

FCCB UCC In-Person Regathering Plan

Here, we pass the PEACE, not COVID-19

Phase **P** for Phased-in worship regathering
 Phase **E** is for (holy) Experimentation
 Phase **A** is for Add the broader congregation
 Phase **C** is for Children + in-person fellowship
 Phase **E** is for Everyone, everywhere

Phase	Shorthand + Est Timeline	Description / Activities	Requirements / Limitations	Graduation criteria* (to get into this stage)	What do we need that we don't already have in place?
P	Phased-in worship regathering MAY-JUN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - P1: Staff-only, filming in the sanctuary - Allow renters back in at designated times - Record worship for streaming - P2: Staff and worship leaders recording OR streaming from the sanctuary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masks AND 6 feet of physical distancing required - Limit of no more than 10 in sanctuary or chapel <i>total</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All staff and worship leaders <i>present</i> fully vaccinated - No known presence of vaccine-resistant variants in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance around ventilation (doors open, cross-breeze, run kitchen fan, bathroom fans, etc.) - Policy for decontamination pre / post use - Policy for vaccinations? - Congregational survey
E	(holy) Experimentation MAY-JUN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff, worship leaders, and a designated group such as Exec Council, Trustees, Deacons, Worship Team, Faith Formation team gather to test out what a hybrid regathering would be like, then discuss it later and make changes based on experiences and science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masks and 6 feet of physical distancing required - Limit of no more than 25 in sanctuary and 10 in Chapel, 1 person in the kitchen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All present vaccinated with at least one dose - No known presence of vaccine-resistant variants in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Same as above - Research HEPA filtration units for high-traffic, low ventilation areas (like hallway/stairwell, Pastor's office) - Ensure HVAC units are tested for
A	Add the broader adult congregation JUN-JUL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First introduction of the broader congregation to services, in numbers limited by physical distancing capacity. - Signups for in-person worship. Fellowship outside if at all - Most teams given option to begin regathering in person, with accommodations for virtual attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masks required - Physical distancing required - Vaccine recommended for indoor gathering - Limited numbers in sanctuary and in Chapel based on state guidelines (suggest that fellowship take place outside, weather permitting), 1 person in the kitchen - No Sunday School / childcare - No physical passing of the peace - No congregational singing - No food at fellowship hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of the adult church population vaccinated with at least one dose - Majority of the Chittenden Co adult population vaccinated with at least one dose - No more than 2 percent positivity rate in County, 14 day downward trends - No known presence of vaccine-resistant variants in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Same as above - Determine how many people we can fit in the sanctuary and chapel with 6 feet of distance - Research and purchase HEPA filtration units for chapel

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; color: #00AEEF;">C</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Children + In-person Fellowship</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">JUL-AUG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C1: Hybrid in-person and online worship to include Sunday school/childcare - C2: Some kind of fellowship hour following worship. Begin expanding numbers if they were limited in earlier phases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masks required - Vaccine recommended for indoor gathering - Limited numbers in sanctuary and in Chapel based on state guidelines (suggest that fellowship take place outside, weather permitting), - No physical passing of the peace - No congregational singing - No food at fellowship hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than half of adults in the church population vaccinated with at least one dose - Most adults in the Chittenden Co population vaccinated with at least one dose - No more than 2 percent positivity rate in County, 14 day downward trends - Presence of a COVID vaccine for children - No known presence of vaccine-resistant variants in the area - Indication that survey or other qualitative input suggests parents are willing / interested in bringing children before vaccination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Same as above - Research and purchase HEPA filtration units for Sunday school/childcare rooms
<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; color: #800080;">E</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Everyone, Everywhere</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">TBD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everything above and including choral and/or congregational singing. - Continued streaming on Zoom in perpetuity (builds health resilience for the congregation moving forward) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masks recommended - Vaccines recommended - 20 feet of physical distance for choir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nearly all adults in the church population vaccinated with at least one dose - Most children in the church population vaccinated - No more than 1 percent positivity rate in Chittenden County - No known presence of vaccine-resistant variants in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Same as above - Research options for HEPA filtration for sanctuary (Addition of large individual units, etc.)

