

UU Church of Waterville - COVID-19 Advisory Group
Recommendation re Resuming Small Group Meetings in Church
February 9, 2022

Summary: On February 9th, the Board of Trustees approved the COVID-10 Advisory Group's proposal that small groups (not including the Coffeehouse) be allowed to resume meeting in the church as of **March 1, 2022**, as long as certain conditions are met and specific protocols are followed (details below). Of course, this does not mean that groups or individual members are *required* to meet in the church.

Rationale:

- Most of our members are vaccinated (and even boosted) and the vaccination rate in our county and state is relatively high.
- While the risk level in Kennebec County and Maine as a whole is still "Very High" (per covidactnow.org), the trend in cases and hospitalizations here and in the country as a whole is downward. Projections are also downward.
- Other churches in our area and some other UU churches (such as the one in Belfast) have been more open than we have, apparently without serious consequences (outbreaks, hospitalizations, deaths.)
- At our meeting with committee chairs on 1/19/22, most were in favor of taking this step.
- Small group meetings in the church would allow us to move toward "normalcy" until we have the technology, etc., in place to begin multi-platform Sunday services.

Conditions to be met:

- Continued improvement in risk levels in the county and state.
- Group members understand that they meet at their own risk.
- Group leaders are responsible for reminding members about protocols.
- Any group member who tests positive should cease attending in church, isolate, and report their status to the group (perhaps through the group leader).

Protocols for attendees:

- 10 or fewer people in the meeting
- Wear masks (multi-layer, well-fitted masks that cover nose and mouth)
- Stay at least 6 feet apart
- Practice good hygiene (handwashing and/or sanitizing)
- Limit eating and drinking. (Masks should be put back on as soon as possible after eating or drinking, if allowed.)
- No singing or wind instruments. (No Thursday Coffeehouse for now.)
- Location:
 - Meetings may be held in Averill Parlors.
 - Meetings may be held in the Sanctuary or "Library" when Annabeth Rynders is not practicing; her use of the space takes precedence. (Annabeth generally practices from about 1 to about 3 pm on Tuesday and Fridays, but may practice other days, depending on weather, etc.)
 - Meetings should *not* be held in the "meditation room" (behind the balcony).
- Air quality/ventilation: When/where possible, air filtration systems or fans should be used. When weather permits, doors and windows should be opened or meetings moved to outside.
- Suggested Time Limit: One hour