**Reopening Plan Out of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown, NY**

August 1st, 2021

This document addresses the terms and conditions for reopening the All-Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown, New York building for use by the congregation and outside groups. Procedures are detailed for hygiene and behaviors when a group or groups gather for activities inside the church building. This will be in effect until the pandemic has been declared to be no longer a threat to public health.

**Reopening Criteria**

This section covers the use of the church building for in person gatherings. Conditions for reopening categories affect Sunday worship, Religious Education (RE), small group gatherings, building maintenance, clerical work, and other applications. The granted building use shall follow the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) and New York State Religions and Funeral Master Guidance recommendations as the standards for reopening activities.

**Conditions for Reopening for Inside Building Use**

1. The Building Use Form shall be completed by groups requesting to use the church building, church campus grounds or both and follow pandemic transmission prevention guidelines;

2. All meetings and gatherings shall be approved at the discretion of the Executive Board;

3. Upon entry into the building, a sign-in sheet must be completed for tracing purposes. A copy of this sheet shall be submitted to the church office within two days of the event;

4. Masks are to be worn by everyone with respect for children and people with compromised health;

5. Maintain three (3) feet of distance at all times;

6. Frequent hand washing is strongly recommended;

7. Use of hand sanitizer is strongly recommended;

8. If food is to be served, a designated person shall set up and serve all refreshments (ex: Social hour host). Individuals may provide their personal refreshments;

9. Upon completion of the event, all exposed surfaces shall be disinfected.

**Changes to the Reopening Policy**

The Church Board will follow this policy unless COVID-19 detection for the following parameters exceeds a seven-day average in Jefferson County, New York.

Any parameters will result in the church closing it’s doors to events.

Daily new cases: at or above 25;

Total active cases: at or above 125; or

Positive COVID tests: the average of positive test results of 3% or higher.

**In-person Sunday Worship Services**

1. It is recommended that in-person church service attendees contact the church office via email or telephone by noon (12 PM) the Saturday immediately prior to Sunday church services to assess seating placement.

Accommodations will be made for anyone arriving for services without prior notification;

2. Attendance shall be limited to 100 souls;

3. Sanctuary seating shall be arranged to accommodate responding attendees;

4. Ushers will be supportive and ensure that attendees have signed the tracing sheet and then escort them into the sanctuary for appropriate seating;

5. Family units will sit together; individuals from different households shall maintain the recommended separation distance;

6. Outdoor gathering is recommended on warmer days;

7. Singers and worship leaders shall maintain twelve feet from others and will not be required to be masked during services;

8. The congregation shall not participate in the singing;

9. Offering baskets will be located at entrance of the sanctuary;

10. Standard hygiene practices shall be followed during the post-service Social Hour.

11. Use of outside areas is encouraged.

**Religious Education (RE):**

1. There will be no indoor RE through September 12, 2021

2. RE activities are encouraged to be located outside.

3. There will be no childcare or RE coinciding with worship services during the summer season.

4. Indoor RE activities will require the children to be masked;

5. Children should maintain a minimum distance of 3 feet apart unless of the same household;

6. Refreshments will include prepackaged snacks and bottled water;

7. All adults working with children shall be vaccinated.

**Additional Comments**

Hybrid church services will commence Sunday, August 22, 2021.

This document is subject to revision by the Pandemic Task Force as the pandemic recedes or other health crises develop. Or the pandemic virus has been declared to be no longer a threat to public health.

**References:**

[COVID Alert NY | Department of Health](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-alert-ny/)

[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)

**Covid-19 Building Use Policy for UU Church of Canton,** First Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton.