

New Covid Protocols and Guidelines for The First Church in Oberlin, UCC

As we continue to welcome friends into the First Church building, the health and safety of our community is the prime concern. The protocols listed below have been created in accordance with the Lorain County Board of Health and denominational guidelines, and are subject to modification.

*I was glad when they said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'* Psalm 122:1

We continue to enjoy having our congregation back to in-person worship, and our friends and neighbors returning to our facility. As we move into the post-pandemic period, we want to ensure that experience is as pleasant and safe as possible for everyone involved. To that end, we are providing these COVID guidelines:

- We will continue to provide a virtual worship experience on Facebook Live for those who do not attend in person.
- We encourage all people attending to be vaccinated if they are eligible.
- Indoor masking will be voluntary. Please respect the wishes of others who decide to wear a mask indoors.
- Please be sensitive to the physical distancing needs of those around you.
- To offer additional physical distancing the balcony will remain open for seating.
- We will have childcare available during the service.
- We are asking the congregation to sing with their masks on during the hymns.
- Communion will be handled in a safe manner. Participation is optional.

- Carpooling to offsite events may be arranged based on the comfort level of the households involved.
- Church committees may meet either virtually or in person, at the discretion of the committee members.

- Rooms must be reserved in advance; No walk-up use of spaces.

COVID GUIDELINES FOR CHILDCARE AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

Matthew 19:13-14: *Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."*

As we welcome all people back to church - including our children, we want to make that experience as pleasant and safe as possible for everyone involved. To that end, we are providing these COVID guidelines for our childcare program:

- We have purchased a Germicidal UV and HEPA air filter for Room 1, where we will have children ages 0-2 (who should not wear masks).
- We will be opening windows whenever possible for better ventilation.
- We will be asking staff and children to frequently wash hands, and use hand sanitizer frequently as well.
- All toys that are out in the childcare rooms will be washed monthly.
- Frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, tables, and sink faucets will be cleaned weekly.
- Any mouthed toy will be placed in a bin of soapy water on a high shelf, then washed and disinfected before it is returned to use.

We also need your help to keep everyone safe. We ask that all families observe the following rules when in the childcare area:

- Indoor masking will be voluntary. Please respect the wishes of others who decide to wear a mask indoors.
- We ask children who are old enough to wear a mask while singing.
- If you anticipate your child needing a change of clothes, please bring that in a labeled backpack, which will be hung in the hallway outside Room 2.
- We will ask during check-in about how you would like us to handle diapering. If you would like to diaper your child yourself, we will text you if that is necessary. If you would like our staff to diaper your child, they will be required to wear gloves, and wash their hands before and after diapering.
- If you anticipate your child needing a bottle, please bring it in a labeled diaper bag or backpack, which will be hung in the hallway outside Room 2. We will ask during check-in about how you would like us to handle feeding. If you would like to feed your child yourself, we will text you if that is necessary. Staff will wash hands before and after feeding.

We ask your patience as we navigate through the gradual lifting of restrictions. These guidelines were created with the health of our community as our priority. They are in accordance with the Lorain County Board of Health and are subject to modification. Thanks for your support and your understanding.