

UUCWC Reopening Guidelines (August 12, 2021)

These guidelines, created by the Staff, and affirmed by the Board of Trustees, are created with unending appreciation for the work of the UUCWC Reopening Team.

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Reopening Overview

The UUCWC Staff and Board of Trustees proposes a gradual process of resuming in-person activities guided by information about the risk of COVID-19 infection in the communities surrounding UUCWC. Smaller, non-public events will resume in-person first. Large, public gatherings will resume last. Outdoor events are less risky than indoor events and may resume first.

Masks will be required for all indoor use **until all children can be vaccinated.**

If the metrics indicate risk level is low, moderate or, with discretion and added precautions, high, the first **in-person worship** service will be held in the Sanctuary on Sunday, September 12, 2021 at 10am. The specific logistics for the service are under development and will involve some occupancy restrictions. Virtual live worship will always be available.

Policies and procedures for resuming full **Faith Engagement classes for children** and **music programming** (including choir rehearsals and singing in worship) are under development with key staff. **We are planning for an October 3rd start to Faith Engagement for children.**

Starting in August, small (fewer than 10 people) events were invited to be held both outside and inside. Medium (10-25 people) events were encouraged to continue to be held remotely, outside, or using a multi-platform approach.

Reservations must be made and criteria outlined in this document must be met to meet indoors.

Guiding Principles

Theology: As Unitarian Universalists, a celebratory diverse body, one way we practice our faith is by expressing solidarity for all who are still threatened physically and psychologically by COVID-19.

We take seriously the long and cruel history of systemic racism in our country, that was often expressed through medicine, and specifically in vaccines. We seek to protect our children who cannot yet receive a vaccination, as well as the immuno-compromised, transplant recipients and many cancer survivors who cannot be vaccinated. We acknowledge the enormous inequities and lack of access in communities and work forces that have made vaccination difficult or impossible. We also recognize that isolation is a public health concern and is detrimental to some members of our congregation.

Called to a life of humility and wonder, we acknowledge that this document must always be considered and revised depending on the science and circumstances.

Safety: At a minimum, UUCWC will follow all restrictions and guidelines from government authorities. The approach to understanding the risk of COVID-19 transmission is based in science. The current scientific consensus is that the primary risk of contracting COVID-19 is from airborne transmission of the virus, not from surfaces. Masks do help prevent transmission. The risk of transmission outdoors is low. Risk of transmission indoors is higher. Crowded spaces indoors with poor ventilation are at highest risk. Singing or yelling are higher risk activities.

Metrics: As researched by the Reopening Team, and for consistency, we will use the **NY Times Metrics - number of cases per 100,000 for a 7-day average** - prioritizing the higher risk county within which most of our congregation resides: Bucks, PA, or Mercer, NJ. **Weekly metrics and their impact on use of the building and grounds will be reported in the Weekly email.**

Low: less than 1 per 100,000	Open
Moderate: 2 per 100,000	Open with some restrictions
High: 3-10 per 100,000	Open with more extreme caution
Very High: 11-44 per 100,000	Grounds & Building Closed
Extremely High: 45+ per 100,000	Grounds & Building Closed

Covenant: The following ground rules* will guide the regathering process:

In gathering together, we promise to:

- Gain consent before touching / hugging others.
- Wear masks inside the building until vaccines are available to all children.
- Find ways to be inclusive of adults who cannot be vaccinated.
- Give and accept reminders of these ground rules gracefully.
- Take seriously the obligation to think about the safety of the whole before our own sense of what is safe for ourselves.

- Assume good intentions, but also accept that policies and these ground rules will guide our actions.
- Respect the authority of the people making policies.
- Not attend in-person gatherings if we are not feeling well, or have been exposed to COVID-19.

** developed by Carol Gay, UU Congregation of Cleveland*

Overall Principles for Regathering

Because we are a community of care, we encourage everyone to regather gently, thoughtfully and incrementally.

