

## **First Unitarian Church of Des Moines**

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

This document describes the general approach to be taken by the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines for limiting building use and in-person meetings in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific procedures applicable to each level of opening are covered in separate sections of this document. The church recommends that all persons participating in church activities become familiar with and follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Information is available at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and at [www.UUA.org](http://www.UUA.org) .

### **Procedures and Descriptions of Levels of Opening**

The Board of Trustees has adopted requirements and procedures that are intended to minimize possible exposure to the Covid-19 virus and to reduce the risk of members contracting the disease while participating in church activities. Adopted procedures should not be construed as a guarantee that no exposure will take place. Individuals that meet the CDC definition of "at risk", or that consider themselves to be at a high risk of experiencing severe symptoms if the disease is contracted are encouraged to stay home and stay safe. The CDC defines the "at-risk population" as those who are 65 or older, especially those with chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, chronic heart disease, severe obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, liver disease, or a weakened immune system. Each individual must evaluate the risks of exposure when participating in activities (church or otherwise) against the benefits derived from the participation, and act accordingly. The church will make a concerted effort to provide opportunities for participation in all group activities by persons not comfortable with meeting in-person

Requests for building access or activities not covered by these procedures should be addressed to Rev. Amy Shaw, the President of the Board of Trustees, and the co-chairs of the Lens of the Future Committee. Rev. Shaw and the Lens of the Future Committee will provide their recommendation to the Board for action on the request. The Board will act on the request in a timely manner, and Rev. Shaw will notify the requesting party of the Board's decision.

All members are urged to observe all prudent precautions when participating in activities, including those sponsored by the church. Specific procedures have been developed for each level of opening. In addition to the level-specific procedures, the following procedures apply to all church related activities until rescinded by Board action.

# First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

Definitions – the following terms are defined for purposes of these procedures.

**Pod** – A group of six or fewer persons that are either 1) from a single household, or 2) are all fully vaccinated and have mutually agreed to become members of the pod. Persons in a pod that are not from a single household should not have any unvaccinated household members who are at increased risk of complications if infected with COVID-19.

**Fully Vaccinated** – Persons are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving the second dose of a 2-dose series or after receiving a single-dose vaccine.

**Facial Coverings** – All persons must wear a face covering when in close proximity to people not in their pod. Face coverings should be properly constructed and properly worn to protect the wearer and other people around them. The CDC guidelines can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>. Face coverings are required whenever 2 or more people not from the same pod are in a common enclosed indoor space, regardless of separation distance. The use of facial coverings during outdoor events is encouraged, but when such use is not practical (such as during food events) individuals must remain separated from other people not in their pod by a minimum of 6 ft.

**Hand washing and hand sanitizing** – Everyone is required to use a hand sanitizer immediately upon entering the church building or other common area, and again immediately prior to leaving. Everyone is also encouraged to wash their hands or to use a hand sanitizer frequently while participating in group meetings or activities.

**Self-screening** – Anyone that has reason to believe they might be infected should stay home and not attend any gathering or event. This includes having experienced any of the following symptoms during the 14 days prior to the event.

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Unusual fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New or unusual loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

## **First Unitarian Church of Des Moines**

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

Bathroom Use – Access to any one bathroom is limited to a single person, with ample time between users to allow for air to be exhausted. Use sanitizing wipes to clean every surface that is touched, including door handles, light switches, and bathroom surfaces. Close the lid on bathroom stools before flushing. Additional procedures will be developed as more extensive building use is allowed in levels 3 and 4.

Music – No congregational singing, chanting, recitation, or similar activity is allowed in the church building. Special procedures with appropriate precautions are under development in conjunction with the Choir Director to allow for solo, small choir, and other appropriate performances. A separate set of Guidelines will be provided.

Food and beverages – No food or beverages may be shared during church activities, except as specifically allowed by the level-specific procedures.

Facilitator – Each meeting or gathering must have an assigned facilitator. The facilitator is responsible for sharing a copy of the guidelines and procedures prior to the gathering (electronic or read; no handouts), assisting participants in following the procedures, and maintaining a log of all persons attending. The facilitator will also read the Covid Covenant statement at the beginning of the meeting. The identity of participants will be recorded by the facilitator, including a current email address, phone number, or other contact information. This record will be used to contact people in the event that an attendee becomes ill within 7 days of the gathering.

