

**WOLLASTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS FOR GROUPS
USING CHURCH FACILITIES FOR MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

The recommendations shown below reflect the policies and procedures for members of the Wollaston Congregational Church, and all users of the church facilities. These recommendations incorporate the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Sector Specific Standards for Places of Worship to address COVID-19 concerns, supplemented with additional recommendations for other sectors to include third party users of the church facilities.

In preparing these recommendations, the Church Stewards make the following Public Health Plan assumptions:

- Reopening the building for services and/or events and activities will increase the risk of COVID-19 spread; the goal is to know, communicate and manage transmission risk.
- Programs and activities within the building need to be altered, some significantly, for several months or longer, until an effective vaccine and treatment are developed.
- These recommendations need to include mechanisms to scale back programs and services in COVID-19 cases and deaths begin to re-escalate.
- The experiences and needs of those disproportionately impacted need to be considered (e.g. the elderly and/or those with pre-existing conditions now known to be adversely affected).

At a minimum, these recommendations should be used as an addition to any Federal and State mandates. These recommendations have been prepared using state-issued Standards for Places of Worship in conjunction with recommendations from the state for re-opening of other activities such as schools, camps, Yoga and other users of the church facilities.

This policy remains in effect until the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and church office lifts all COVID-19 related mandates and restrictions.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Standards for Church Buildings in Massachusetts

These sector specific safety standards were issued to provide church buildings with instructions to help protect against COVID-19 spread as the building resumes in-person activities – either for church worshippers or for other activities within the building and on the premises. These standards are minimum requirements only and are not exclusive or exhaustive. Public health data and state guidelines change frequently, and the church staff and staff of third-party users are responsible for adhering to all Federal, State and local mandates.

The following standards apply to all activities within the church building whether for congregational purposes or for third party events and activities.

- Any church member or participant in other activity at the church building cannot attend that activity if they are feeling sick, are exhibiting any of the following COVID-19 symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath, chills, muscular pain, headache, sore throat or new loss of taste or smell), or potentially have been exposed to anyone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. A potential exposure means having household contact or having close contact (within 6 feet) with any individual for any period of time (over 10 minutes) while that person is symptomatic or 48 hours before symptoms develop.
- Persons who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the Center of Disease Control (e.g. age or underlying conditions such as heart or lung issues or diabetes) are encouraged not to attend activities at the church building.
- Wollaston Congregational Church, at this time, is holding virtual Sunday services using Zoom and may, at some point, begin outdoor services if deemed appropriate and possible, while maintaining all social distancing recommendations.
- Any group that includes children and youth who plan to use the building, in addition to following these recommendations, must also adhere to the re-opening Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety included in the **Massachusetts Child Care and Youth Serving Programs Re-open Approach** documents issued by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

Operational Recommendations

The following specific safety standards are organized around seven distinct categories covering Occupation Limitations, Social Distancing, Face Coverings, Contributions and Fees, Communal Food and Drink, Cleaning and Disinfecting, and Staff and Operations.

1. Occupancy Limitations

- Occupancy is limited to 40 percent of the maximum permitted occupancy level as documented in the occupancy permit on record with the City building department. The occupant count shall include all attendees, volunteers and staff at any point in time within the premises.

- Staff or volunteers shall monitor the number of attendees entering the building to ensure compliance with the maximum occupancy level.
- If feasible, on-line signup for any events or activities should be arranged in advance to monitor and limit the number of attendees.
- Increase and/or space out all activities to ensure better social distancing of attendings and sufficient time for cleaning and disinfecting of common areas and specific spaces being used.
- Due to staff capacity and resources activities should be limited to one location when possible to provide increased attention to safety of attendees.
- A single point of entry and a single point of exit are advised as this allows staff and volunteers to maintain a consistent count of attendees and attention to cleaning and disinfecting.

2. Social Distancing

- Any attendees for any activity who are not part of the same immediate family must stand or sit at least 6 feet apart. Same family members are allowed to sit/stand together less than 6 feet apart.
- If fixed seating is in place (e.g. the sanctuary) certain rows must be blocked off and kept empty to allow for sufficient distancing between rows.
- The placement of tape or other distancing marking are encouraged to delineate 6-foot separation and signage may be posted to indicate the maximum number of attendees in any row or area.
- Promote ventilation for enclosed spaces where possible. For example, opening of windows and area use of fans to promote air flow. Fans should not be placed to allow airflow transmission from person to person.

Entrances and Exits

- Signage or floor markings should be posted to have one way entrances and exits or otherwise direct attendees to follow certain pathways that encourage social distancing while entering and exiting the building.
- If a line is waiting to enter the building, those waiting should be directed to maintain social distances. Tape or other ground markings can be placed to encourage at least six feet of social distancing.
- Staff or volunteers should direct people in high-traffic areas (hallways, etc.) to help maintain social distancing.
- Doors should be left open where possible to limit contact with doorknobs and handles (fire doors and other safety doors should remain closed for safety reasons).

