to make sure we are checking the fruit in our lives. He weighs the difference between being led by the flesh and the Spirit of God. All of our actions should be marked by those nine qualities that Paul lays out in verses 21-22. We should all be filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Paul's encouragement in verse 25 is simple: *"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."* It is most assuredly sage advice for all of us.

The enemy is all about driving us apart. His goal is disunity and hatred. He wants us nipping at each other and works to cause fights and quarrels among us. Let's determine together to agree with Paul's words in Ephesians 4:27 to, *"...not give the devil a foothold."* There will be plenty of people in our church who disagree with whatever stand you take on the virus. The beautiful thing about walking with Christ is that our opinions do not need to get in the way of our relationship with Him or with each other.

C. Be PROACTIVE

If there is a problem someplace, let a leader know! Our staff, elders, and other leaders will be clearly marked with bright name tags that say, *"I CAN HELP"* on them. If you come across any situation or condition that needs attention, our encouragement is to seek one of these people out and bring it to their attention. We assure you in advance that we will do everything in our power to rectify any potential problem.

3. Preparing the building

For many, the big question is how will we prepare the building? It is a good question. We are taking several key steps.

A. The building will be thoroughly cleaned

In addition to our regular cleaning, all surfaces, handles, knobs, and doors will be wiped down and sanitized before the services begin.

B. We are resetting the chairs in the worship center to accommodate social distancing

One of the beauties of our very large building is we can handle several hundred people at one time and maintain social distancing. The guideline is to divide the legal occupancy of any space in half and not exceed that number. The occupancy

limit of our entire building is 1,500. The occupancy limit of our worship center is 800. We will easily fall within the parameters of 750 in the total building and 400 in our Worship Center.

C. All toys in the Nursery and Comfort Room will be thoroughly cleaned

Children in the Nursery and Comfort Room will be allowed to play with the toys.

After a toy is played with, it will be put into a “sanitizing tub” and will be wiped down before it is returned to the shelf.

D. We are adding additional hand-sanitizing stations

We already have several stations in our lobby and Worship Center. We are more than doubling their number. They will now be found at the restroom doors, the entrance to and inside the Worship Center, and the Comfort Room.

4. How will it work?

A. Parking

When you arrive, you will be directed by one of our security people to a specific parking spot. We will not park in every stall in order to keep social distancing with our cars. Of course, if you are a senior or handicapped, we will save the front spots for you.

B. Entrance

The doors to Lobby A, outside of the Worship Center, will be the only doors that are available to enter through. The doors will be propped open so you will not have to touch a handle.

You will be met by someone from our Greeting Team. They will be wearing gloves and masks and will offer you a bulletin. If you are a guest and have questions, they will do their best to answer them for you.

C. Worship Center

We are planning a full worship service at our normal time of 10:30 AM. Our time together will include all of the things you are used to: Music, message, communion, offering, and prayer.

When we come to communion we will not pass any trays. The ushers, wearing gloves and masks, will pass out communion.

We will have ushers stationed in the back of the Worship Center as the service ends with trays where you can place your offering and used communion cups.

D. Restrooms

The *only* restrooms available during Stage 1 will be those in Lobby A. At the women's, men's and family restrooms there will be someone who will wipe down everything after every use.

E. Cleaning

Before we gather the following week, the building will be thoroughly cleaned. We will repeat all of the steps that we are taking for our first service on June 7th. We will make sure that our members are as safe as possible while here at The Grove.

If you have any other questions about our opening, or our planned stages, feel free to call the church office or send us an email (740-862-6245, info@thegrove.church).

We are excited that we have come to this point of opening. We want to encourage you to join us in prayer for June 7th. We look forward to seeing you. However, we know that some of you may still feel vulnerable. If that is the case, we encourage you to stay home.

We are hoping you will use this as an opportunity to invite your family and friends to church. We will finish our series, UNWAVERING on June 7th. The last message will be on the topic of refusing to return to normal. Then on June 14th we will start a series on the book of Ephesians.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q – Will there continue to be an on-line video of the message?

A – Yes. Over the last 3 months we have been pre-recording the message on Thursday evening. As we start our live services again, we will record the message as it is delivered on Sunday morning. That video will need to go through a process to enable it to be posted online. That process takes several hours. You will be able to find the message on our website and Youtube. Our goal is to have the video up on the internet by Sunday evening, however, it may push to Monday.

Q – I am over 60, can I come to service?

A – Yes. We are leaving the decision to come back to the church completely in your hands. We believe you are wise and can make the best decision for yourself. However, if you are over 60 with an underlying medical condition and are therefore at an increased risk, we encourage you to take that into account.

Q – I am feeling sick, am I allowed to attend service?

A – No. Considering the highly infectious nature of this virus and the fear that is present in many, it would be ill-advised for anyone who is feeling flu-like symptoms to attend service. We ask you to be sensitive to your brothers and sister in Christ. Let's all work together to make The Grove a safe place spiritually, emotionally, relationally, and physically.

Q – Do I have to wear a mask to come to church?

A – No. Ohio has issued a statement of “recommendation” concerning masks, but they are not required. All of our security detail, greeters, ushers, and anyone helping to serve will be wearing a mask. Those who are handling communion and bulletins will be wearing gloves as well.

Q – Will the church be checking temperatures of people when they enter the building?

A – No. Checking temperatures is not required.

Q – What if someone attends a service who is later found out to have the Coronavirus?

A – The church is being cleaned and sanitized on a weekly basis. All counters, surfaces, knobs, handles, etc. are being cleaned and wiped down. If we learn that someone who attended was infected, we will follow our same cleaning procedures. In addition, we will follow the current cleaning guidelines as listed on the Fairfield County Health Department website.