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News release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Liane Blanck  
262-605-6713

## **Kenosha County, Grace Welcome Center partnering in COVID-19 vaccine outreach effort**

KENOSHA — Kenosha County Public Health and the Grace Welcome Center are working together on a neighborhood outreach effort to provide greater access to the COVID-19 vaccine for underserved populations.

Public Health employees and volunteers earlier this week staged a three-and-a-half-hour, walk-in clinic in the sanctuary of Grace Lutheran Church, 2006 60<sup>th</sup> St., Kenosha. Another such event is scheduled for 2 to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 30.

Vaccination doses will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last, with no appointment needed and no requirement to show I.D.

“In this effort, we’re targeting our most vulnerable population,” said Kenosha County Health Officer Dr. Jen Freiheit. “We’re trying to get the vaccine into communities that are the hardest hit by COVID-19 and to people who may be more reluctant or unable to register for a large-scale clinic, and might be more hesitant to receive the vaccine.”

Leif Peterson, executive director of the Grace Welcome Center, said the Tuesday afternoon vaccination events coincide with the center’s weekly food pantry distribution — an effort that itself has been altered by the pandemic. With the pantry itself closed due to social distancing concerns, boxes of groceries are now distributed to patrons in the parking lot, and twice-weekly breakfasts are served to-go rather than in the center’s dining area.

“This vaccination outreach is about protecting the community,” Peterson said. “The sooner we get Kenosha vaccinated, the sooner we can open our doors for breakfast and fellowship on Thursday and Friday mornings — and the safer our community will be as a whole.”

Freiheit said the Grace Welcome Center partnership is part of an ongoing effort to promote equity in the way the COVID-19 vaccine is distributed in Kenosha County.

A vaccine equity task force, made up of representatives of various community organizations, is working to develop strategies to provide access to and information about the vaccine across all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic lines, Freiheit said.

Other outreach efforts underway include small, pop-up vaccination clinics for homeless individuals at the Shalom Center and information-sharing with churches in communities less likely to have accessed the vaccine.

At the Grace Welcome Center clinics, vaccinators are administering doses to patients in the pews of the sanctuary — a scene that Peterson says is fitting with Grace’s mission.

“The church is being used not only to heal spirits, but also to heal and save lives,” Peterson said. “So we are excited to be able to do that.”

For more information about Tuesday’s clinic, please contact Peterson at 262-930-8325 or [LPeterson.GraceWelcomeCenter@gmail.com](mailto:LPeterson.GraceWelcomeCenter@gmail.com).

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