

Draft #3.0 Pandemic Guidelines for the
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Duluth
22 August 2020

Our UUCD Mission Statement begins with the phrase, “To care for one another. . .” At this time when the COVID-19 pandemic surrounds us, it is necessary to take measures to set the health and safety of our members and our broader community as our congregation’s first priority.

We will continue to live other aspects of our mission: searching for truth and meaning, acting for justice, and celebrating the spirit of life. However, these we must pursue in less traditional ways for some time to come. Essentially, we must limit physical contact, but be grateful that we are facing these challenges at a time when technological advances permit us opportunity to maintain contact, to express love and support for one another, in other ways.

The guidelines that follow recognize that there is no technological total substitute for being able to be and interact in physical presence with one another. Yet, we must manage a balance between social / psychological needs and physical risks in these challenging times.

Because we cannot predict what course this pandemic will take, these guidelines are divided into five ‘Levels of Concern’ as opposed to phases. Each ‘Level of Concern’ is determined by criteria based upon the prevalence and direction of increase or decrease of the spread of the disease. Within each level of concern, the guidelines identify acceptable degrees of physical gathering, alternative means of carrying through with our UUCD mission, and required precautions to limit spread of the virus applied to several aspects of our congregational life.

Level 5 - Red

Situational Criteria:

If any one or more actual, existing conditions are of greater severity than even one of the bulleted criteria conditions, the guidelines of the next higher level are to be implemented. An example is Level 5 - Red being a higher level than Level 4 - Orange.

- The spread of the COVID-19 is increasing at such a rate and has reached such numbers in the region that state and local authorities have mandated and are enforcing a “stay at home lock-down.”
- Only the most essential services are allowed to operate.
- ICU units of hospitals are filled or capacity is being exceeded to care for COVID-19 patients in need of hospitalization.

Building Accessibility and Use:

- The building is altogether closed; locked.
- Entry is only permitted for essential maintenance, like checking the status of mechanical equipment and watering plants.

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Congregational Life - Worship and Program:

- Sunday services are prepared, portions recorded, and disseminated, on-line, from home(s).
- Religious education classes, discussions, and other activities are carried out remotely, i.e. on-line, with participants at home as individuals or family groups.
- All normally in-person meetings and group gatherings take place on-line, only.

Staff Practices:

- All staff work remotely.
- All meetings are held on-line.
- If two or more individuals are required to carry out essential services within the building, they are to maintain physical distance of 6' or more, wear masks and gloves, wash hands at each opportunity, and sanitize surfaces contacted.

Level 4 - Orange

Situational Criteria:

- COVID-19 transmission is increasing; totals of new cases from one week to the next are increasing by a factor of 1.3 or greater. *(Note: This is approximately the transmission rate of a 'normal' flu. If COVID-19 is increasing at this rate or lower, it is due to safety measures having been taken if the rate was higher previously, or could indicate infusion of the virus from other locations if the rate was previously lower.)*
- There are no governmental “stay at home lock down” orders in place, but there are directives issued related to limiting business activity to “essential services.”
- Governmental and/or Health Authorities maintain orders that distancing and face mask wearing is required in public buildings including businesses.
- Hospitals have enough beds and other resources in ICU units to treat patients admitted for COVID-19 infection.

Building Accessibility and Use:

- During daytime, working hours the building is not locked.
- There is no physical impediment to entering the building, but signage is displayed indicating what uses of the building are acceptable and by whom.
- Surfaces that people touch on a regular basis will be sanitized regularly, several times a day, by the building custodian.
- Hand sanitizer will be placed in appropriate locations throughout the building.

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- East hallway access is limited to nursery school use at all times.

Congregational Life - Worship and Program:

- Sunday services are prepared, portions recorded, and disseminated, on-line, from home or by one or two individuals in the building.
- Music may be played and recorded in the building, excluding group singing, a group being three or more individuals not from the same household.
- Religious education classes, discussions, and other activities are carried out remotely, i.e. on-line, with participants at home as individuals or family groups.
- All normally in-person meetings and group gatherings take place on-line, only.
- The UNS (nursery school) will be permitted to offer its program, following its own stringent protocols.
- Our UUCD facility is used as a polling place for local, state, and national elections. Following state and local guidelines / restrictions, we will permit access to our building for voting.

