

UCE Guidelines for Building Use Updated September 1, 2022

The COVID Task Force, which includes ministers, staff, board leaders and medical professionals, has been reviewing our procedures and practices around in-person gatherings at the Unitarian Church of Evanston and mitigating risks of Covid-19 since March 2020. We have periodically updated our guidelines based on recommendations and advice from the Evanston Health Department, Illinois Department of Public Health, the Center for Disease Control, the Unitarian Universalist Association, as well as local UU and non-UU houses of worship. In reviewing and modifying guidelines, we are trying to be responsive to the changing landscape of the pandemic, while holding in balance the wishes of the congregation and the well-being and safety of members, visitors, and staff.

Our general principles include:

- Inclusivity and justice: We strive to be as inclusive as possible and center equity and anti-oppression in our decision-making.
- Safety: We prioritize keeping our people and the community safe, and to do what we can to mitigate community spread.
- Community is vital: We value our community and being together. We recognize the importance of closeness and connection.
- Pro-science: We support vaccinations as effective and safe and believe masks mitigate transmission of Covid-19.

If Covid-19 transmission in our community increases dramatically, or if we have reason to be concerned about transmission at UCE, worship services may return to livestream for a period of time.

We will continue to follow the advice of the IDPH and CDC as the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic evolve.

If you contract Covid, have a positive test (with or without symptoms), or close contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid, please consult the [Illinois Department of Public Health for guidance on quarantine/isolation](#).

Masks:

We encourage attendees to wear well-fitting masks over their nose and mouth on Sunday mornings and large group events, except when eating or drinking. For small groups and rentals, masks are optional (beginning October 2nd) though still recommended. Small, UCE gatherings (12 or less), should establish consent among the group before removing masks to ensure that each person feels comfortable being indoors without masks. If one or more people request that the group remain masked, please respect that and comply.

Well-fitting medical grade, KN95/KF94, or multiple-layer cloth masks with inserted filters, are highly recommended.

People with any COVID or flu-like symptoms should worship online, and not in person.

Proof of vaccination:

Our community has an expectation that those who can get vaccinated are vaccinated. We do not verify vaccination status, but we covenant to care for ourselves and others.

Singing:

The choir and congregants are encouraged to continue masking while singing.

Kinship Time (formerly called Coffee Hour):

We encourage individuals participating in Kinship Time to keep their masks on except when actively eating and drinking.

Meetings:

Congregational meetings should be multi-platform if meeting in-person, meaning that individuals can choose to join via Zoom as well as in-person. Technology has been upgraded in many of the meeting rooms and we will continue to work towards improving this technology.

Room occupancy will be based on room size and ability to safely distance. Please schedule your meetings through the Office Administrator at admin@ucevanston.org. It is helpful to fill out a [Room and Publicity Request form](#).

Room 2: 15

Room 3: 40

Room 5: 12

Room 6: 30

Room 8: 12

Room 12: 12

Room 13: 12

Sanctuary: 250

COVID-19 community mitigation protocols and community expectations:

Mask – Masks are strongly encouraged but not required beginning October 2, 2022. Masks should be snug-fitting and worn over the mouth and nose. High quality N95 or KN95 masks are encouraged.

Distance and Contact – We have a consent culture. As we greet each other, we will respect each other's personal space and establish mutual consent before closely approaching or making contact (such as a handshake). You are also invited to add one of the available colored stickers to your nametag to indicate if you are open to hugs (green), prefer elbow bumps (yellow), or need to maintain some physical distance (red).

Hand Washing – We will wash our hands regularly for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer which is readily available around the building.

Vaccination – If we are able to get vaccinated, we will get vaccinated.

Illness - If you or a member of your household are not feeling well (fever, cough, headache, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, etc.) do not come to in-person worship or meetings at UCE. Take care of yourself and talk to your doctor.