1. Start with the easy gatherings
 - Non-public before public events
 - Small before large events
2. Move slowly
 - Start small, announce tentative schedule for bigger events
3. Communicate clearly
 - Clearly communicate expectations and restrictions early and often
4. Evaluate often
 - After action – how did the event go? Did any situation arise that was unexpected? Should our approach be adjusted for that type of event?
5. Look ahead
 - Watch the health metrics
 - Prepare ahead of time to scale back events as health conditions indicate

Procedures & Protocols for Events

- All events should have a designated leader who will assume responsibility for health and safety protocols. Coordinators maintain contact information for all participants of non-public events. Coordinators will be asked to provide brief feedback after the event – # of attendees, protocols used, whether everyone felt comfortable, anything they would do differently next time. Coordinator information will be provided when reserving space.
- Minimum requirements of indoor events: masks and 3'-6' of social distancing, based on rated occupancy per room.
- When possible, events provide a streaming option for those who are unable to attend in person.

- Special events will be treated on a case-by-case basis, considering the above guidelines.
- Public events, regardless of size, must assume attendance by, and provide for, vulnerable persons and implement appropriate protocols (masks, social distancing, and limited capacity to allow for distancing).
- Staff and Board of Trustees continue to provide guidance and receive feedback about these processes.

Proposed Process for Resuming In-Person Activities on Sundays *while risk is at High*

In addition to the Reopening Overview listed above....

Distancing: Each person is responsible for their own comfort and sense of safety. UUCWC will provide colorful *social space cards* to create physical boundaries between individuals or groups. Two chairs are the equivalent of 3 feet. While the risk level is *High*, 6ft (or four chairs on each side) will be required between individuals or family groups.

Sanctuary setting will be limited to 160 *chairs* or about 50 people.

Hosts: Given that socializing must be held outside; given that order of services will be visual/virtual:

Two lay Hosts (previously Ushers and Greeters), in addition to Rev. Kim Wildszewski and Faith Engagement Director Robin Pugh, will be responsible for greeting, informing of social space cards, and encouraging folks to overflow spaces. They will also count money and put the bank bag in the lock box. They will set out the outdoor desk with disposable masks & hand sanitizer.

Fellowship Hour: Fellowship Hour will be held outdoors and is weather permitting. Hot and cold drinks will be available, in the rear of the Crossings Room and to be taken outside for gathering.

Congregating: Before Sunday Service, physical attendees will be encouraged to take a seat in the sanctuary upon arriving to avoid congregating in the lobby in clusters. Socializing is encouraged outside.

Proposed Process for Resuming In-Person Activities in the Building *while risk is at High*

In addition to the Reopening Overview listed above....

For maximum air circulation and distancing, only the largest rooms will be made available. For groups of 5-12 people, available rooms include: Sanctuary, Crossings Room, Rooms 201 and 202. For groups smaller than 5, rooms 203 and 103 will also be made available.

FAQs – UUCWC Regathering Plan

When will we worship in the Sanctuary again?

If the risk is Low, Moderate or High (as defined by the *New York Times* COVID tracker) the first in-person worship will be held in the Sanctuary on Sunday, September 12, at 10AM. The specific logistics for the service are under development and will involve some occupancy restrictions. If the risk level is High there will be additional precautions put in place.

Will we have to wear masks?

Yes. To be inclusive of members of the community of all ages, we will wear masks until vaccinations are available to all.

What about the kids?

Sunday, September 12 is a multigenerational service. Children are invited to attend with their parents. After August 1, the staff will begin developing plans for when in-person Faith Engagement for children and youth will resume.

What about singing?

We do not know when we will be able to safely resume singing during in-person services, nor when the choir will be able to rehearse safely in person. Decisions about choir rehearsals and singing in worship will be made after September 1.

When can I make a reservation for a Room and a Zoom?

Starting now, and assuming the building is open for use, you may make reservations with the Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang.

Will I still be able to attend remotely? If yes, for which activities?

Worship services will be accessible remotely. Our goal going forward is to make as many other activities as possible accessible through a multi-platform approach. Organizers will make decisions for private events.

What would cause us to stop meeting in person, and who will decide?

The risk level will be assessed weekly using available metrics. The UUCWC Staff, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, will decide which planned activities may go forward, based on that risk level.