



Church Community Health COVID-19 Policy *Approved by Church Council July 13, 2020*

The diversity which is central to life at St. John's UCC Lyons means that a fair number of people in our active congregation are physically, emotionally, or economically vulnerable (or some combination of the three).

In addition to worship service, we congregate for other meetings, such as Bible Study, Book Club, the Quilter's Ministry and the Women's' Guild. We host two other groups who meet weekly on Wednesday and Thursday in our building. We also engage with and host others who are especially vulnerable groups of people.

For this reason, we seek to be proactive, adaptive and responsive to the potential for an ongoing spread of COVID-19 - and to establish a policy that, with revisions as appropriate, will be helpful going forward should other mass health concerns arise.

This policy was drafted by Rev. Kimberlee W. Vasko (adapted from Rev. Jennifer Sanders, Pastor of Beloved Community UCC) (3/11/20) and originally approved by Church Council on 3/13/20. This policy was revised in July and approved by Church Council (7/13/20) to reflect the continuous changes in our understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic and to reflect the most recent guidelines by local, state and federal health departments and authorities.

It is envisioned as a series of cumulative proactive steps with calm and sensible responses. These steps will aid the rapidly evolving situations in which there is both perception of threat and actual threat of serious illness up to death.

STAGE 1 - FORMAL CALL FOR RESTRICTIONS **on activities or quarantine by denominational or governmental officials** ***(Phase 1 of Restore IL Plan - Stay at Home / Shelter in Place)***

- Change the way we operate for the protection of church members and the safety and well-being of all visitors through the temporary halt of all scheduled activities in the building facilities.
- Notify all members at this stage of church operational plans via email and/or text messaging system.
- Cancel all meetings or events scheduled at the church by notifying meeting or group coordinators.
- Provide virtual worship on Sundays for congregational members.
- Explore opportunities for digital study, team meetings and social connection through Zoom and other online media.
- Assess ability of the church to provide financial resources to low-resourced congregational members in need.
- Discontinue access to building except for Pastor or Facilities Director.



- Building activity is subject at all times to the policies and procedures determined by the Church Council along with the consultation of Pastor Kim.
- Establish a Congregational Care Ministry Team along with Pastor Kim to adopt a protocol for support needed for anyone within the congregation.
- Provide resources to address mental health needs during times of self-quarantine or isolation, as well as other resources needed or requested by congregation.
- Continued assessment and evaluation in preparation for weekly Sunday worship services.
- Assess capacity of Pastor along with available members to provide assistance to low-resource members on an as needed basis - and develop plans for response based on that capacity.
- Request that financially stable people who support the church financially enroll in online giving to ensure that basic necessary bills can be covered even if in-person attendance is not possible.
 - Provide one on one guidance for first time online giving assistance set up as needed.
- Ensure that Beth Johnson - Council President, Scott Mares - Facilities Director, Brad Gronke - Council Member and Trustees well as Pastor Kim are in communication about COVID-19 related topics, including sharing news of confirmed cases in the congregation or the congregation's extended community, keeping the name(s) of person's affected confidential unless otherwise permitted.
- Participate in virtual activities and share written information from local organizations, denominational resources, and government information as well as and initiatives around disease prevention /and mitigation. An especially useful resource - <https://transformativespaces.org/2020/03/04/demands-from-grassroots-organizers-concerning-covid-19/>

STAGE 2 - WIDESPREAD CASES IN ILLINOIS and/or CONFIRMED CASES

among people connected to St. John's UCC - Lyons

(Phase 2 through Phase 3 of Restore IL Plan - Some Limited Travel/Gatherings Allowed)

Continue with measures from Stage 1 with the following modifications:

- In addition to the Pastor and Facilities Director, the Music Director and Church Council President will be allowed access to the building.
- During this Stage, Council has the discretion to allow small group gatherings as under State guidance, groups of up to 10 can congregate. However, this will be a decision made each time the State moves back into previous Phases.



STAGE 3 - CONFIRMED CASES IN ILLINOIS

(Phase 4 of the Restore IL Plan - Groups up to 50 maximum may gather following physically distant and other safety guidelines)

The church council will consider progression to Stage 3 of this Policy by balancing the efficacy of providing in-person worship services with outlined safety protocols when the State of Illinois has entered Phase 4 *and* has experienced a current trend of a decrease in the percentage of new cases (related to all tests provided) over the preceding 14 days.

