

Congregational Church of Hollis, U.C.C. Protocols and Gathering Guidelines for 2021-2022 Program Year

Mask policy

We now *require* that anyone over the age of 2 attending an *indoor* service, meeting, or event wear a proper face mask (a well-fitted mask that covers the nose and mouth) due to substantial transmission of the Covid-19 virus in our region.

We introduced this requirement because our area is at a “substantial transmission” rate for the Covid-19 virus. Substantial transmission means 50 to 99+ weekly new cases per 100,000 residents. We will reconsider this requirement when the transmission level is consistently below “substantial” in our area.

The Delta variant of the Covid-19 virus is highly transmissible. Few, if any, people who have received the Covid-19 vaccine are hospitalized or die due to the Delta variant. However, unlike previous variants, even the vaccinated can contract and transmit the Delta variant. While the likelihood of contracting and exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms is rare for the vaccinated, even the asymptomatic vaccinated person who has contracted the Delta variant can transmit the virus. Masking is proven to dramatically mitigate transmission.

Outdoor Gatherings

Masks are optional. Please respect 3’ social distancing guidelines.

Vaccination

We continue to strongly encourage that everyone 12 years and older who is eligible receive the Covid-19 vaccine.

As Christians, we believe that we have a responsibility to care for one another, even when it demands that we sacrifice our personal comfort or preferences—particularly when the wellbeing of anyone more vulnerable than ourselves is at stake.

The apostle Paul compared our life in community to that of a body: “A body is a unit and has many parts; and all the parts of the body are one body, even though there are many. ... So the eye can’t say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you,’ or in turn, the head can’t say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you.’ Instead, the parts of the body that people think are the weakest are the most necessary. ... But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the part with less honor so that there won’t be division in the body, and so that the parts might have mutual concern for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part gets the glory, all the parts celebrate with it.” (1 Cor. 12:14, 21-26, CEV)

At the Congregational Church of Hollis, U.C.C., we are proud to play our part in making our community a safe place for all who live, learn, pray, and seek to grow here. If you are looking for answers to questions or concerns about Covid-19 vaccination, [click here](#). To find a vaccination location near you, [click here](#). In New Hampshire you can also call 211 for help with vaccination scheduling.

If you are struggling with the question of vaccination, Rev. Tanya and/or fellow members of your church who are licensed medical health care professionals will be very happy to speak with you. Click [here](#) to contact Rev. Tanya, who can direct you to a trustworthy health care professional at your request.

In-Person Attendance at Services, Programs, and Events

Attendance at any worship gathering continues to be open to everyone. You are welcome to attend in person or via Zoom. Masks are required for in-person attendance. For your own safety, and the safety of others, if you are eligible but have not yet received the Covid-19 vaccine, we continue to strongly encourage you to do so. If you are immunocompromised, please consult your health care provider to decide if you should attend in person.

In-person worship services: In order to provide the greatest possible freedom of movement with minimal confusion, we are not delegating spaces but are asking individuals/families/pods to seat themselves with appropriate spacing in the pews, maintaining at least 3' between each. If you arrive to discover a crowded Meetinghouse, there are overflow areas in Hardy Hall and/or Emerson Chapel, where you may still participate in community; the service is viewable on the big screen in each room.

Those who are leading services or have speaking/singing parts in the service may remove their mask while they are doing their part and then must wear it at all other times. Singing should only happen with masks on, with the exception of the individual leading the singing.

People should respect one another's wishes around personal space, handshakes, hugs, etc. When in doubt, ask. It will seem awkward but is worthwhile.

Church Committee/Ministry Team Meetings may happen in-person, on Zoom, or hybrid. When in-person in the building, the mask mandate for groups holds. Room capacities are as follows:

- Austin Room <7
- Emerson Chapel <12
- Flagg Room <20
- Hardy Hall <50
- Parkhurst Room <7
- Saunders Room = 2

Groups may wish to meet outside on the Squires Community Patio, or in the Adam Verrecchia Community Memorial Garden, where masks are optional.

Please contact the [Church Office](#) to book space inside or outside the church prior to your meeting, or zoom@hollischurch.org to book a Zoom meeting using the church's account.

Faith Formation/Church School Activities will be held outside whenever possible, and the mask mandate holds.

Food – Outdoors and Indoors

We can eat and serve food that is individually portioned or prepackaged, and at the moment are using cafeteria-style service (where a masked, gloved volunteer will gladly serve you). Eating and drinking is encouraged to happen outdoors whenever possible. Indoors, the mask mandate holds except while eating or drinking.

Individual Meetings with the Pastor or Other Staff

All of the church staff are fully vaccinated. We can arrange meetings with you individually or as a family in any place or way that is mutually agreeable. We will always offer to wear a mask when we meet you. We can decide together not to wear masks.