

COVID Guidelines – As of 8/2/21

Good news! The sanctuary has a new system installed that will bring in 16% fresh air of the air that is being circulated. This system now meets the state requirement for fresh air. We also have UVC lights in the air circulation system that have been shown to kill viruses including Covid-19.

The Council of Trustees (COT), together with members of the ministry team and church office, will be monitoring the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and school guidelines as they evolve for the Fall school year. Depending upon the circulation of the Corona virus variants and other factors, our restrictions may change again mid-August. But for the remaining weeks of the summer, the Church will implement the following:

1. The Church will no longer limit attendance during the summer. We will revisit this policy regarding attendance numbers when we anticipate high peak Sundays (such as Sept. 19th Welcome Day, when we register for Sunday School and hold a luncheon to welcome back Rev. Lynn).
2. Those entering the sanctuary for worship will sign-in either at a podium monitored by a custodian at the Whitehall desk or at a table staffed by the ushers. When signing in on Sundays, church congregants will write-in their names, phone number, and email address. They do not need to answer COVID questions on the form and they do not need to pre-register for service, unless we limit the numbers for anticipated peak Sundays. This contact information will be used in case we need to do contact tracing.
3. Visitors to our building during the week will need to provide the same information as our church attendees. Located at the Whitehall and Kensington entrances will be podiums with a clipboard, and weekday visitors will need to provide their names, phone numbers, and email addresses.
4. Fully vaccinated congregants are not required to wear masks for worship or for church meetings, but they may if they have underlying health concerns or feel they wish to. (See #12 below regarding congregational singing.) Please be advised - the CDC announced on July 27, 2021, its recommendations that vaccinated persons wear masks indoors for counties with 'substantial' or 'high' Coronavirus transmission. As of July 30, the CDC listed Nassau County as 'substantial' risk. In addition, the New York Conference of the UCC, as of July 30, "strongly recommends that all persons (vaccinated and unvaccinated) wear face masks at all times for all gatherings in our church buildings."

For congregants who aren't vaccinated, our Church requires that they continue wearing masks. We will proceed with an honor system because the Church will not ask for proof of vaccination.

5. The tape marking seating has been removed from the pews already. Congregants should exercise judgment in maintaining a distance of 3 feet. For instance, the Sanctuary is sparse with attendance in the summer and congregants can easily spread out. Those attending services with members of their own household are not expected to socially distance among each other. During Fellowship hour, which has been outside, people do not need to stand three feet apart to converse, and it is reasonable for people to take off masks to have a beverage or a snack.

6. For passing the peace, we should continue with smiling and waving, as we have.

7. For passing the collection plate, we can continue without passing the plate until we have more ushers. In the Fall when we have more ushers, we can resume our practice of passing the plate.

8. For passing communion elements, until we have more people to assist, we can continue as we've been doing with pre-packaged elements, which will be provided on a table at the entrance to the sanctuary. In the Fall, we can hopefully resume Communion as before when we have more volunteers.

9. For the children's message, children will be invited to come forward during Sunday worship.

10. If we have leaders and good weather, children can be outside in the Summer in the playscape, but this will depend upon having volunteers available to supervise. Children will not be required to wear masks while playing outdoors.

11. For now, parents are advised that children ages 2 - 11 wear masks while inside the Church building and in the Sanctuary for service this summer.

The Sunday School classrooms are not yet ventilated, but they should be by the Fall. The schedule for ventilation is being arranged currently for these classrooms (in addition to the nursery school, church offices, Gardner Hall, chapel). The Church is currently developing the Sunday School schedule and assembling teachers and volunteers. When the CDC and local school district announces a mask-wearing policy for teachers and students in the Fall, we will announce ours.

12. We can recommence congregational singing; however, vaccinated and unvaccinated people need to wear masks while singing. Congregants should use discretion and observe 3 feet of social distance with non-household members.

13. For the choir, whose members sing in close proximity, the Church requires participation in the choir be limited to fully vaccinated people at least until the pandemic is declared to be over. Many choirs and choral societies across NYS are adopting this policy.

The recent CDC announcement regarding mask-wearing:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

In peace,
Robin B. Laisure
Chair, Council of Trustees