

# **Unitarian Church of Montpelier Covid Safety Policies**

*as of February 23, 2022*

As we begin to re-open for services and other activities, we do so knowing that there are tools and strategies we can employ to reduce the risks associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and gather with relative safety. The UCM Executive Team has adopted a set of policies and guidelines upon the recommendations of the Covid-19 Response Task Force that allow us to gather in person even while some risk remains. The ET and Covid Task Force will regularly evaluate the necessity of these policies as circumstances change.

Please review the following policies and guidelines as you prepare to engage with in-person church activities. We understand that all church members and friends will need to make their own decisions about the level of engagement with in-person activities that is right for them. You may address any questions or concerns to the UCM Executive Team, [ucm.executiveteam@gmail.com](mailto:ucm.executiveteam@gmail.com).

## **I. General Policies**

### **A. Employee Vaccination Requirement**

Vaccination is an effective tool which is proven to reduce the presence and severity of COVID-19 cases in the workplace. The Unitarian Church of Montpelier (UCM) has adopted a policy of mandatory vaccination of all paid staff members, full and part-time, to ensure the health of colleagues, members and friends of the congregation, and their families, as well as the community at large.

This policy applies to all paid employees of UCM.

Acceptable vaccinations are approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in the U.S. including Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, or Pfizer.

An employee is considered up to date on Covid vaccination 14 days after receiving two doses of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and a booster vaccine.

All staff must show proof of up to date vaccination to the Minister within 4 weeks of receiving notice of this policy. Newly hired employees must show proof of up to date vaccination before the start of their employment.

All medical information collected from staff, including vaccination information, test results or other information derived from testing will be treated confidentially.

Exemptions:

A medical exemption may be granted if receiving a vaccine would jeopardize the individual's health. A licensed health care provider must attest to the employee's need for exemption with a dated and signed letter.

Anyone with an approved medical exemption will be required to test (PCR or rapid) every seven days and submit test results to the Minister. If the employee becomes symptomatic within 48 hours of attending a church event or meeting in person, they should notify the Minister.

### **B. UCM Choir Member Vaccination Requirement**

All UCM Choir Members must be up to date on Covid vaccination (meaning completed the full, primary vaccination course and boosted as appropriate). If you are not up to date on vaccination, you must show evidence of a rapid test done on the day of rehearsal. Proof of vaccination and test results are to be submitted to the Acting Director of Music or designee and are treated confidentially.

### **C. Positive Case**

If a staff member or other person who was present in the building or at a church event tests positive within 48 hours of being present in the building or at the event, they should notify the ET ([ucm.executiveteam@gmail.com](mailto:ucm.executiveteam@gmail.com)) of their positive test result and follow Vermont Department of Health recommendations for quarantine, testing, and isolating. Staff members should notify the Minister. The ET will notify all other persons present or identified as having been exposed to the positive person at the church building/event. If anyone develops symptoms while in the building, they should leave the building immediately and follow VDOH recommendations for testing and isolating, if applicable.

## **II. General Policies for In-person Gathering**

### **A. Symptom-Free Participation**

No one may come to the building or to in-person programming if they:

- Are exhibiting possible Covid-19 symptoms (Includes: Fever or chills; Cough; Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; Fatigue; Muscle or body aches; Headache; New loss of taste or smell; Sore throat; Congestion or runny nose; Nausea or vomiting; Diarrhea)
- Are in isolation because of a positive Covid-19 test
- Are in quarantine/isolation because of a possible exposure
- Are in quarantine/isolation awaiting results of a Covid-19 test

### **B. Masking**

All individuals, ages 5 and up, entering the building must wear a well-fitted face mask that covers the mouth and nose. A multi-layered mask such as N95, KN95, or KP94 is recommended. Disposable masks will be available.

### **C. Sign-in and Attendance Records**

Anyone entering the building or participating in an in-person church event must sign in providing contact information and confirming no recent exposure to Covid-19 and no symptoms within 24 hours. Sign-in sheets will be kept on record for notification of potential Covid exposure as necessary.

## **III. Policies for Participation by Stage**

UCM has developed the following policies for gathering in person and indoors based on levels of risk as determined by Covid ActNow, a public health collaborative. These policies allow for increased activity with fewer safety precautions as the Covid risk level decreases.

