

First Parish Church UU – Kingston MA
COVID Safety Policy – Fall 2021
Sept 3, 2021

PREFACE:

Unfortunately, the Delta variant has messed up our plans as we prepare to begin a new church year together. Considering the rising COVID transmission rates across Plymouth County and the rest of the country, the Governing Board has revised our COVID safety policy for all in—person gatherings.

We do this to protect the safety of our entire congregation, most especially our children and immune-compromised members. Thank you in advance for helping us keep all of us as safe and healthy as possible.

- ⇒ This policy will be revised in accordance with the “daily new cases” and “positive test rate” data for Kingston and Plymouth, listed on Mass.gov ([link](#)).
- ⇒ If or when Kingston or Plymouth’s risk level moves up to “Very High” or “Severe” (per the CovidActNow.org risk categories), the Governing Board may decide to stop all in-person activities, including worship.
- ⇒ If you test positive for COVID after attending a church event, please contact Kathy Scully (Kingstonuu@comcast.net) or Rev Emily (minister@kingstonuu.org) immediately. Without using your name, we will alert the church community via email of a positive COVID test and encourage all affected members to be tested.
- ⇒ This policy is in place until further notice. The Governing Board will be monitoring the Covid statistics and will amend this policy they see fit.

WORSHIP POLICY:

In-person worship services will resume in the meetinghouse on Sunday, September 12th per the following guidelines:

- All adult attendees must remain masked for the entire worship service. Anyone unwilling to abide by this policy will not be allowed to attend worship. The church will provide masks at the door for anyone who does not have one.
- Children aged 5 and over must be masked in the meetinghouse; masking children under the age of 5 will be at parents’ discretion.
- Any unvaccinated attendee is strongly encouraged to double-mask while in the meetinghouse.
- Worship leaders may briefly unmask only when speaking from the pulpit.

- All attendees will follow social distancing guidelines of six feet or more by sitting in alternating pews, which will be clearly marked. Family groups should sit together.
- Singing will be restricted to soloists or duets only. No choir or congregational singing is advised or permitted at this time. We will revise this policy as soon as it is safe to do so.
- All windows will remain open, and fans will be employed to circulate fresh air during the service.
- Plans to live-stream and record the services for those unable to attend in person are in the works. It is our hope to have a plan in place for recording worship as of Sept 12th.
- Coffee hour will be held outside on the lawn of Beal House until further notice, weather permitting. Food should be limited to finger food only, using disposable plates and cups. Hand sanitizer will be made available for frequent use by all. In the event of bad weather, coffee hour will be cancelled.

RELIGIOUS ENRICHMENT POLICY:

- Weather permitting, all RE activities will be held outside on the grounds of Beal House, summer-camp style - utilizing the lawn, playground and a portion of the parking lot/driveway.
- When RE is held outdoors masks are optional for volunteers, staff and children. When RE is held in Sampson Hall masks are required for everyone 5+.
- In the case of bad weather, RE activities will be held in Sampson Hall.
- Nursery care will be held in the basement.
- All RE staff and volunteers must be vaccinated. There is no exception to this policy. Those who are not vaccinated, for any reason, are not allowed to participate in the RE program.

SMALL GROUP GATHERING/MEETING POLICY:

- All gatherings for small groups and/or meetings are encouraged to meet outdoors whenever possible.
- Indoor meetings should be socially-distanced; participants are strongly encouraged to open windows and turn on fans to circulate fresh air.
- For inside meetings, all participants should remain masked for the entirety of the gathering, unless there is unanimous consent to removing masks. If all present are agreeable to un-masking, that is permissible. Each small group/meeting is responsible for themselves; church leadership will not micro-manage this.

VACCINATION POLICY:

It is the expectation that all who are eligible to receive a COVID vaccination will do so before participating in any church activities. All members who are unvaccinated are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Covid-19 Vaccinations are required* for:

- All church staff
- Anyone who will be working with children or youth
- Anyone leading worship or running tech from the meetinghouse
- Anyone singing in worship
- Care Team members who wish to do in-person visits
- Anyone engaging with vulnerable populations due to their role in the church

Vaccination status will be verified on an honor-system basis; physical proof of vaccination (i.e. showing vaccine card) will not be required.

*Any staff or church member who has valid medical reasons for not getting a vaccine will be exempt from this policy. However, anyone who is not vaccinated, for any reason, is prohibited from participating in the RE program or engaging with any vulnerable populations in the church.