

GNUUC Indoor Gathering Policy

Background

The members of the Greater Nashville Unitarian Universalist (GNUUC) community have been challenged, but not defeated, by the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of this policy is to set guidelines for congregational mitigation strategies to reduce or prevent local COVID-19 transmission during indoor activities. GNUUC utilizes guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in developing this policy.

The risk of COVID-19 transmission has directly correlated to higher local infections. The CDC COVID Data Tracker will be used by GNUUC to determine when Davidson County, TN is considered an area of “substantial” or “high” transmission.

Note: This policy may be amended in the future to account for “low” or “moderate” local transmission. The guidelines of this policy are in effect for **all** levels of transmission until such time when edits are reviewed and approved by the GNUUC Board.

CDC: [Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission](#)

CDC: [COVID Data Tracker](#) (county view)

Policy

COVID-19 Vaccinations Are Expected

At GNUUC, attaining and maintaining a high vaccination rate is the foundation of our efforts to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. **Full vaccination against COVID-19 is expected - but not required - of all eligible members of the GNUUC community.** Nothing in this policy is a replacement for a broad and sustained vaccination effort.

CDC: [Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination](#)

CDC: [When You’ve Been Fully Vaccinated: How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)

Masks Are Required During Indoor Events at GNUUC

A face mask is a product that covers the wearer’s nose and mouth, and masks have been proven to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Younger members of GNUUC, those between the ages of 2 and 12, remain ineligible for the COVID-19 vaccines at this time (October 2021). For their protection, and out of the love and respect for others who may have greater COVID-19 risk considerations, **masks are required for indoor events at GNUUC when Davidson County is noted as an area of substantial or high transmission.**

The UUA also provides guidance for gathering in covenantal communities; please see the links and images below for more information.

CDC: [Decline in COVID-19 Hospitalization Growth Rates Associated with Statewide Mask Mandates — 10 States, March–October 2020](#)

CDC: [Families with Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Members](#)

CDC: [Your Guide to Masks](#)











[COVID-19 Indoor Safety Guideline](#) (Indoor Capacity Planner)

UUA: [Individual Masking in Covenantal Community](#)



Guidance for Gathering in Covenantal Community

As part of our covenantal commitment to care for all, we encourage congregations to maintain a culture of masking while indoors regardless of vaccination status, and to take time to listen deeply to one another's concerns and fears before making any decisions that might put members of the community at risk, either physically or mentally, with a continued practice of inclusion, covenant, consent, and care for each other.

Congregational Activity	Guidance	
Small Groups Outside Religious education, childcare, youth group, OWL, Coming of Age, Committee/team meetings, bell choir, small group ministry, playground meetup, games, hiking, bonfire	 OR 	Safest
Large Groups Outside Worship, rites of passage, lawn concert, poetry/play readings, coffee hour, "bring your own food" picnic, camping trips, vigils, protests, community gardening	 OR 	
Small Groups Inside Religious education, childcare, youth group, OWL, Coming of Age, committee/team meetings, bell choir, small group ministry	 OR 	Less Safe
Large Groups Inside Worship, rites of passage, poetry/play readings, concerts, art shows		
Small Groups Inside (with food/ drink/ singing/ deep breathing) Retirees' lunch, lunch bunch, choir, yoga, strenuous activity	 OR 	Least Safe
Large Groups Inside (with food/ drink/ singing/ deep breathing) Coffee hour, "bring your own food" meals, catered dinners/receptions, sing-a-longs, strenuous activity		

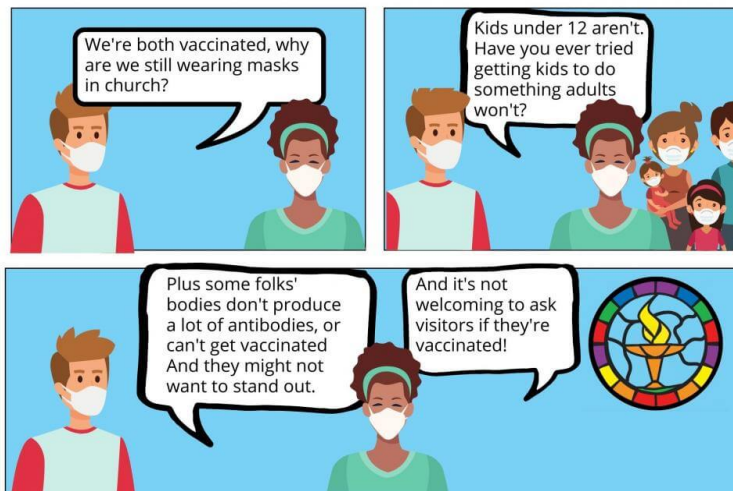


= Take prevention measures to protect self and others



= Take time to listen deeply to one another's concerns and fears before making any decisions, even if everyone is vaccinated

MASKS IN CHURCH?



