

In-Person Meetings in the Time of Pandemic Policy

As Amended December 4, 2021

As we approach two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is time to re-examine our policies for in-person gatherings at UUCB. Most adult and teenage members of the congregation have had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated, and for some adults to receive a booster shot. Children aged 5 to 11 are now able to begin the vaccination process and could be fully vaccinated by mid-December. Some experts believe we will continue in the current situation for the foreseeable future. Our calculation of risks has changed.

There is still real risk associated with the pandemic. Breakthrough infections – sometimes severe ones – continue among the vaccinated. The elderly, children under 5, and those who are immunocompromised may not be any safer than they were earlier. It is important that we consider the experience of all members of the congregation, not sacrificing the rights of one group for the convenience of another.

At the same time, the emotional and spiritual health of our community has been hurt by our current restrictions. Members are anxious to participate in music again, at least in a small way. And winter weather will make outdoor socializing impractical.

Our updated policy seeks to find the middle way, protecting the vulnerable, while serving the needs of as many members as possible.

Policy as Approved by UUCB Board on December 4, 2021

No in-person events can be held if the County has declared prohibitions on such gatherings.

The UUCB Board reserves the right to close down some or all in-person activities if it determines that closure serves the best interest of congregational health and safety. Such decisions will be made with consideration for county transmission rates and other local indicators in alignment with CDC recommendations.

Event organizers (including Worship, Small Groups or Committees) must submit an Application for In-Person Gathering including time, place, and estimated number of participants. The event chair or leader will serve as Covid Monitor.

We strongly recommend that In-Person Gathering Applications be submitted 1 week (7 days) prior to the meeting. In the case of recurring events (monthly committee meetings, weekly worship services), one (1) application may be submitted for the duration of this iteration of the policy. When science and events on the ground necessitate a revision of this policy, applications will be re-evaluated and the Pandemic Response Team will communicate with group leaders as necessary.

Applications can be submitted through the online form shown below. The application will be reviewed by the Office Manager. Applications that do not ask for any exceptions to the policy as stated will be automatically approved. If a group would like to alter an aspect that is defined in this policy, that application will be considered by the board. Communication with the organizer of the event will be prompt.

The Board reserves the right to limit or deny any event or gathering.

Outdoor gatherings must follow all guidelines.

Attendance at indoor gatherings is limited by space sufficient to ensure proper social distancing. The following are estimated numbers for maximum seating capacity for specific rooms. The first number is assuming the 3-foot distance for every individual. The second number is actual seating, thus allowing for family units sitting together to increase the allowable capacity.

<i>Sanctuary 74/112</i>	<i>Chapel 22/40</i>	<i>Social Hall 60/100</i>	<i>Meeting Rm 12/20</i>
<i>Fireside Lobby 8/15</i>	<i>Library 4/8</i>	<i>Youth Room 8</i>	<i>Finance Room 5</i>
<i>Nursery 8 (+ 2-4 adults)</i>	<i>Main Office 4</i>	<i>Minister's Office 5/7</i>	<i>DFM Office 3 /4</i>
<i>RE Classrooms TBD</i>	<i>Basement rooms TBD</i>	<i>Café TBD</i>	<i>Kitchen TBD</i>
<i>Total for building 230/350</i>			

The following Covid Safety guidelines must be followed whether the meeting is inside or outside:

- Every participant of an in-person event must sign in with a phone number for contact tracing and affirm that they are in good health. Dated contact tracing sign-in sheets must be turned in at the office and will be kept on file for a month.
- The proper and continuous wearing of masks is required indoors and encouraged outdoors, except for children under age 2. A mask may only be removed if an individual is speaking from the pulpit (maintaining recommended distance from other people) as part of leading the Sunday Service (or similar event) or singing a solo as part of special music for the Sunday Service (or similar event). Afterward, that person will put their mask back on. Event organizers must make sure that extra masks are available.
- Humming and singing will be allowed under the following conditions:
 - Worship or event leaders must provide advance notice whenever increased risks occur, such as are posed by choir or congregational singing, and must allow time for those who do not want to share in that risk to opt out by leaving the room.