Sunday Worship and Worship Rituals

- Resume in person worship with a maximum of fifty (50) people allowed in the building at one time; council members will rotate and serve as greeters each Sunday to ensure maximum capacity and policies are abided by and attendance is recorded upon entry.
- Begin live streaming services and activities when possible to allow people to continue to worship where they feel most safe.
- Add signage to all doors: "We are a loving church. Show love for everyone by ensuring their well-being. Please refrain from all physical contact, maintain physical distancing of at least six feet, and a wear face covering that completely covers your nose and mouth while inside the building. Thank you for extending these graces of love and kindness during this time.'
- Lovingly request all persons follow non-contact greeting protocols during community greeting times.
- Require face coverings for all participants in worship as well as group activities and in person meetings; provide disposable masks at entry ways for all people entering the church building that do not already have their own mask.
- Establish physical distancing for households of at least 6 feet between pews / rows of worship chairs through use of signage and roping off of pews / rows. Parents have discretion to bring children to worship services, but children must remain with their family unit. All children over two years old must also wear face coverings.
- Install temporary washing facilities to all entry doors with sanitizer and soap and water.
- Limit singing as recommended by the Director of Music Ministry, based on current research and the most up to date, reliable information provided. Use pre-recorded music and encourage only humming along if one desires. Consider other forms of expressive worship such as interpretive dance, motions, and images of art. Singing is subject to further change based on recommendation by Director of Music Ministry and approved by Council.
- Provide Holy Communion in individually wrapped servings and encourage people to bring in their own elements for consumption on communion Sundays.
- Rather than passing the offering plates, one plate will be placed at the back of the sanctuary and one in the front on the altar. People will be invited to place their



offerings in the plate as they arrive or leave. Offering counters will have use of disposable gloves to wear while counting the offering and preparing the deposit.

- Request that parents bring their own silent activities for children during worship or meetings, as Sunday School will not resume until Stage 4.
- Allow people to bring their own drinks or snacks to consume in the building. Encourage people to only share individually wrapped snacks or sealed drinks with others if they wish to share food or drink.
- During Fellowship Hour any snacks or drinks provided will be provided in sealed, individually wrapped packages or disposable, environmentally sustainable containers.
- Encourage non-participation in worship or group gatherings if any individual is feeling ill (cough, fever greater than 100.1, shortness of breath, muscle aches, sore throat, unexplained loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, or headache) or you have been closer than six feet to someone that has had these symptoms in the past 14 days.
- Provide disinfectant supplies and sanitizer in each bathroom and common area.
- Increase frequency of routine disinfecting of common areas, which includes every four (4) hours during normal operation as well as before and after all events. This may include surface cleaning as well as disinfectant fogging.
- Request that those involved with the congregations of St. John's UCC Community notify the Pastor if they or any of their family members are diagnosed or quarantined through COVID-19 exposure.
 - The specific name(s) of any individual that has volunteered information as to their current medical status related to COVID-19 will remain confidential.
 - Council will notify the Village of Lyons and Cook County Public Health for proper record keeping and contact tracing.

Church Use Requirements

- Notify coordinators of outside meetings (AA, Quilters, etc.) at the church of these policies and procedures, including notification of any updates to the stage level within 24 hours of the determination.
- Require all groups that meet in the building at St. John's sign a revised church-use agreement to ensure they are abiding by the established policies and procedures in Stage 3.
- Require supplemental insurance for rentals of the sanctuary or fellowship hall.
- Ensure that all groups meeting in the building at St. John's are adhering to these protocols and notifying the Facilities Director or Pastor if there are confirmed cases among their participants.
- Meeting coordinators for each gathering will be instructed to use provided disinfectant supplies in each bathroom and common area to wipe down around faucet handles and doorknobs after each meeting or worship service. The meeting coordinator will be allowed to designate a trusted participant to handle those tasks. Coordinator will be required to confirm via phone or text the completion of required disinfectant and clean up protocols.



STAGE 4 - NO IMMEDIATE, HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS CONCERNS IN THE REGION

(Phase 5 of the Restore IL Plan - No restrictions on group sizes or physical distancing. Some risk mitigation and safety procedures still remain present.)

- Provide access to hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content as well as restrooms with hand soap, running water, and a method to dry the hands.
- Maintain basic hygiene, order of the premises, and ask those using the facility to do the same.
- Encourage people who are not feeling well to refrain from participation in group activities.
- Resume Sunday School activities for children.
- Resume singing throughout worship services.
- Allow for outside groups to rent the sanctuary and fellowship hall for any size events as well as enter into a Church Use Agreement to abide by cleaning and disinfectant policies.
- Advocate for just and equitable access to healthcare for all people, as well as environmental policies that protect the well-being of ecosystems.
- Pray for the health and well-being of all who are sick, including but not limited to those in the active congregation. Pray for those whose livelihood and financial stability is affected by illness or societal change.
- Provide pastoral and congregational care as appropriate, within our abilities, for those in the congregation as well as those in the wider St. John's community who need support during their own illness or the illness of a family member.
- Ensure that individuals can safeguard their own health, well-being, and bodily integrity without stigma during community greeting times by abstaining from physical touch if they choose.

Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols:

In addition to normal sweeping, cleaning and trash removal, additional disinfection shall occur 2+ hours prior to any scheduled event and following all building events.

Disinfectants approved by the American Chemistry Council's (ACC) Center for Biocide Chemistries (CBC) that are pre-approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use against emerging enveloped viral pathogens will be used during the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) disinfection cleaning.

St. John's will cover enhanced cleaning material cost from the general fund and will ask organizations using the space to help cover this cost, as the cost of disinfectant materials has risen during this time.



All cleaning shall include *disinfection of the following items:*

1. All Light Switches
2. Kitchen Cabinet Handles
3. Door knobs and handles
4. Door push pads
5. All folding tables and chairs used during activities
6. All sinks and faucets
7. Door Key slots
8. All toilets and urinal pull handles
9. Mailboxes and all letters and packages