Stay 6 Feet Away From Others

GNUUC event participants are expected to maintain appropriate physical distance to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19 between unrelated individuals. The CDC recommends 6 feet of distance between people who don't live in the same household. People without symptoms are able to spread the virus.

CDC: [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)

Capacity Planning

GNUUC is utilizing an application to inform capacity planning considerations that includes consideration of a group's demographics, vaccination rates, mask utilization, and building space.

Primary considerations:

1. Room specifications: The GNUUC Sanctuary reflects approximately 2,300 square feet (over 16,000 cubic feet) with a functioning commercial HVAC system.
2. Human behavior: Everyone is required to wear a mask, correctly fitted, during indoor events and maintain 6 feet of distance.
3. Duration of event: COVID-19 transmission is driven by time and degree of exposure. The duration of scheduled indoor events may be reduced if the number of attendees exceeds expectations.
4. Community Transmission Status: GNUUC leadership will consider pandemic changes, such as the Delta Variant transmission rate, as part of policy updates and edits.

Mask quality and fit compliance are the driving factors affecting the length of time scheduled for indoor events at GNUUC. The correct use of a disposable surgical mask in place of ***any*** multilayer material mask by all indoor event participants can alone increase the safe duration of an event time for 100 people from 40 minutes to 3 hours, according to the Indoor Capacity Planner (see link below).

GNUUC is fortunate to possess a large sanctuary to accommodate in-person events. An assessment of risk will be made at the beginning of each in-person event to determine if additional actions are required.

PNAS: [A guideline to limit indoor airborne transmission of COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 Indoor Safety Guideline](#) (Indoor Capacity Planner)

Building Ventilation

COVID-19 is spread more easily indoors where the concentration of particles can be higher. When indoors, ventilation mitigation strategies can help reduce viral particle concentration. The lower the concentration, the less likely viral particles can be inhaled into the lungs (potentially lowering the inhaled dose); contact eyes, nose, and mouth; or fall out of the air to accumulate on surfaces.

Please note: the use of masks by all indoor event participants significantly reduces or eliminates the presence of airborne viral particles ahead of ventilation enhancement measures.

The following practices will be utilized by GNUUC to improve ventilation, in accordance with the weather::

1. Increase outdoor air with open doors and windows.
2. Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality.
3. Confirm the HVAC system is set to maximize total airflow to occupied spaces.

4. Run the HVAC system (using AC, heat, or fan as required) for 2 hours before and after the building is occupied.

CDC: [Ventilation in Buildings](#)

Hosting Indoor Meetings

1. People may now gather indoors for meetings and worship at the Greater Nashville UU Congregation.
2. Indoor GNUUC functions will be hybrid to include remote participation following best practices technology advice from the Shared Ministry Council.
3. Indoor meetings will be hosted by a ministry team or covenant group and must be scheduled with the Congregational Administrator.
4. GNUUC will provide masks to all attendees of any indoor meeting. Masks must be worn at all times indoors at GNUUC.
 - a. GNUUC will provide guidance for proper mask-wearing.
 - b. Fabric masks are not as effective as non-woven masks.
 - c. GNUUC will provide event attendees with a non-woven disposable procedure mask (e.g. 3M Earloop Procedure Face Mask 1820).
5. Hand sanitizer will be made available.
6. Congregational singing indoors is not permitted at GNUUC when Davidson County is noted as an area of substantial or high transmission.
7. Food and drink may not be served indoors at GNUUC when Davidson County is noted as an area of substantial or high transmission.
8. Signage reflecting mask requirements, COVID-19 reporting, and the encouragement of vaccination for eligible individuals will be posted at exterior doors prior to indoor events.
9. Regarding vaccination choices, mask-wearing, and physical distancing, GNUUC community members will assume the goodwill of others; people will make decisions based on personal convictions, not malice. There are many reasons why these mitigation strategies may be difficult for some people. Our success depends on collective action, not individual compliance.
10. The GNUUC Children's RE team will develop a separate coordinated COVID-19 policy for children, youth, and the adults working with them.