The Levels of Opening are generally defined as follows, with detailed procedures described in the sections below. Activities that are allowed at any level are also applicable at all higher levels.

Level 0 – No in-person church sponsored meetings, gatherings, or events are allowed. Building use is limited to specific activities approved by the Board.

Level 1 – Groups of 10 or fewer people are allowed to meet outdoors. Building use is limited to single persons for setup and bathroom use for groups meeting on the church grounds, and for other specific activities approved by the Board

Level 2 - Groups of 20 or fewer people are allowed to meet outdoors, with 10 or fewer meeting indoors. Meetings in the church building are limited to using Griffin Hall, the gathering area or the auditorium. Groups meeting for food events are limited to outdoor locations with 10 or fewer people. Physical distancing must be maximized at all times.

Level 3 – Up to 50 people are allowed in the church. A minimum of 8 hrs must separate events with more than 20 people in attendance.

## **First Unitarian Church of Des Moines**

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

Level 4 – Full re-opening, with specific procedures and precautions to be developed and implemented prior to moving to this level.

The Lens of the Future Committee will monitor the prevalence of disease in the community using defined criteria, and will recommend to the Board when movement between levels is appropriate. Re-opening status, as approved by the Board, will be communicated to the congregation via Intercom, website and/or Sunday service, with special emphasis to provide clear notification of changes to the status of meeting restrictions.

# First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

The following procedures are applicable during each Level of re-opening.

## Level 0

No church sponsored in-person meetings allowed, regardless of the number of people attending or the location of the meeting.

The following procedures apply to activities while at Level 0.

1. In-person meetings and gatherings are not allowed, except as specifically authorized by the Board.
2. The church building is closed for all access and uses, except as follows:
  - a. Staff are encouraged to work from home, but are allowed to come into the building at their discretion.
  - b. Limited access for specific tasks such as maintenance and cleaning.
  - c. Specific activities authorized by the Board, with defined restrictions on number of people, building area to be used, cleaning, etc.
  - d. Care must be taken to maintain physical distance if staff or maintenance or cleaning personnel are in the building while another authorized activity is in progress.
3. This is not intended to restrict individuals or family groups from using the church grounds.

## Level 1

The church building remains closed except for specific activities authorized by the Board. Groups are allowed to meet in person in outdoor settings.

The following procedures apply to activities at Level 1:

1. Small groups are allowed to gather for in-person activities at their own risk, either on the church grounds or in other public or private spaces, subject to the following restrictions.
  - a. All gatherings must be held outdoors in the open air with individual pods spaced as far as practical from other pods, with at least 6 feet distancing maintained at all times.
  - b. No more than 10 people may assemble at any one time.
  - c. No communal singing or chanting is allowed.
  - d. Minimize contact with common surfaces; no shared open containers of food or beverages, talking pieces, other materials, or handouts are allowed.
  - e. Use of face coverings (self-provided) is required, except during food events.

# First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

- f. Individual pods may bring their own food and beverages. Prepackaged individual serving food and beverage items in disposable containers (preferably biodegradable) may be distributed. Facial coverings may be removed only when eating or drinking.
  - g. The facilitator will assemble a list of all attendees with phone numbers or emails and report to the Membership Coordinator within 24 hours of meeting completion. Group members must be encouraged to report any illness to the Senior Minister if they fall ill within a week of the group meeting.
  - h. Any use of church grounds for group activities must be scheduled through the normal church calendar procedures. Scheduling requests should be emailed to [officeassistant@ucdsm.org](mailto:officeassistant@ucdsm.org).
2. The church building is closed for all access and uses, except as follows.
  - a. Staff are encouraged to work from home, but are allowed to come into the building at their discretion.
  - b. Limited access for specific tasks such as maintenance and cleaning.
  - c. Specific activities authorized by the board, with defined restrictions on number of people, building area to be used, cleaning, etc.
  - d. Groups meeting on the church grounds may access the building with the following restrictions.
    - (1) Building access for set-up activities is limited to 1 person at any one time. Bathroom or lift use is also limited to 1 person at a time, unless caregiver assistance is needed.
    - (2) Use of the kitchen is not allowed.
    - (3) No group meetings or gatherings are allowed in the building.
    - (4) The lift may be used to provide access to the patio area from the upper parking lots.
    - (5) Events held on the patio or adjacent areas will be limited to using the bathrooms on the lower level. Events held on the north or west side of the building, or in the upper parking lot will be limited to using the bathrooms on the upper level.
    - (6) Cleaning supplies, such as sanitizing wipes, alcohol spray, and hand sanitizer will be provided by the church. Extra facial coverings must be provided by the group.
    - (7) Use sanitizing wipes to wipe down every surface that is touched, after each person exits the building, including door handles, chairs, tables, light switches, and bathroom surfaces.

