

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Clemson

Policy for Returning to Church

Draft: 8/19/20

Approved by the Board: 8/23/20

If you test positive for COVID-19, or become aware of another individual at UUFC who tests positive for COVID-19, please refer to the Pandemic Exposure Procedures.

At the behest of the Board, the Council of Committees took over the work of the Re-Entry Task Force to establish policies and guidelines for a safe and responsible return to our physical facilities during the novel coronavirus pandemic. A significant number of our members, friends, staff and their households are in one or more high risks groups. Our faith tradition calls us to make the safety of all of these individuals our highest priority. That same tradition also calls us to respect the guidance of science when making decisions concerning reopening our facilities.

Criteria for Reopening

Any transition to reopening, or any transition from one phase to another of reopening, must be informed by the relevant data regarding COVID-19 cases in the area (specifically, Anderson, Oconee, Pickens and Greenville counties in SC, and Hart county in GA), with a minimum of 14 days of a downward trend in new cases. Case reports from Clemson University also need to be taken into account, with the caveat that the University will report cases based upon the home address of the affected individual, rather than as entirely in Clemson. In addition, needed supplies for our return, such as hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and toilet paper must be readily available in the stores before any new phase begins. Masks must also be widely available. A new upward phase will not be adopted within 14 days of the start of a local K-12 or college academic semester.

It should be noted that a safe and responsible reopening process may not be a simple, linear progression through the phases identified herein. Local conditions, including the case load data, and/or the needs and concerns of our membership, may require that we return to a previous phase before we can move forward again. Alternatively, those same conditions and concerns, perhaps in conjunction with the physical limitations of our space, may suggest that we remain in Phase One for a longer period of time before moving to Phase Two or skipping ahead to Phase Three.

Before and During Phased ReEntry

The Re-Entry Task Force will:

- Post signage indicating proper hand washing methods, indicating symptoms, urging people to stay home/seek medical attention if they have symptoms, indicating when the buildings are closed, and other documentation required by this policy.
- Monitor the amount of cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer and operational materials (toilet paper, etc.) in the sanctuary and the general supply available for purchase, contacting the Office Administrator when necessary.
- Indicate relevant changes pertaining to the phase to the Board of Trustees in order to communicate the potential need for contractor involvement and budget reallocation.

All proposed access to the facilities must be permitted by the current phase and submitted to the Congregational Secretary at least one week in advance for inclusion in the UUFC master calendar. A minimum 2-hour window between the exit of one group and the entry of another will be maintained.

- **Individuals:** Must wear masks, follow social distancing when possible, sign-in and out on the sheets posted on the entry doors, and follow all posted guidelines for cleaning.
- **Groups and events:** All groups, regardless of UUFC affiliation, must identify one individual to ensure group compliance with the amended Facility Use Policy. Following the event or meeting, a list of attendees must also be submitted, along with the relevant cleaning checklist. In the case of non-UUFC affiliated groups, the same individual must sign the Amended COVID-19 Building Use Policy and Agreement or relevant rental agreement. Any group wishing to use the facilities may suggest alternative procedures that they feel adequately fulfill the requirements put forth in this policy, subject to Board (or other relevant UUFC leadership) approval. This policy shall constitute an amendment to the UUFC Building Use Policy and Agreement and all existing rental agreements.

Pre-Phase One (Maintenance & Critical Operations Only)

In the event that maintenance or critical operations must occur, the person scheduling or performing the duty must contact the President of the Board (president@uufc.org) and Re-Entry Chair (council@uufc.org) for express approval, with the congregation's Office Administrator (admin@uufc.org) copied for scheduling purposes. Ongoing projects and services should seek the express permission of the Board of Trustees. All volunteers, staff and other individuals must follow mask wearing, social distancing, cleaning and contact tracing requirements.

Only pre-approved groups are allowed to congregate on the property for operational purposes.

Phase One

Phase One may be entered once cases reach a 20% decline over a period of 14 days.

Phase One will include allowing outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people and opening up some additional operations with social distancing requirements, including the use of masks and cleaning protocols. Any individual exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend any UUFC function or activity. An individual may be asked to leave. Vulnerable individuals should continue to shelter in place.