Staff Practices:

- Staff may work remotely or may choose to work in their offices.
- Staff choosing to work in the building must answer “No” to all of the “Stay Safe MN” *Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist* questions related to symptoms. If any questions are answered “Yes,” the staff member is not to remain in the building.
- When working alone, wearing a mask is not necessary.
- When two or more staff members are sharing the same work area, masks are to be worn and physical distancing adhered to.
 - *Note: Masks and six-foot distancing seem to mitigate the risk of transmission of ‘particles’ broadcast by a cough or sneeze. However, aerosols may still accumulate in the air in an enclosed area over a period of time and may be a source of transmission. Limiting the time two or more spend in a room together and increasing air circulation, by using a fan and opening doors are actions that should be taken.*
- Staff meetings are held on-line.
- Sharing of work tools and equipment, (e.g. pens, pencils, calculators, computer keyboards, etc.) is discouraged. Should a tool be shared, it is to be disinfected between users.
- Should a staff member become ill, experience symptoms on the *Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist* or test positive for the COVID-19 virus, they must notify other staff members. Other staff members with whom the ill person has come in contact, are to remain home and self-quarantine.

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Level 3 - Yellow

Situational Criteria:

- COVID-19 new cases, weekly totals, from one week to the next are not increasing, or they are increasing at a rate of less than a factor of 1.3.
- Governmental and/or Health Authorities maintain orders or directives that distancing and face mask wearing is required in public buildings including businesses.
- Hospitals in Duluth are not having any difficulty providing care for the number of COVID-19 cases needing to be treated, i.e. the number of beds in ICU units is greater than the number of COVID-19 patients being treated.

Building Accessibility and Use:

- During daytime, working hours the building is not locked.
- There is no physical impediment to entering the building, but signage is displayed indicating what uses of the building are acceptable and by whom.
- Surfaces that people touch on a regular basis will be sanitized several times each day by the building custodian.
- Hand sanitizer will be placed in appropriate locations throughout the building.
- East hallway access is limited to nursery school use at all times.

Congregational Life - Worship and Program:

- Sunday services are prepared from home or by a small number of individuals in the building. Portions of the services are pre-recorded, and the service is disseminated on-line.
- Music may be played and recorded in the building, but no group singing.
- Religious education classes, discussions, and other activities are carried out remotely, i.e. on-line, with participants at home as individuals or family groups.
 - The class, discussion, or activity may be led from the building by as many as two, staff and helper, leaders, maintaining a six-foot distance between one another and wearing face masks.
- Small groups meeting the stipulations that follow may gather and be active.
 - Participants need to sign-in with name and telephone number in the log book provided for this purpose.
 - Sign-in protocol: all potential attendees attest to three stipulations in order to remain in the building and participate in the activity:
 1. They feel healthy now and have not experienced fever, chills, new cough, shortness of breath, new sore throat, muscle aches, new head ache, or new loss of smell or taste in the last 14 days.

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2. They have consistently worn a mask and maintained social distance when interacting with others outside of their household for the last 14 days.

3. They have not traveled to areas experiencing increases of cases of COVID-19 greater than those occurring in the Duluth area in the last 14 days.

ear masks, and maintain social distance.

- Expected participants will be notified ahead of time of the sign-in protocol, including the health questions, the attestations related to health precautions taken, and travel.
- Small, necessary projects to be carried out in the building by a UUCD group may be approved by the Congregational Administrator.
 - Participants in the projects wear masks and maintain social distancing.
 - Group size should be limited to 6 individuals working together in any one room or part of the building.
 - Any participant experiencing illness within 14 days following the UUCD group activity must report the illness to the Congregational Administrator. Sign-in and illness reporting are necessary for contact tracing should COVID illness appear.
- Congregational groups of as many as 12 individuals may request permission to gather for meetings, approval by the Congregational Administrator.
 - The group should state a purpose. This could be discussion or team decision making.
 - The group shall plan and prepare to offer access to the meeting on-line as well as in-person for those who desire to participate but prefer not, or are not able, to join the group physically.
 - The group shall follow the sign-in protocol described above.
 - The group should meet in the larger social hall area.
 - They may meet for as long as one hour.
 - Group members should wear masks and maintain 6' social distancing.
 - There will be no sharing of food. Individuals may bring personal water bottles and snack items .
 - Any participant experiencing illness within 14 days following the UUCD group activity must report the illness to the Congregational Administrator. Sign-in and illness reporting are necessary for contact tracing should COVID illness appear.
- Our UUCD facility is used as a polling place for local, state, and national elections. Following state and local guidelines / restrictions, we will permit access to our building for voting.

Staff Practices:

- Staff may work remotely or may choose to work in their offices.