## Level 2

Groups of 20 or fewer people are allowed to meet outdoors, and the church building is open for small groups of 10 or fewer people. Sunday programs may be partially

# First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

or totally originated from the auditorium, with no more than 10 total participants. The procedures for outdoor gatherings are the same as in Level 1, except that groups not participating in food events may include up to 20 people. The following procedures apply to all groups meeting in the church building, including those presenting the Sunday morning program.

1. Individualpods must remain spaced as far as practical from other pods, with at least 6 feet distancing maintained at all times.
2. No more than 10 people may be in the church building at any one time.
3. Contact with common surfaces must be minimized; no shared talking pieces, materials, or handouts are allowed.
4. For groups of no more than 10 that are meeting outdoors, individualpods may bring their own food and beverages. Prepackaged individual serving food and beverage items in disposable containers (preferably biodegradable) may be distributed. Food can also be prepared, plated, and served to each participant by one individual taking appropriate safety precautions.
5. Facial coverings may be removed only when eating or drinking.
6. All group activities using the church building or grounds must be scheduled through the normal church calendar procedures. Scheduling requests should be emailed to [officeassistant@ucdsm.org](mailto:officeassistant@ucdsm.org).

## Level 3

The church building is open for limited use. The procedures for indoor gatherings at locations other than the church building, and for outdoor gatherings are the same as in Level 2.

A maximum of 50 people may be in the church building at any one time, with the number of people in individual rooms and spaces further limited as follows. The large activity room may not be used for group activities because of the limited air circulation in that area.

Auditorium	50 persons
Gathering Area	20
Griffin Hall	35
RE Greeting Area	10
Room 112 (Child Care)	7
Class Rooms	5
Peace Conf Room	5
Offices	2
Minister's office	4

Sunday programs may be originated from the auditorium, with no more than 50 total participants. The following procedures apply to all groups meeting in the church building, including those presenting and attending the Sunday morning program.

# First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

1. Individual pods must remain spaced as far as practical from other pods, with at least 6 feet distancing maintained at all times.
2. No more than 50 people at any gathering or in the church building at any one time.
3. Contact with common surfaces must be minimized. No shared food, drinks, talking pieces, microphones, other materials, or handouts are allowed. Cleaning procedures will be developed and implemented for microphones and other equipment used during programs.
4. The use of face coverings is required at all times.
5. All group activities must be scheduled through the normal church calendar procedures. Scheduling requests should be emailed to [officeassistant@ucdsm.org](mailto:officeassistant@ucdsm.org).
6. No one is allowed to meet in the building until a minimum of 8 hours has elapsed after a group with more than 20 persons has concluded.
7. The furnace blowers must be set to run continuously during and between events, with a minimum run time of 8 hours following each event.

## Level 4

The church building is open for normal use. Some precautions and restrictions may be required, depending on the ongoing conditions in the community and recommendations from the CDC. Specific procedures will be developed and implemented prior to moving to Level 4.

These procedures may be modified at any time by the Board, and will be reviewed and updated regularly.

# First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

## **Metrics and Criteria**

The metrics and criteria to be used to evaluate the on-going risk and to assist in determining when it is prudent to move from one level to either the next higher or the next lower level are described in the following paragraphs. The metrics provide a means of evaluating the prevalence of the disease and the rate that is spreading throughout the community. The agreed upon metrics will be monitored and evaluated by a subgroup of the Lens of the Future committee, along with other circumstances that might impact meeting attendees. When the sub-group notes that a change in level is warranted, a recommendation will be reviewed by the complete Lens Committee, and upon agreement, sent to the Board for action. The opening Level will be communicated to the congregation as directed by the Board, with special emphasis on providing clear notification of changes and relevant changes in meeting restrictions.

The current value of COVID community metrics is available on the web site <https://iowacovid19tracker.org/>, and serve as a data source for metrics used by First Unitarian Lens Committee to make recommendations to the Board. The following paragraphs describe each metric and provide instructions for finding it on the web site. Note that the web site is being updated continually, and the details of where to find specific data may change without notice. The criteria to be used for evaluating each metric is described in the next section.