***NOTE:** Criteria should be considered a rough guideline for graduation to the next stage - the indicators are estimates and do not determine safety or readiness on their own. We suggest that each phase trigger a conversation by church leadership to review the levers and indicators mentioned in this plan, and update the guidance as needed.



INPUTS TO THIS PLAN:

COVID Principles (also pasted below)

Levers and Indicators (in order of efficacy / priority, and with associated resources/guidance):

- General
 - [CDC guidelines for faith-based organizations](#)
 - [ASHRAE Building Readiness for Communities of Faith Guidance](#)
 - [New England resource](#) recommending churches open for indoor worship when vaccination rate in the community is 70 percent and positivity rate is less than 3 percent.
- Air hygiene
 - Capacity limitations
 - Masks
 - [Filtration / fit suggestions](#) (double masks not required, unless fit is poor)
 - Improved ventilation / fresh air dilution
 - [CDC guidelines for improved ventilation](#)
 - Filtration (HEPA units)
- Individual hygiene
 - Physical distance
 - Hand washing / sanitizer
 - Vaccination requirements / rates - in church and in surrounding community (note: vaccination rates in Chittenden County are likely higher than in our surrounding neighborhood)
 - Positivity rate in Chittenden County (note: positivity rates are likely higher than in our surrounding neighborhood)
 - Zoom service availability for people who aren't feeling well
- Surface hygiene
 - [Safe decontamination regimens](#) (no added bleach, no foggers, good ventilation)

Other Church Events: This phasing is pretty good for worship services, but doesn't account for events like Peace Camp, weddings funerals Suggest addressing those events as they come, and developing a COVID Safety Plan for each event



FCCB UCC COVID PLANNING PRINCIPLES

#1: We respect the power of place:

We take an expansive view of our building and property as a site for connection, prayer, etc. First Church UCC grounds can be a sanctuary for body and spirit during this difficult time, and leadership supports the need to care for those who seek out in-person connection in a safe, controlled setting. We balance that consideration with an acknowledgement of the weight of responsibility we feel – as lay leaders – to first care for the safety and welfare of our community.

#2: We consult emerging science / trusted guidelines:

We are guided by the latest available evidence on topics like transmission and protective measures, as well as the impact of isolation on mental health and social bonds. We will regularly consult, at a minimum, the latest guidelines and recommendations from the World Health Organization, the Center for Disease Control, the Vermont Dept of Public Health, and the United Church of Christ.

#3: We follow the precautionary principle:

We acknowledge that much is still not yet known about this virus. We will err on the side of caution when considering evolving information. While “no evidence” does not necessarily indicate “no risk,” we will also seek to find grey areas where we may be able to offer creative ways to connect at lower risk levels. Also, we affirm that the availability of grounds or building should not be considered an endorsement of safety and recommend that individuals consider their own risk profile and risk tolerance in deciding whether to visit.

#4: We aim to simplify:

Where possible, we aim for simplicity and brevity to ensure policies are easily understood and followed, reducing the mental load and decision set for those attending events on the FCCB UCC property.

#5: We protect our staff:

We affirm that staff experience different levels of vulnerability. We operate under the expectation that any in-person activities or policies must not require staff to attend and should take special care not to burden staff with expectations for enforcement or exposure.

#6: We promote accessibility:

We are guided by regard for the most vulnerable (health-wise) in our congregation. We will seek solutions that are as inclusive as possible, including exceptions to regular guidelines, when necessary, to promote accessibility.



#7: We will flex and use judgement:

We recognize that the pandemic will likely be with us long-term and will require policies and procedures that are flexible enough to adjust as new information comes in, incorporating a consideration of benefit as well as risk. We will regularly consider new information, research, guidelines, and best practices to revise and inform our approach. As needed, we will convene to consider exceptions or additions to these guidelines.

As a corollary to #7, please note that we expect these policies to change over time as:

- (A) We collect congregational feedback on any in-person events First Congregational Church of Burlington UCC conducts;
- (B) We learn more about COVID-19 and its transmission;
- (C) We receive additional guidance from sources including (but not limited to): Federal, state, and local governments, the United Church of Christ, and the UCC Insurance Board;
- (D) Situations arise that we cannot predict.

It is important for the Executive Council to retain flexibility to address the changing nature of this season and other situations as they arise. We are striving to maintain consistency, flexibility, and good humor through it all.