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- Staff choosing to work in the building must answer “No” to all of the “Stay Safe MN” *Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist* questions related to symptoms. If any questions are answered “Yes,” the staff member is not to remain in the building.
- When working alone, wearing a mask is not necessary.
- When two or more staff members are sharing the same work area, masks are to be worn and physical distancing adhered to. (See note in Level 2 - Orange)
- Staff may choose to meet physically in the workroom or join the meeting on-line.
 - Physical distancing and substantial air circulation are essential if meeting and not wearing a mask.
 - Meeting time is limited, if there are two or more physically gathered, to an hour.
 - If the meeting needs to run longer, those gathered in the building could move to the social hall.
- Sharing of work tools, (e.g. pens, pencils, calculators, computer keyboards, etc.) is discouraged. Should a tool be shared, it is to be disinfected after use by each worker.
- Should a staff member become ill, experience symptoms on the *Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist*, or test positive for the COVID-19 virus, they must notify other staff members. Other staff members with whom the ill person has come in contact, are to remain home and self-quarantine.

Level 2 - Blue

Situational Criteria:

- COVID-19 new case numbers have been decreasing in St. Louis County, based on weekly count totals, over a period of three weeks.
- The general population is adhering to guidelines / advisories or orders to wear masks and social distance in public places, including businesses and other enclosed areas.
- Hospitals in Duluth are treating six or fewer COVID-19 cases between them.

Building Accessibility and Use:

- During daytime, working hours the building is not locked.
- There is no physical impediment to entering the building, but signage is displayed indicating what uses of the building are acceptable and by whom.
- Expectations for safety are displayed.
- Surfaces that people touch on a regular basis will be sanitized regularly, several times a day, by the building custodian.

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- Hand sanitizer will be placed in appropriate locations throughout the building.
- East hallway access is limited to nursery school use at all times.

Congregational Life - Worship and Program:

- Sunday services are conducted in the same manner as described at Level 3 - **Yellow**. They are prepared from home or by a small number of individuals in the building. Portions of the services are pre-recorded, and the service is disseminated on-line.
- Music may be played, but no group singing.
- Religious education classes, discussions, and other activities are carried out remotely, i.e. on-line, with participants at home as individuals or family groups.
 - The class, discussion, or activity could be led from the building by as many as two, staff and helper, leaders, maintaining a six-foot distance between one another and wearing face masks.
- Small, necessary projects to be carried out in the building by a UUUCD group may be approved by the Congregational Administrator.
 - Detailed guidelines follow those for Level - 3 Yellow.
- Congregational groups of as many as 20 individuals may gather to meet or carry out work projects, with approval from the Congregational Administrator.
 - They should state a purpose for meeting, could be discussion or team decision making, and their reason why an in-person meeting is desired.
 - The leaders of the group meeting shall plan and prepare to offer access to the meeting on-line as well as in-person for those who desire to participate but prefer not, or are not able, to join the group physically.
 - Meetings must take place in the larger social hall area.
 - Groups may meet for as long as one hour.
 - Group members should wear masks, distance, and not share food.
 - Food may be brought into the building, but not be prepared in the kitchen.
 - Again, participants need to follow the sign-in protocol, attesting to the same stipulations found in Level 3 - Yellow, and report illness if it occurs after the gathering.
- Memorial Services may be requested and granted after consultation with the Minister and Congregational Administrator.
 - Number of expected attendees limited to 30. Should more than 30 arrive, these shall be offered spaced seating in the social hall.
 - Seating in the sanctuary spaced.
 - Some food in by catering, but not a sit-down meal.
- If conditions make it possible, the Memorial Garden should be used for after service gathering.

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- Our UUCD facility is used as a polling place for local, state, and national elections. Following state and local guidelines / restrictions, we will permit access to our building for voting.

Staff Practices: (The same as Level 3 - Yellow)

- Staff may work remotely or may choose to work in their offices.
- Staff choosing to work in the building must answer “No” to all of the “Stay Safe MN” *Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist* questions related to symptoms. If any questions are answered “Yes,” the staff member is not to remain in the building.
- When working alone, wearing a mask is not necessary.
- When two or more staff members are sharing the same work area, masks are to be worn and physical distancing adhered to. (See note in Level 2 - Orange)
- Staff may choose to meet physically in the workroom or join the meeting on-line.
 - Physical distancing and substantial air circulation are essential if meeting and not wearing a mask.
 - Meeting time is limited, if there are two or more physically gathered, to an hour.
 - If the meeting needs to run longer, those gathered in the building should move to the social hall.
- Sharing of work tools and equipment, (e.g. pens, pencils, calculators, computer keyboards, etc.) is discouraged. Should a tool be shared, it is to be disinfected between users.
- Should a staff member become ill, experience symptoms on the *Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist*, or test positive for the COVID-19 virus, they must notify other staff members. Other staff members with whom the ill person has come in contact, are to remain home and self-quarantine.

