**All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown**

**Policy For Building Use During a Pandemic**

**September 23, 2021**

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown is reopening the church building at 1330 Gotham Street for in-person events while the COVID-19 and variants extend the current Pandemic period. This plan describes the protocol for in-person gatherings for Sunday worship, small groups, religious education, and other events.

Protection of health and safety is paramount. To minimize risks of virus transmission during in-person gatherings event attendees are encouraged to following the General Recommendations and the ADDENDUM TO USE OF BUILDING REQUEST FORM Healthy Hygiene Practices:

**General Recommendations:**

*Please*, do not come to the Church building if any of the following apply to you:

▪ COVID like symptoms: Fever, coughing, loss of taste, sore throat, etc.

▪ Recent traveling from areas with high infection rates of the COVID-19 or variant.

▪ Contact with someone known or suspected of being COVID-19 positive, or

▪ Not feeling well

● All meetings and events must be approved by the Executive Board

● Masks, physical distancing, handwashing, and disinfecting practices are strongly encouraged. Hand sanitizer will be available and used upon entrance to the building.

● Any groups using the building shall make a tracking document including the name and phone number of each attendee. Within three days, the responsible party shall submit a copy of the document to church staff to maintain in the office. Appropriate confidentiality shall be maintained.

● All attendees age two years and older shall wear a face mask, except while seated six feet apart

● A minimum of six feet of separation shall be maintained; common household members may sit together.

● Masks must be worn indoors, and when distancing is impractical outside

● Food shall not be shared. Special provisions may be made during social events such as assigning a masked and gloved individual to serve the attendees.

● All contacted surfaces shall be cleaned and disinfected by the responsible party immediately following the event.

● Indoor attendance is limited to 100 participants and use of outside space is encouraged.

● All church staff are required to be vaccinated.

**Worship Services:**

● Follow the General Recommendations above

● Worship leaders singers and musicians will maintain a minimum of 12 feet from congregants and may be unmasked

● The congregation is encouraged to hum rather than sing.

● Attendees shall avoid handshaking or hugging

● An offering box will be available at the entrance to the sanctuary.

**Religious Education (RE)**

● RE will take place outside as weather permits and indoor RE will require children to be masked and maintain a distance of 3 feet apart unless they are from the same household

● Refreshments shall be limited to packaged items such as bottled water and prepacked snacks

● All RE Volunteers will be vaccinated and masked

**Existing agreements**

All current pre-existing agreements with community groups are subject to the Building Use agreement and General Recommendations of this policy.

**Temporary Building Closure**

The Church Board maintains responsibility for monitoring guidances issued by:

The New York State Public Health Department,

The Jefferson County, NY Health Department,

The United States Center for disease Control (CDC), and

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

The Church Board shall use information from the Health Departments, CDC and the UUA to determine when temporarily closure of the church building is necessary. A formal statement shall be prepared and issued by the Church Board regarding changes to church accessibility.

Exceptions to accessing the closed building are the following:

•Small groups or individuals that have agreements to use the Church building

•People preparing for hybrid worship services.

$• $Contractors and volunteers needed for upkeep and maintenance.

References:

[Considerations for Communities of Faith | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html)

[ReligiousandFuneralServicesMasterGuidance.pdf (ny.gov)](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ReligiousandFuneralServicesMasterGuidance.pdf)

[www.uua.org/safe/pandemic/gathering-guidance](http://www.uua.org/safe/pandemic/gathering-guidance)

[NYS-COVID19-Tracker](https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/views/NYS-COVID19-Tracker/NYSDOHCOVID-19Tracker-Map?%3Aembed=yes&%3Atoolbar=no&%3Atabs=n)

UU Church of Canton Covid Safety Plan**,** First Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton.

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, ADDENDUM TO USE OF BUILDING REQUEST FORM Healthy Hygiene Practices