

Building Use Policy

First Unitarian Church of Providence

Purpose: Enable small groups to safely use the Meeting House and Parish House during a pandemic.

Policy

This policy addresses ways to protect the congregation, visitors and staff from infection by minimizing the risk of transmission of a pandemic virus on church property, and ways to adjust building use as the prevalence of infection changes in Rhode Island during the pandemic.

The Church will work to minimize the risk of transmission of pandemic virus in the buildings while accommodating, as much as possible, the needs of the congregation and outside groups to meet in person in Church buildings.

Building use is governed by the state guidelines for reopening faith communities and will change as the state moves between the various phases of reopening. If the perceived risk of transmission changes, the Governor implements new Executive Orders, or if the State changes its reopening guidance then limitations on the use of Church buildings will also change. At the discretion of the Church leadership, Church policies on the use of buildings may change before the state or federal guidelines change.

During the pandemic social distancing guidelines will effectively reduce available space for meetings in the Parish House. Priority will be given to meetings attended led and attended by members of the Church.

The Church will:

- Make every reasonable effort to minimize the risk of transmission to occupants of the building, including visitors and staff. This includes sanitization of spaces in use and requiring safe behavior from all using the Church buildings.
- Have and make available to users of the buildings the Church's current procedures for visitors and guests to:
 - Apply to use space in the Church's buildings
 - Follow current federal and state guidelines and Church policies to minimize risk of transmission of the virus to others. This includes at all times social distancing appropriate for location and group size, plus masking, handwashing/sanitization.
- Have a procedure to monitor pandemic risk in the state and revise the building use policy and procedures if the pandemic risk in the state increases or decreases

significantly in the opinion of the Church leadership.

- Require visitors to agree in writing to adhere to church policies while in the building. Failure to accept and adhere will lead to warnings and finally revocation of the privilege of using the building for recurrent failures to adhere to Church policies.
- Require leaders of groups wishing to use Church buildings to complete a Meeting Request Form identifying themselves, their group, their contact information; the maximum count of attendees; request a room based on the size of their group; describe the duration of the meeting; and the activities planned.

The church administrator will review this application with the Meeting Leader and assign a room for use at agreed times and dates. If agreement cannot be reached, the Church Administrator will escalate the issue to church leadership for medical, operational or policy guidance.

- The Meeting Leader will review and sign acceptance of this Church policy and procedure.

The Meeting Leader will also agree in writing to:

- Distribute and collect signed copies of Church pandemic Visitor Guidelines regarding social distancing, mask wearing and handwashing/use of hand sanitizers to all potential attendees before each meeting
- Distribute and collect signed Waivers from every attendee and return these to the Church Administrator
- Review Church building use policies with attendees at each meeting
- Collect and keep contact information for each attendee at each meeting for the purposes of contact tracing if required to do so by the RI Department of Health
- Inform the church administrator of any diagnosed pandemic cases among those who have attended a meeting in the church fourteen or fewer days prior to diagnosis.
- Bring any questions or concerns about the policy or the group's ability to follow the policy to the Church Administrator