

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Guide for Meetings and Events

Re-opening after COVID closing

Introduction

Recognizing the widespread availability of COVID-19 vaccine and the growing need of members of the congregation to come together in community in person, the Board has approved revised practices for First Unitarian Church of Des Moines. The church recommends that all persons participating in church activities follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Information is available at www.cdc.gov.

The Board of Trustees has adopted these procedures to minimize possible exposure to the Covid-19 virus and to reduce the risk of members contracting the disease while participating in church activities. These procedures replace the previously adopted stages of reopening. They should not be construed as a guarantee that no exposure will take place. Individuals 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. 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.

We are aware that there may be members unable to be vaccinated due to medical issues and that no vaccine at this time has been approved for youth under the age of 12. Hybrid activities that provide both virtual and in person participation are encouraged to ensure that these members and youth will be able to participate in church activities. Anyone that has reason to believe they might be infected should seek appropriate medical care, stay home, and not attend any gathering or event. Anyone with a confirmed case should follow CDC guidelines and medical advice.

Allowable Activities and Restrictions

All persons eligible must be fully vaccinated to attend any church sponsored event that is held indoors, and for all events held in the church building.

Properly worn and fitted facial coverings are required when 2 or more people are in the same room or working space in the church building.

Singing by both the choir and congregation is allowable with all participants wearing facial coverings, including both indoor and outdoor events.

Air purifiers must be operating when more than 2 people are together in a class room or other similar sized room in the church building.

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Metrics and Criteria

The criteria to be used to evaluate the on-going risk and to guide decisions on allowable activities and meeting restrictions is the “Risk Level” that is calculated and published by CovidActNow.org. CovidActNow.org is an independent nonprofit organization that is working to help people make informed decisions by providing timely and accurate data about COVID in the U.S. Information about the initiative can be found at <https://covidactnow.org/covid-risk-levels-metrics>. The CovidActNow.org Risk Level is updated weekly and is available for every county and state in the country, as well as for many of the larger metropolitan areas (including Des Moines). The current value of the CovidActNow.org risk level for Polk County is available on the web site https://covidactnow.org/us/iowa-ia/county/polk_county/?s=21851111.

The LENS committee will monitor the Risk Level as published by CovidActNow.org as well as the CDC Guidelines and the response of local and state governments. When the committee feels that a change in the current procedures is warranted, a recommendation will be sent to the Board for action. The current requirements will be communicated to the congregation as directed by the Board, with special emphasis on providing clear notification of relevant changes in meeting restrictions.