

Establishment of FCCW Regathering Team

May 19, 2020

The FCCW Leadership Team authorizes the establishment of a Regathering Team to investigate, develop, and implement safe plans for the possible phased-in resumption of in-person worship and other in-building activities at the First Congregational Church of Winchester in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Charge

The Regathering Team will create a flexible working plan with accompanying guidance for the possible resumption of in-person, in-building activities — including worship, choir, ministry meetings, children and youth faith formation classes, adult spiritual programs, small group gatherings, Ripley Presents events, tenant activities, service work, and other in-person functions. It is expected that the planning and implementation process will be iterative, and executed in prioritized stages as new information related to the Covid-19 pandemic becomes available over time.

Possible Actions

- Collect input from the SNEUCC, peer churches, and other Winchester houses of worship regarding their findings and plans
- Consult with local and state public health officials, including meeting with them virtually, to gather information and direction
- Divide potential resumption actions into categories and stages (i.e. cleaning, worship, church school, meetings, events, etc...); each will likely be slightly different.
- Develop a cleaning plan for the initial return to the building as well as what will be needed for ongoing efforts in order to appropriately address heightened concerns regarding health and cleanliness
- Communicate with members of the congregation about their comfort in resuming aspects of FCCW's church life
- Work with FCCW tenants to gather their input and provide direction
- Develop a draft work plan/timeline for the resumption of appropriate activities, including re-entry education and training for staff, congregants, and tenants
- Explore alternative approaches for carrying out activities that require delayed resumption
- Consider safety lessons learned from Covid-19 (passing of the peace, one-way walking routes, Zoom as an ongoing meeting option, etc...)
- Bring major recommendations to the Ministry Team and the Leadership Team for feedback and approval before implementation
- Communicate guidance to congregation and provide support to ministries

- Implement the approved iterative work plan

Membership

One member from each of the following, if possible:

- Ministry Team
- Leadership Team
- Diaconate
- Personnel Ministry
- Health Ministry
- Children and Youth Faith Formation Ministry
- Facilities Ministry
- Ripley Programming Group

One congregational representative from each of the following, if possible:

- Medical sector
- Emergency planning sector
- Legal sector
- Communications sector
- Governmental sector

It may be that there will be some overlap between these two groups, which will actually be helpful.

Timeframe

The Regathering Team will commence its work immediately, meet as needed to develop an initial work plan including suggested timelines by 7/1/20, provide ongoing guidance to FCCW, continue its review with iterative recommendations, and conclude when the threat of the pandemic is well-controlled.