Stages are determined by the criteria listed, looking at the [CovidActNow.org](https://www.covidactnow.org) status in Washington County. These risk levels look at three things: daily new cases (per 100K), infection rate, and positive test rate. Each is graded on a five-color scale and the highest risk color becomes the location's overall risk level. The one exception is that if a location's daily new cases

are green, then its overall risk level is green. More detail on how the risk levels are calculated can be found [here](#).

#### **A. Stage **DARK RED** (Covid Act Now **EXTREMELY HIGH** Risk)**

No committees or small groups meet in the building except for staff, worship team, Community Lunch personnel, and essential property functions, e.g. contractors, cleaners, AQP team. The Sunday worship team and tech team numbers should be as sparse as possible during this period.

Staff are allowed to work in the building in a full capacity, scheduling time, masking and using air filtration devices if the air quality project is not yet complete.

Choir will not meet in-person. Smaller groups within the choir, up to 6 people, may meet off-site following basic precautions (masks and distance) and other mutually agreed- upon protocols. Outdoor singing, distanced and masked, for short periods of time (less than 1/2 hour) is allowed.

#### **B. Stage **RED** (Covid Act Now **VERY HIGH** Risk)**

In person attendance of Sunday morning services is permitted **before the completion of the Air Quality Project** with the following protocols:

- In person attendance will be offered every other week.
- Attendance is limited to up to 30 people.
- All attendees must RSVP in advance.
- All attendees who are eligible are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated against Covid-19.
- All attendees must provide evidence of a negative rapid Covid test taken that day or a negative PCR test taken within the previous 48 hours.
- All attendees must sign in, providing contact info and certifying they have been symptom-free for the past 24 hours and have not had a recent known exposure to Covid.
- All attendees ages 5 and up must wear a well-fitted face mask that covers the mouth and nose. A multi-layered mask such as N95, KN95, or KP94 is recommended.
- Six-foot social distance is to be maintained between individuals and/or pods.
- Singing is not permitted. Attendees may hum along to hymns and songs.
- Worship leaders are permitted to remove their masks when speaking only.

- Attendees are encouraged to greet one another and socialize outdoors before and after the service. There will be no indoor coffee hour.

Choir can meet in-person with the following protocols:

- Vaccination policy for choir must be followed.
- The rehearsal space must have adequate ventilation as defined by the AQP (3 ACH or equivalent)
- Participants will wear high quality, well fitting masks (N95, KN95, KF94 only)
- Participants will maintain 6 ft distance while singing.
- There will be a time limit of 30 minutes of singing at a time, with a 10-minute break out of the room to allow for air exchange.

Staff are allowed to work in the building in a full capacity, scheduling time, masking and using air filtration devices if the air quality project is not yet complete.

### **C. Stage **ORANGE** (Covid Act Now **HIGH** Risk)**

In person attendance of Sunday morning services is permitted **before the completion of the Air Quality Project** with the following protocols:

- Attendance is limited to up to 30 people.
- All attendees who are eligible are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated against Covid-19.
- All attendees must RSVP in advance.
- All attendees must sign in, providing contact info and certifying they have been symptom-free for the past 24 hours and have not had a recent known exposure to Covid.
- All attendees ages 5 and up must wear a well-fitted face mask that covers the mouth and nose. A multi-layered mask such as N95, KN95, or KP94 is recommended.
- Six-foot social distance is to be maintained between individuals and/or pods.
- Singing is permitted for the final hymn. Attendees may hum along to other hymns and songs.
- Worship leaders are permitted to remove their masks when speaking only.
- Attendees are encouraged to greet one another and socialize outdoors before and after the service. There will be no indoor coffee hour.

Choir can meet in-person with the following protocols:

- Vaccination policy for choir must be followed.
- The rehearsal space must have adequate ventilation as defined by the AQP (3 ACH or equivalent)
- Participants will wear high quality, well fitting masks (N95, KN95, KF94, singers' masks or surgical masks)
- Participants will maintain 3-4 ft distance while singing.
- There will be a time limit of 45 minutes of singing at a time, with a 10-minute break out of the room to allow for air exchange.

Staff are allowed to work in the building in a full capacity, scheduling time, masking and using air filtration devices if the air quality project is not yet complete.

***The Covid-19 Response Task Force is continuing to develop recommendations for other in-person church activities and Covid risk levels. Please stay tuned for further updates.***