Accountability

1. The Minister, the team leads hosting an indoor meeting, and the Congregation Administrator will be responsible for scheduling and capacity policy.
2. CDC guidance is about individuals. As congregations, our decisions need to be about community. We are in covenant with one another to act not just as a collection of

individuals, but as a body that works for the good of all

UUA: [Individual Masking in Covenantal Community](#)

UUA: [Covenantal Consent](#)

COVID-19 Case Reporting

Individuals at GNUUC have been directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sharing information regarding current or past infection is at the discretion of individuals, with the exception of those attending events at GNUUC.

1. Attendees who experience COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of attending an indoor meeting are expected to share that information with the Minister. Confidentiality will be maintained.
2. People who are feeling ill are expected to refrain from attending in-person events at GNUUC. Please wait at least two weeks after symptoms have stopped (or a negative COVID-19 test) before returning to church.
3. People who begin to feel ill during an indoor event will be isolated and assisted.
4. The team hosting an indoor meeting will maintain an attendance list to aid in contact tracing should a COVID-19 infection occur.
5. The Minister will work with the GNUUC Board President, Vice President, and Congregational Administrator to notify attendees as required if a person reports a positive COVID-19 test within 14 days of an in-person meeting.
6. After a report of COVID-19 symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test following an indoor event, all scheduled in-person gatherings will be immediately evaluated by the Minister and the GNUUC Board President and Vice President to determine if events should be canceled or if they may continue as planned.
7. People who have attended a meeting after which someone tested positive for COVID-19 may consider getting tested for COVID-19 3 to 5 days after the event. People are expected to consider themselves at risk of developing COVID-19 for up to two weeks after exposure and take necessary precautions to mitigate transmission to others during this time.

Scope and Definitions

Hybrid meeting means a meeting of people both physically present and remotely present. This most likely means Zoom meetings run simultaneously with physical meetings.

Physical distance means maintaining at least 6 feet of separation between people

Maximum capacity means the maximum number of people that can fit in a space while maintaining physical distancing.

Mask means a face covering that meets current CDC guidelines reducing the spread of COVID.

Close contact means being within 6 feet of someone for more than 15 minutes in a 24 hour period.

Stakeholders

This policy affects every person, covenant group, team, and all committees of the congregation, as well

as visitors to the congregation. All of those provided input into the policy during the feedback period. Covenant Group Facilitators, Teams will be responsible for observing the

Feedback

From Congregants with Medical Training

- Prepare a simplified version for the congregation that's easier to process and easier to follow.
- Vaccines. Masks. Air circulation, in that order.

From the Shared Ministry Council and Teams

- Hybrid Worship is a Thing!
- Children's RE will need to adopt additional policies because kids aren't yet able to get vaccinated.

From the Congregation

- Some people really want to get together in person.
- Some people really don't want to get together in person.
- People's comfort with getting together will change from week to week.
- Go outside!
- Don't cut off the remote people from in-person activities.

Reference Materials

Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission

Updated May 23, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/community-mitigation.html>

COVID-19 Indoor Safety Guideline (Risk and Room Capacity Calculator)

(Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://indoor-covid-safety.herokuapp.com/>

Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination

Updated Sept. 15, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/fully-vaccinated-people.html>

When You've Been Fully Vaccinated: How to Protect Yourself and Others

Updated September 16, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>

Decline in COVID-19 Hospitalization Growth Rates Associated with Statewide Mask Mandates — 10 States, March–October 2020

Published February 5, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7006e2.htm>

Families with Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Members

Updated Aug. 4, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/about-covid-19/caring-for-children/families.html>

Your Guide to Masks

Updated Aug. 13, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

Individual Masking in Covenantal Community

Updated May 19, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/masking-guidelines>

Covenantal Consent

Updated August 19, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/covenantal-consent>

A guideline to limit indoor airborne transmission of COVID-19

Published April 27, 2021; updated May 6, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.pnas.org/content/118/17/e2018995118>

Ventilation in Buildings

Updated June 2, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/ventilation.html>

Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace

Updated August 13, 2021 (Retrieved October 13, 2021)

<https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/ventilation.html>

<https://www.uua.org/safe/pandemics/gathering-guidance/guiding-questions>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/ventilation.html>