**Polk County positivity test rate, 14-day average:** The positivity test rate must be below the value in the table, with a general downward trend, and with the total number of tests holding steady or increasing. To find the data on the web site, click on 'counties', then scroll down and select Polk County. The current value of the 14-day positivity rate is shown in the first section titled 'Snapshot Statistics'. Both current and historical data is shown in the Data Table in the 'Testing Data' section. Use the scroll bar below the Data Table to view the far right column labeled '14-day PCR & Antigen Test-Positivity (Polk)'.

**Currently active cases in Polk County and the state:** The current number of active cases in Polk County and the total for the State must be below the value shown in the table, with a general downward trend. The active infections are shown in the graph and data table immediately below the positivity test data table. The number of active infections is shown in the first data column, just to the right of the date column. The number of active cases can be converted to a percentage of residents by dividing by 490,161, the current county population.

The data for the State is found on the home page of the web site. Scroll down to the 'Statewide Testing Data' section. The third graph/table in this section is titled 'Active Infections'. The number of statewide active cases is shown in the first data column of

## First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

the table. The value is converted to the percentage of residents by dividing the number of cases by 3,155,000, the current state population.

**Statewide weekly total of newly confirmed cases and number of tests:** Click on 'Data Tables' at the top of any of the web site pages. Scroll down to the section labeled 'COVID-19 CSV Data'. Click on the 'Weekly Overview' tab at the bottom of the spread sheet. The bottom row of column C (Weekly Positives) shows the latest weekly total of state-wide positive tests. The total number of tests completed during the week is shown in the bottom row of column G (Weekly Tested Iowans). This data is updated on Saturday. The number of cases per 100,000 population is found by dividing the number taken from the web site table by 31.55.

**Number of hospital beds available in Iowa Region 1:** Region 1 includes 25 counties in south-central Iowa. The number of available hospital beds is found by selecting "Iowa Hospitals and COVID-19" from the top of any web site page, and scrolling down to the section labeled "COVID-19 Bed Availability". The first graph in this section is labeled "RMCC Region 1 Hospital Beds". Position your mouse over the top line in the graph to show the number of beds available for each day. The percentage is calculated by dividing the number from the graph by 2,377.

**Active cases within the church community:** If any person that has participated in any church related gathering in the past two weeks is confirmed to have an active case of COVID-19, meetings of all groups that had potential contact with that person will be suspended for 2 weeks, and all persons who had participated in those groups will be notified of the potential exposure. The church will maintain full confidentiality of the person who tested positive.

The criteria to be applied to each metric described above is shown in Table 1. The committee will track the indicated metrics each week, and will consider a recommendation to move from the current level to the next higher level when the value of all of the metrics are either within or approaching the range shown for that higher level. The committee will consider a recommendation to move to the next lower level if the value of any one metric falls into the range for that lower level, or if the general trend of multiple metrics is moving toward a lower level. These values are provided for guidance only, and the committee may consider other factors in determining when to make a recommendation to the board to change the current level of opening.

# First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

Table 1: Metrics and criteria for each Level of opening for First Unitarian Church.

		The general range of the metric associated with each level, subject to review and interpretation by the Lens of the Future Committee and confirmation by the Board of Directors				
Metric	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
Polk County positivity test rate, 14 day average	>10%	10-6%	6-4%	4-1%	<1%	
Daily active cases in Polk County and percentage of population	>2,500, >0.51%	2,500 - 2,000, 0.51 - 0.41%	2,000 - 500, 0.41 - 0.10%	500 - 100, 0.10 - 0.02%	<100, <0.02%	
Daily active cases in the State of Iowa and percentage of population	>16,000, >0.51%	16,000 - 12,000, 0.51% - 0.38%	12,000 - 3,000, 0.38% - 0.09%	3,000 - 1,000, 0.09% - 0.03%	<1,000, <0.03%	
Statewide weekly total of newly confirmed cases and number per 100,000 population	>4200, >135.0	4,200 - 2,800, 135.0 - 88.7	2,800 - 700, 88.7 - 22.1	700 - 350, 22.1 - 11.1	<350, <11.1	
Number of hospital beds and percentage of total beds available in Iowa Region 1	<595, <25%	595 - 650, 25% - 27%	650 - 715, 27% - 30%	715 - 740, 30% - 32%	>740, >32%	

# First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

Table 1: Metrics and criteria for each Level of opening for First Unitarian Church.