Recommendations:

- **Worship:** UUFC will continue holding online worship services only.
- **Coffee Hour:** Virtual and small-group parking lot social times only.
- **Rites of Passage:** (weddings, funerals) may be held online or in person with 10 individuals or less in attendance.
 - No use of the kitchen will be permitted. Any food or beverages served must be in pre-packaged, single use servings.
- **Religious Education:** continues to be offered online only.
- **Playground:** will remain closed.
- **Staff, Maintenance and Other Volunteers:** Staff or volunteers entering either the Main Building or Founders House must wear a mask and practice proper social distancing to the furthest possible extent. Individuals should enter and leave the premise one at a time.
- **Outdoor Activities:** Limited to 10 individuals or less, with masks and proper social distancing at all times.
- **Restroom Use:** Only one individual at a time may use either the men's or women's restrooms next to the sanctuary. Exceptions may be made for an individual requiring assistance, preferably from a household member.
- **Renters and non-UUFC affiliated groups** may be allowed back in the building if they are able to observe gathering limits, restroom restrictions, cleaning procedures, and distancing protocols both during the event and when entering or exiting the buildings.
- **Pastoral Care:** Pastoral care visits to senior living facilities, hospitals, and high-risk individuals are prohibited. Pastoral care is available by online meeting only.
- **Office Operations:** Regular office functions may resume while maintaining social distancing and wearing masks.

Phase Two

Phase Two may be entered after a 30-day period of declining in cases in all relevant counties and Clemson University.

Phase two will include allowing gatherings of up to 10 people indoors with physical distancing requirements and some resuming of other operations with physical distancing requirements. Vulnerable people should continue to shelter in place.

Recommendations:

- **Worship:** In- person worship services of 10 people, including volunteers and staff (with a plan for managing the number of people per services), along with online worship.
 - All attendees are required to wear masks, with the exception of the service presenter.
 - No choir or singing of hymns.
 - Hymnals removed.
 - Maintain physical distance of at least 6 ft. on premises.
 - No paper orders of service. Electronic order of service is recommended.
 - The offering is collected at the beginning of service while entering, or at the end while leaving. Volunteers and staff should pay attention to hand cleaning before and after handling the offering. Electronic contributions for offering are recommended.
 - Seating should be physically distanced at least 6 ft. apart with exceptions for family and household groups.
- **Coffee Hour:** Remains virtual. Small groups are allowed while physically distancing in the parking lot. Refreshments are individually provided.
- **Rites of Passage:** Continue to be allowed as virtual or under the 10 person limit. The Social Room may be opened as an alternative viewing area, if the number of available volunteers allows.
 - No use of the kitchen will be permitted. Any food or beverages served must be in pre-packaged, single use servings.
- **Religious Education:** Adult Faith Formation and Children and Youth Religious Exploration remain virtual.
- **Staff, Maintenance and Other Volunteers:** Staff or volunteers entering either the Main Building or Founders House must wear a mask and practice proper physical distancing to the furthest possible extent. Individuals should enter and leave the premises one at a time.

- **Staff, Committee and Administrative Meetings:** May occur in groups of less than 10 people in the Social Hall or Sanctuary. No more than one group can occupy the building at a time, with a period of at least 2 hours between groups.
- **Fundraisers:** Will remain online.
- **Renters and non-UUFC affiliated groups** may be allowed back in the building if they are able to observe gathering limits, restroom restrictions, cleaning procedures, and distancing protocols both during the event and when entering or exiting the buildings.
- **Pastoral Care:** Pastoral care visits to senior living facilities, hospitals, and high-risk individuals are prohibited. Otherwise pastoral care is as determined by the minister.
- **Office Operations:** Regular office functions may resume while maintaining physical distancing and wearing masks.

Appendix: UUFC Cleaning Checklist

Appendix: Pandemic Exposure Procedures

Sources:

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 phased reopening guidelines

South Carolina DHEC guidelines

Recommendations from the Unitarian Universalist Association

Massachusetts Safety Standards: Places of Worship and Religious Services

Massachusetts COVID-19 Checklist: Places of Worship and Religious Services

“Guidelines for Reopening Your Church Building,” Georgia Baptist Mission Board

OpenTexas Minimum Standard Health Protocols: Checklist for Churches/Places of Worship

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton Returning to Church Options by Rev. Dr. Cynthia Landrum