

UUFSD Policy and Procedure Document**Policy ID: 151****Title:** Contagious Disease Protocols**Date Approved:** September 6, 2023 by the Board of Directors**Purpose**

To provide guidance on how to operate UUFSD during a contagious disease outbreak, pandemic/endemic or health crisis (COVID-19, flu or other), to ensure the safety of all members of the congregation and staff while continuing to live our purpose and be in alignment with our UU values.

In 2020, COVID-19 rocked our world. In-person services and gatherings ceased. Public health officials have said that we must be prepared to be flexible and ready to shift from in-person to virtual if conditions change. This policy is designed to create this expectation, reminding us to be flexible and resilient while living our UU values.

The original policy specifically addressed the Covid-19 pandemic. However it is intended to be adaptable to any contagious/infectious disease crisis that might arise.

Policy

Decisions about operating during an infectious disease pandemic are grounded in our deep values and are core to who we are as a faith tradition:

- Our abiding care and concern for the most vulnerable, inside and outside our congregation.
- Accessibility and inclusion for all our members and friends to participate in our congregation, regardless of health status, health vulnerability, or ability.
- Recognition that we are part of an interdependent web and, as such, our risk-taking and our protective actions affect far more than just ourselves. Our congregational decisions can impact other congregations and the wider community.
- Ethical treatment and expectations for our leaders and staff, minimizing the risks to their own health and well-being.
- Our affirmation that good science, coupled with our UU values, must be the basis upon which we make decisions about in-person gathering.
- Commitment to our mission, community, and theology more than ever, mindful of the spiritual demands of this transition.
- Our deep hope that we as a country, and as a world, will not return to “normal” when the pandemic is over. We seek to live into “a new normal” of more justice, more love, more equity, more sustainability, and more peace.

UUFSD will follow UUA guidance, CDC guidelines, Federal, State, County and local laws and regulations and make necessary adjustments to this policy and/or the procedures based on changing guidance.

The Board of Directors will be responsible for determining which procedures shall be implemented at any time given the changing nature of a pandemic or contagious health crisis. Input will be sought from staff and committee chairs on changes to procedures that impact operations.

Procedures

Decisions about how we operate during a pandemic or contagious disease crisis will be made by the Board of Directors based on current information available and applicable guidance and laws. When required, UUFSD will cease in-person operations and conduct weekly services, religious education, committee meetings and other meetings virtually. Every effort will be made to keep a high level of engagement for virtual services, including virtual “coffee hour” chats following the service. When in-person services resume, virtual service offerings will continue to be an important option to serve our congregation and be as inclusive as possible.

Communicating Operational Changes:

When a change needs to be made regarding how we operate, the Board of Directors will send a notice to the entire congregation. Notices to cease in-person operations require very little or, in the case of a law going into effect, no notice. Notices to re-start in-person gatherings after a closure require at least two weeks’ notice to the staff and congregation. The intent of this two-week period is to allow all involved in weekly services enough time to pivot from remote to in-person offerings.

In-Person Gatherings during Contagious Disease Crisis:

During a time of risk for transmission of disease when there is no law or regulation preventing large gatherings, in-person gatherings may be held with some or all the following conditions in place:

1. All attendees 5 years or older (or the earliest age vaccinations are given) who come on-site are highly encouraged to be vaccinated as medically advised.
2. All paid staff must be vaccinated and show proof of vaccinations. For staff, a record of vaccinations and test results will be kept in personnel files.
3. Masks are optional but highly recommended for everyone over 2 years of age for all indoor and/or outdoor events. Masks must be made of material that best prevents transmission of the disease, cover your nose and mouth and fit snugly on your face. Everyone should bring their own mask.
 - a. Masks are optional for the minister and other speakers at the podium.

4. Maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet between members of different households.
5. Food or beverage may be suspended during times of high risk. Specific guidance will be given as conditions change. You may bring your own beverage on-site at any time.
6. Singing:
 - a. Indoor singing may be suspended completely during a pandemic or infectious health crisis.
 - b. Choir may or may not be permitted to rehearse or perform in person during a pandemic or infectious health crisis. Recorded music from our choir, band, or other individuals is a wonderful and safe alternative to in-person singing.
 - c. When outdoor singing is permitted, all singers are highly encouraged to wear well-fitted masks and stay at least 6 feet apart (10 – 12 feet is considered a safer distance).
7. Religious Education Classes will be held outdoors with masks optional. Children must be registered prior to attending an RE program. Snacks may or may not be allowed and will follow the guidance for food and beverage overall.
8. Pre-registering for attendance at in-person indoor services may be an option to pursue if/when attendance exceeds capacity.
9. Small Group Gatherings
 - a. When large gatherings are not permitted, it may be possible for small groups to continue to be on-site using the above protocols. The Board of Directors will communicate the maximum number of people who can be on-site during a time when large gatherings are prohibited.
 - b. When large gatherings are permitted, small groups can meet on site using the above protocols. It is preferable for small groups to also meet outdoors, but indoor meetings may be permissible if social distancing requirements can be upheld.

Outdoor Services / Gatherings

1. Given the nature of a pandemic or infectious health crisis, we are uniquely equipped to be able to hold services outdoors where it is safer for all. The intent is for services to be outdoors as much as possible during these conditions. In the case of rain or inclement weather, services will be virtual for that day, and the congregation will be notified by email and/or text at least one hour before the start of service.
 - a. When a planned outdoor service is canceled, only the staff and service participants will be on-site and hold the service indoors - all others may attend virtually.

Indoor Services / Gatherings

1. Indoor services may be suspended during a pandemic or infectious health crisis. When indoor services are not recommended, services will only be held outdoors and/or virtually. Indoor services can be held when data for San Diego County is

in the Low or Medium transmission risk with masks. Whenever possible, all windows and doors will be open.

2. In the event that we exceed the capacity limit for our indoor attendees may listen to the service in the core area outdoors or return home to watch virtually.