		The general range of the metric associated with each level, subject to review and interpretation by the Lens of the Future Committee and confirmation by the Board of Directors				
Metric	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
Polk County positivity test rate, 14 day average	>10%	10-6%	6-4%	4-1%	<1%	
Daily active cases in Polk County and percentage of population	>2,500, >0.51%	2,500 - 2,000, 0.51 - 0.41%	2,000 - 500, 0.41 - 0.10%	500 - 100, 0.10 - 0.02%	<100, <0.02%	
Daily active cases in the State of Iowa and percentage of population	>16,000, >0.51%	16,000 - 12,000, 0.51% - 0.38%	12,000 - 3,000, 0.38% - 0.09%	3,000 - 1,000, 0.09% - 0.03%	<1,000, <0.03%	
Statewide weekly total of newly confirmed cases and number per 100,000 population	>4200, >135.0	4,200 - 2,800, 135.0 - 88.7	2,800 - 700, 88.7 - 22.1	700 - 350, 22.1 - 11.1	<350, <11.1	
Number of hospital beds and percentage of total beds available in Iowa Region 1	<595, <25%	595 - 650, 25% - 27%	650 - 715, 27% - 30%	715 - 740, 30% - 32%	>740, >32%	

# First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

The table below will be updated weekly to inform the congregation of the current level of opening and the values of the metrics being followed. It is intended to be posted on the church web site and other social media, as determined to be appropriate by the board, the senior minister, and the Communications Team. Printed copies may also be posted in the church and at other locations where groups are meeting, as we move to higher levels of opening.

EXAMPLE Weekly report for communicating COVID virus metrics to the congregation.

The church is currently at <b>LEVEL 0</b>						
Line	Metric	Needed to Move to Level 1	Recorded Value			
			10/9/2020	10/16/2020	10/23/2020	10/30/2020
1	Polk County positivity test rate, 14 day average	Less than 10.0%	10.0%	12.2%	14.9%	19.5%
2A	Active cases in Polk County	Fewer than 2,500	2,192	2,323	2,564	3,485
2B	Active cases as percentage of Polk County residents	Less than 0.51%	0.45%	0.47%	0.52%	0.71%
3A	Active cases in the State of Iowa	Fewer than 16,000	20,567	22,545	24,411	30,557
3B	Active cases as percentage of Iowa residents	Less than 0.51%	0.65%	0.71%	0.77%	0.97%
4A	Number of hospital beds available in Central Iowa	More than 595	651	725	756	739
4B	Number of hospital beds available as percentage of total beds	Greater than 25%	27%	31%	32%	31%
5	Statewide weekly total of newly confirmed cases	Fewer than 4,200	5,632	6,495	7,791	8,316
	Legend					
	Metric is within the limit that would allow consideration to move up to next Level	Green				
	Metric is slightly above the limit that would allow consideration to move to next level	Yellow				
	Metric is well above the limit that would allow consideration to move to next level	Orange				

# **First Unitarian Church of Des Moines**

Guide for Meetings and Events as it relates to re-opening after COVID closing

The following statement is to be read by the group facilitator at the beginning of each meeting or gathering.

**Covenant for In-person Gatherings during COVID-19 Pandemic** – to be read at the beginning of each In-person Gathering by the gathering facilitator.

Covenant is the silk that joins Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations, communities and individuals together in a web of interconnection. The practice of promising to walk together is the precious core of our creedless faith.

Aware of the preciousness of health and life, as we attend this in-person gathering during the COVID-19 Pandemic, we covenant with each other to keep ourselves and each other as safe as possible:

1. I will not attend this meeting if I have any COVID-19 symptoms or feel unwell in any way whatsoever.
2. I take responsibility for my own personal risk of potential exposure to COVID-19 by attending this meeting.
3. We will observe social distancing practices, including:
  - a. Wearing facial coverings at all times
  - b. Maintaining a 6-foot distance from others at all times
  - c. Not sharing any items with others, such as pens, pencils, papers, food or beverage.
4. I will speak up if anything happens that seems unsafe.
5. I will leave if I begin to feel unwell or if something happens that causes me to feel unsafe.
6. I will notify Rev. Amy or the leader of this gathering if I test positive for COVID-19 infection or become sick with COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days of attending this meeting.
7. We will honor our meeting leader(s) and will support one another in respect, kindness and care.