

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH COMMUNITY WORSHIP HANDBOOK **CONVENER'S GUIDE**

What is a Convener?

A convener is responsible for connecting with the pastor, organizing the group, and gathering materials. The convener does not necessarily have to be responsible for leading worship, but should be willing to help organize tasks within the group to make worship happen. This responsibility can be shared between two people if desired.

Gathering Materials

Each Friday by 12:30 pm, conveners will receive materials for the coming week's service. The materials will be sent to you through email. The materials will also be available in the church office.

Materials you will receive through email:

- A printable copy of the bulletin.
- A Convener's Guide that includes a guide for leading worship.
- A Liturgy Guide which includes the scripture and prayers that can be given out to members of the group who are leading worship.
- A digital copy of the sermon for the week.

When you receive the materials, review the service so that you will be ready to lead the group smoothly through worship. If you are not the person leading worship that week, please forward the information to the leader so that they can review it before the service.

There is no need to print out bulletins or gather other supplies, you will find the materials in your meeting room when you arrive to lead worship. These materials include:

- Copies of the bulletin for each person in your group.
- A copy of the Convener's Guide
- A copy of the Liturgy Guide
- A DVD of the sermon (just press play!)
- Offering envelopes
- A screening form for your group.
- A Safe Meeting Checklist
- Hand Sanitizer

- Disposable masks
- Disinfecting spray
- An altar set up as a focal point for your worship time
- Any other materials needed

Required Safety Measures

Members of a Community Worship group are responsible and accountable for keeping each other safe. This is a way that we can be God's beloved community together and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

To that end, the following guidelines are required for all in-person meetings (consistent with current GUMC policy):

- Masks are required for all participants.
- Remaining 6 feet away from those of another household
- Maintaining a log of completed screenings of each person at each gathering.
- Refraining from singing while indoors.
- No shared food or drinks can be served at meetings.
- Anyone experiencing COVID-possible symptoms should remain at home and not attend in-person meetings.

The following guidelines for gathering should also be considered when meeting in person:

- Avoid coming early or staying after the service to minimize contact with others.
(Meeting times for groups are intentionally staggered, so that groups will not come in contact with one another when coming or going from worship.)
- Ensuring that hand sanitizer or hand washing stations are available.
- Minimizing the use of shared materials (i.e., worship bulletins, bibles) by printing a copy for each person.

Health Screening Form

As the convener, you are responsible for ensuring that each member of the group completes the screening form at the beginning of the worship service. This screening form is found in your handbook materials and it will also be in your meeting room for each meeting. The form includes taking temperatures for each person who comes to the group. There is a forehead thermometer available in the Gathering Area as people come in. It is recommended that you or someone else from the group stands in the Gathering Area to greet and screen people as they come in for worship. At the end of worship, please turn your screening form into the church office.

Safe Meeting Checklist

As the convener, you are responsible for making sure that the area where your group met is cleaned and that the group complied with the safety guidelines for meeting. Please complete the Safe Meeting Checklist at the end of your worship time and turn it into the church office.

Offering

Toward the end of worship each week, the group will be invited to share their gifts with the church. Offering envelopes and an offering basket will be available for people to use for their offering. Do not pass the basket around the group. When the service is over, put the offering into the large envelope provided with your leadership materials in the room, write the day and time of your group meeting on the outside of the envelope, and put it under the door of the church office.

First Meeting Conversation/Group Covenant

At the beginning of the first group meeting, you will lead your group in developing a covenant, which is a non-legal agreement for accountability. The “covenant” is a practice rooted in scripture, and is intended to help people maintain healthy relationships that will be spiritually generative. A covenant relationship in some form is essential to discipleship.

You will find a Covenant Template with our Handbook materials, which asks you to consider the following questions. You may use this template or develop your own. Whether you choose to use this template or create your own, each member of your group should sign and have access to the completed covenant for reference.

Questions to consider when developing your covenant:

- 1) How will you decide who leads worship each week? (It is highly encouraged that responsibility for the group rotates. Examples of how you can do this might be assigning parts of the service at the beginning of your time together, deciding at the end of the service who will lead it next time, or whatever else you decide works for your group.)
- 2) What specific safety guidelines do you commit to practicing to mitigate risk of COVID exposure?
- 3) Who will be responsible for ensuring safety guidelines are followed?
- 4) How often will you gather? How long will each meeting last?
- 5) How will you hold each other accountable for discipleship through prayer, giving, and service?
- 6) How will you communicate information about the group (for example, a cancelled/rescheduled meeting time)?

Worshipping as a Community

Community Worship groups can find their own rhythm of worship as you gather over time. If your group decides that they would like to spend more time on some elements of worship than others, you are free to do so. Use the bulletin and worship materials as guidelines and do what works best for your group.

Role of the Pastor

Rev. Sarah will be attending all of the Community Worship groups at regular intervals (not with each group every week, but with each group at least twice a month). When she attends worship, it is not expected that she will lead the service. She will however be there to lead the group in Holy Communion at the end of the service. Once the groups are established, Rev. Sarah will provide a schedule of when she will be attending the groups.

Rev. Sarah will contact the group conveners on Thursdays to check in about how the service went, troubleshoot any questions or needs that have arisen, and find out if there are any pastoral care needs that she should be aware of. You can also reach out if there are urgent needs that arise. (406-381-6137 or sarah@graceumcbillings.org)

Communication with the Group

As the convener, you will be the point person for the pastor/office to communicate with the group. You will also be the point person to communicate within the group if there is a cancellation or postponement of a group meeting, someone gets sick, etc. Decide within the group how you would prefer to communicate (email, text, phone call). This is one of the questions on the Covenant Template and should be discussed at the first service.