Seating

- Display clear signage to help attendees to sit/stand in the right places.
- If there is fixed seating or standing areas (e.g. the sanctuary), two rows should be blocked off between every occupied row to maintain social distancing.
- If moveable seating is used, it should be set up to provide a minimum of six feet of separation. Floor markings can be used to discourage people from re-arranging the seating.

3. Face Coverings

- All attendees and staff at meetings and events must wear face coverings or masks in accordance with COVID-19 Order No. 31 and the Department of Public Health Guidance while inside and while entering and exiting the building if there is any possibility of not being able to maintain a 6 foot distance from other persons or non-family members. An exception would be if a person is unable to wear a face covering or mask because of a medical or disabling condition.
- For children above the age of 2, the wearing of a face covering is at the discretion of the child's parent or guardian. However, wearing of masks by anyone over the age of 2 should wear a mask if there is any possibility of not being able to keep 6 feet away from a non-family member. under the age of 2 should not wear a face covering.
- A person who declines to wear a face covering or mask because of a medical or disabling condition shall not be required to produce documentation verifying the condition.
- The church and or group holding the event or meeting may refuse entry to a person who refuses to wear a face covering or mask for non-medical reasons.
- Signs are to be placed inside and outside the building reminding people of the need to wear a face covering and to maintain social and physical distancing.

4. Contributions and payments

- Cash contributions and payments to the church at this time are not encouraged. Contributions and payments may be made by check

placed under the church office door or placed in the mailbox at the office/school entrance at 48 Winthrop Ave.

- Contributions and payments may also be made on-line through access on the church website www.wollastonucc.org where there is link for “on-line offering”. This may also be used for payment of building use fees as the link takes you to our offering page where there is also a box for building use fees.

5. Food service

- Whenever possible, snacks and meals, and/or communion elements, should be prepackaged and ready-to-serve as individual portions to minimize handling. Meals must not be served family style.
- Group dining rooms should be avoided to prevent potential spread of infection. If there are no alternatives, programs must provide adequate social distancing and groups should not inter-mingle.
- Multiple children and adults must not use shared serving or eating utensils.
- Sinks used for food preparation should not be used for any other purpose.
- Staff and attendees must wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Tables and chairs used for meals need to be cleaned and sanitized before and after use.
- All food contact surfaces, equipment and utensils used for preparation, packaging or handling of food products must be washed, rinsed and sanitized before each use. Additionally, programs must frequently clean non-food contact surfaces such as doorknobs, tabletops and chairs. Use sanitizers approved by the EPA for use against COVID-19 and for food-contact surfaces.
- For all activities (not just for snack/mealtime), the shared use of any frequently touched items is discouraged, other than as single-use items. This included books, papers, music scores, and other documents. Frequently touched items such as doorknobs, chair backs

and seats, and any props used for events must be frequently cleaned and sanitized.

6. Cleaning, Disinfecting and Hygiene Protocols

- Areas in use shall be cleaned and disinfected between each use, including disinfection of high-transit areas (hallways and entrances) and high-touch surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, railings, light switches, bathrooms, shared instruments and other props).
- If the Church learns that an individual with COVID-19 learns attended an event or meeting or otherwise entered the space, a closure and deep-cleaning and disinfecting consistent with the Centers for Disease Control guidance.
- Groups using the building for events and meetings must have access to handwashing facilities with sufficient break time to allow handwashing. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol should be made available where possible.
- Response action protocol:
 - Groups using the building should also keep a daily log of cleaning and disinfecting which should be kept on-site.
 - A log of all attendees is to be kept to provide notification in the event of a positive case of COVID-19.
 - In the event of notification of exposure, the group must notify the church office (617-773-7432) and the City of Quincy Public Health Department (617-376-1270) and assist as reasonably requested to trace likely contacts to isolated and self-quarantine.

7. Staffing and Operations

- Staff and group leaders should consider screening staff, volunteers and attendees before they enter the building, including temperature checks, asking about any symptoms. Continue frequently to check the CDC's update on symptoms as these may change.
- Staff and group leaders need to be aware that singing, reciting and other forms of strong address are inherently more capable of

spreading micro-viruses. Social distancing and more is required to ensure that aerosol droplets of virus are not carried for longer distances.

- Customary and cultural greetings of friendship should exclude kisses, hugs, handshakes, holding of hands or contact of any type.
- Outdoor Activities and Meetings
 - All attendees should wear face coverings and all attendees not from the same family should be spaced at least 6 feet apart.
 - Consider marking off clear spaces with cones, chalk, etc. to indicate social distancing as to where to stand or sit.
 - If outdoor seating is used, space seats 6 feet apart.

If you have any questions about the operational guidelines for reOpening strategies, please contact the church office (617-773-7432), your building contact person or by reaching out to us through the church website:

www.wollastonucc.org.