- A choir can sing while wearing professional grade masks. The Music Director and Worship Leader (or event planner) must plan the timing of performances and size of the choir to minimize risks of transmission.
- Congregants may hum along to brief songs such as the Doxology or Spirit of Life while continuing to wear their masks.
- Congregational singing is permitted at the end of service by those seated and wearing masks.
- Outdoor singing is permitted while wearing masks and maintaining social distancing between familial groups.
- Handwashing and/or hand sanitizer must be available.
- Participants must maintain at least a 3- foot distance from each other at all times unless a part of the same household.
- Eating and drinking are permitted inside under these guidelines:
 - Any food or beverages must be served in compliance with CDC recommendations: specifically, that only designated servers, properly gloved, handle the serving of food and beverages, and that eating utensils be individually prepared under sanitary conditions.
 - Food and drink must be either prepackaged or put together and served by a limited number of people who are properly masked and gloved. Individuals must not handle community serving utensils such as coffee urn spigots, serving spoons, creamer pitchers, etc.
 - Food and drink can be prepared in the kitchen and served in the Cafe.
 - Unmasking in order to eat or drink must occur only in spaces large enough to accommodate a 3-foot distance between all individuals who are not part of a single household. Thus, a small group of 5-10 people may be able to use the Cafe to eat and drink, but a larger group would need to use a larger room with better ventilation, such as the Social Hall.
 - Maintaining a 3-foot distance from others not in your household - especially while unmasked indoors - is required.
 - Space must be reserved for those who wish to gather only with other masked individuals.
- Every gathering must have people serving as Covid Monitor(s) to ensure that proper safety protocols are being followed at all times. They must make clear those protocols and expectations for the gathering at the beginning of the event.

Applications can be submitted **using this online form**.

Here is a PDF version of these guidelines and application form.

To clarify protocols to follow for each type of event, see below:

Sunday Worship

One application for regular Sunday Worship Service is in place for the duration of this iteration of the In Person Gathering Policy. Ushers/Greeters will also serve as Covid Monitors. There must be at least one and preferably two at each entrance (front and back). As people enter the building, masked, they must sign in for contact tracing. Hand sanitizer must be available. Posters with expectations of protocol must be posted and reviewed as needed. Seating in the sanctuary must be arranged with wider rows to accommodate 3-foot distances. Family groups may sit together and must place a social distancing sign on the chairs on either side of the grouping. Those signs are available in the hymnal racks under each seat. Singing is restricted. For example, the congregation may be invited to hum, while masked, the Doxology at the beginning of the service and Spirit of Life after the Meditation. Singers as part of a choir may perform while wearing professional-grade singing masks during a service. The congregation may be invited to sing a closing hymn in lieu of a postlude. Congregants must be informed when congregational singing will occur and be given an opportunity to leave the room first. Eating and drinking must follow the guidelines above.

We will continue to offer virtual services for those unable to attend in person, or who do not feel comfortable doing so.

Committee Meetings

One application for regular monthly or bimonthly meetings may be submitted for the duration of this iteration of the In Person Gathering Policy. Chairperson or designee will serve as Covid Monitor, ensuring that contact tracing sign-in sheets are completed at each meeting and that everyone is masked, is healthy, has hand sanitizer available and maintains social distancing of at least 3 feet. Eating and drinking must follow the guidelines listed above.

Committees should continue to offer virtual meeting options for those who cannot attend in person, or do not feel comfortable doing so.

Small Group Meetings

Because Small Group Meetings are a UUCB sponsored activity, whether you wish to meet at the church or in each other's homes, we are asking groups to complete an application if you wish to or are meeting in person. One application for regular biweekly meetings may be submitted for the duration of this iteration of the In Person Gathering Policy. Group facilitator and/or host of each meeting will act as Covid Monitor, ensuring that contact tracing sign-in sheets are completed at each meeting and that everyone is masked, is healthy, has hand sanitizer

available and maintains social distancing of at least 3 feet. Eating and drinking must follow the guidelines listed above.

Events

Whether a special service, celebration, or meeting, events are the most likely place where other members of the community may be coming in. An application must be made for each and every Event – secular or spiritual. Event organizers must ensure there are adequate numbers of Covid Monitors. Contact tracing sign-ins, masks, sanitizer, and social distancing of at least 3 feet as in all other gatherings are required. The number of participants cannot exceed the space/ventilation capacity of the room(s) used for the event. Eating and drinking must follow the guidelines listed above.

Non-Congregational Use of the Building

If and when the Board opts to open spaces to the public for rentals, it is expected that those outside groups will be provided with a copy of this policy (and future iterations of this policy) and that they will be required to agree to follow this policy fully when in our building.