Level 1 - Green

Situational Criteria:

- COVID-19 cases are decreasing steadily nationally.
- There have been fewer than 2 new cases detected by testing in the county in any week for several weeks and fewer than two COVID patients in local hospitals.
- The Minnesota “state of emergency” has been lifted.
- However, there is not yet a widely available vaccine.
- The virus is still impacting other parts of the country and/or world. It is not ‘gone.’

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- The low local/regional incidence of illness is due to people abiding by recommended transmission inhibiting behavior, adequate testing, and contact tracing.

Building Accessibility and Use:

- The building is “open.”
- It is unlocked and accessible to anyone during the day.
- Signage continues to direct those entering to social distance and wear masks if part of a group.
- Surfaces continue to be sanitized regularly.

Congregational Life - Worship and Program:

- Sunday services are conducted in the sanctuary and disseminated on-line, as well.
- There is no limit on the number allowed to attend; seats can be more widely spaced if attendees are too close to one another.
 - There should be two seats between attendees not part of the same household.
- There is no congregational singing, but a soloist or small singing group may sing with a plexiglass barrier between them and the congregation.
- Bulletins and hymnals (which include readings) are not used. Order of worship and words to readings or to follow what might be sung by soloist or group are projected.
- No collection plates are passed. Offerings are placed in plates/baskets in the back of the sanctuary.
- Store purchased food and coffee/tea are available following the service.
 - Tables are arranged to make large squares for ‘distanced’ visiting.
- If public schools are open, consideration can be given to holding a form of in-person RE for youth.
 - *Opening of the Sunday nursery will require some thought . . . and possibly advice from the UNS people.*
- Congregational and rental groups may schedule times to meet in the social hall. And volunteer work crews may conduct their activities in the building.
 - The sign-in protocol continues to be used.
 - Groups may exceed 30 in number.
 - Social distancing should be maintained and physical contact not take place.
 - Regular sanitizing of touched surfaces will be continued.
- Memorial services can be scheduled and conducted as in Level 2 - **Yellow**

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- Our UUCD facility is used as a polling place for local, state, and national elections. Following state and local guidelines / restrictions, we will permit access to our building for voting.

Staff Practices: The same as Level 2 - **Yellow**

- Staff may work remotely or may choose to work in their offices.
- Staff choosing to work in the building must answer “No” to all of the “Stay Safe MN” *Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist* questions related to symptoms. If any questions are answered “Yes,” the staff member is not to remain in the building.
- When working alone, wearing a mask is not necessary.
- When two or more staff members are sharing the same work area, masks are to be worn and physical distancing adhered to. (See note in Level 2 - Orange)
- Staff may choose to meet physically in the workroom or join the meeting on-line.
 - Physical distancing and substantial air circulation are essential if meeting and not wearing a mask.
 - Meeting time is limited, if there are two or more physically gathered, to an hour.
 - If the meeting needs to run longer, it could be moved to the social hall.
- Sharing of work tools and equipment, (e.g. pens, pencils, calculators, computer keyboards, etc.) is discouraged. Should a tool be shared, it is to be disinfected between users.
- Should a staff member become ill, experiencing symptoms on the *Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist* or test positive for the COVID-19 virus, they must notify other staff members. Other staff members with whom the ill person has come in contact, are to remain home and self-quarantine.

Level 0 - **Violet**

Situational Criteria:

- An effective vaccine is developed and widely disseminated. *Nice to have something to hope for.*
- Public risk of illness from the COVID-19 virus is deemed extremely low or nonexistent nationally and worldwide.

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Building Accessibility and Use:

- These return to pre-COVID-19 conditions.

Congregational Life - Worship and Program

- Sunday services will be conducted in the sanctuary, however they will continue to be shared on-line and recorded for joining at other times.
- Full choir and congregational singing will resume.
- The RE program will return to its pre-COVID-19 format. Some uses of technology, to reach those not able to gather physically for various reasons, can be continued.
- After service 'coffee' hour may return to serving food and coffee/tea.
- Congregational groups and rental groups may schedule gatherings as they did before the pandemic. There need not be a limit to the number of participants.
- Memorial services and other ceremonies may also resume to pre-virus regularity.

Staff Practices:

- Staff will work in their offices, but may choose to perform work at home as convenient.
- There should be no need to wear masks or maintain a designated physical distance from one another. *This may actually seem strange for a while.*
- Staff meetings will normally take place in the work area, however if helpful, a staff member might attend a meeting on-line.
- Physical meetings can last a long time. :-}