



## **Guidelines from UUCGL's Reopening Task Force 9/1/2021**

Our highest priority is the health and wellbeing of our congregation and community. In recent months we have learned that the Delta variant is much more contagious and dangerous than previously thought, particularly for unvaccinated individuals. We strongly encourage members of our congregation to take advantage of free vaccinations and testing to better protect the most vulnerable among us. In addition, we offer the following guidelines to give UUCGL's congregation an active role in stopping the spread of the Delta variant while still allowing us to gather in person. These guidelines will be in place through December 31, 2021, at which point staff members and the Reopening Task Force will re-evaluate using community health data and UUA and CDC recommendations.

- **Masks:** Fitted masks (not bandanas or gaiters) are required at all times for all indoor and outdoor gatherings at UUCGL, regardless of vaccination status. Disposable masks will be available at UUCGL for anyone who needs one.
  - The CDC recommends masking indoors in areas with substantial or high transmission, which includes virtually all of Massachusetts. It also recommends masking outdoors in crowds or when there may be close contact with unvaccinated individuals. Our ethical commitments to members of the congregation and our wider community lead us to embrace compliance of the use of masks as recommended.
- **In person worship services resume 9/12:** Seating in the Sanctuary and Parish Hall will be modified to allow family groups to sit together but maintain physical distancing from others. Sunday services will include a shorter worship service in the Sanctuary, streamed to the Parish Hall and Facebook Live.
- **Fellowship hour:** We will hold fellowship hour outdoors, weather permitting, immediately after worship service. Masks will be required and any food or drinks provided will be "grab and go" to consume at home.
- **At-home coffee hour:** On Sundays at 11:30am there will be a virtual coffee hour hosted on Zoom each week by a member of the congregation.
- **Music and choir:** Our Music Director, Kenneth Griffith, will provide guidance on both choral and congregational singing based on best practices for singing safely indoors. We are so grateful for his informed perspective as we look forward to sharing live music together again.
- **Food/beverages:** No food or beverages will be allowed indoors or outdoors at UUCGL, regardless of group size or vaccination status. Individual water bottles are permitted for quick sips.

- **UUCGL groups (Wisdom Circle, ministry teams, etc.):** groups are welcome to meet indoors or outdoors at UUCGL. Masks are required at all times and food and beverages are not permitted. Please coordinate with Elizabeth Muller to schedule an on-site meeting (781-595-8836, ext. 10).
- **Outside groups:**
  - The church will remain closed to singing groups.
  - 12-Step Recovery groups are welcome but must follow all UUCGL health and safety guidelines.
- **Ventilation:** The church has purchased a number of HEPA filters and will have them running for any indoor gatherings.
- **Covid testing:** Program staff will be tested for Covid on a regular basis.
- **Illness:** Anyone who has experienced symptoms of illness should remain home. If you test positive for Covid after having attended a gathering at UUCGL please notify Elizabeth Muller for next steps; your information will be kept anonymous.

Many people have had questions about the church's religious education programming as it relates to Covid precautions. Chris Scheller, UUCGL's Director of Community Life and Learning, will be in touch with families soon with more information about the religious education program year, which coincides with Homecoming on September 12. Health and safety practices for the RE programs, developed in consultation with the Faith Development Ministry Team, are below:

- PreK-6 programming will take place outdoors starting at 10am, with participants masked at all times. We are in the process of talking with parents to determine their preferences regarding indoor RE in the case of extreme weather. When not involved in their own RE programming, youth in grades 7+ are welcome to join the PreK-6 group as helpers, or join the indoor worship.
- Through the calendar year, the RE program will follow a "one room schoolhouse" model, with grades PreK-6 participating in programs together. This allows for greater flexibility with attendance, both for students and teachers.
- If any indoor spaces are used they will be ventilated as much as possible and will have HEPA filters. Parents will be notified in advance if we decide to run programming indoors so that they can opt out of indoor programming if they so choose. At home programming options will be made available in such cases upon request.
- Teachers and volunteers will be required to be vaccinated except in the case of medical exemptions. In the rare case that a teacher or volunteer cannot be vaccinated, a rapid Covid test will be administered prior to that person working with children.
- OWL will be offered for youth in grades 7-9, likely in partnership with First Church Salem. Members of the Faith Development Ministry Team and Reopening Task Force will determine health and safety guidelines for this group in the coming weeks.
- Youth Group for grades 10-12 will be offered on a modified schedule later in the program year. Health and safety guidelines for this group are still being determined.