

November COVID Guidelines

Why do we keep asking you to mask?

We want to keep our congregation safe and do our best to prevent any additional pressure on BC's strained health care system. BC has now entered cold and flu season and **health experts are urging people to wear masks at indoor gatherings** to stop the airborne transmission of respiratory viruses, including COVID. The COVID variant most on the rise in Canada now is BQ.1.1, which spreads faster and has mutations that help it evade immunity better than any previous variants. For more details, see this [Global News article](#).

The Church's COVID-19 team continues to monitor the situation, stay abreast of the current literature on COVID, and adjust our guidelines to keep the congregation both safe and happy. Our guidelines have been in general alignment with the BC COVID-19 guidelines while taking a more gradual approach, as recommended by FUCV members in a recent survey, and in consideration for the large number of vulnerable elders in our community.

Our guidelines have also been informed by recent research on COVID rates in the Capital Region and recent studies about the long-term effects of COVID infection, including the following:

- [Possible 69% higher risk of Alzheimer's for older COVID survivors](#)
- [COVID-19 May Increase Risk of Diabetes in Children, CDC Study Finds](#)
- [COVID-19 hospitalization data is being misunderstood as next wave begins: BC modelling group. The correct data shows hospitalizations are starting to rise again already](#)

For the most up-to-date information on our guidelines, always refer to the e-weekly rather than the Newsletter.

1. Worship services. All services are now hybrid, available in person in the Sanctuary and the family-friendly Lion Lounge, or by Zoom. There are no capacity limits, no registration, and no vaccine mandates. Please respect others' comfort levels for social distancing and mask wearing.

2. Masks. The Sanctuary is designated as a mask-only zone Sunday mornings until noon, while masks are optional in the Lion Hall. We will ask people to mask as they enter the Sanctuary, and provide masks to people who do not have one. Masks may be temporarily removed by officiants, readers or for singing a solo. Microphone covers, which we use when speakers remove their masks, are being used as long as we continue wearing masks.

We recognize that it is impossible for us to guarantee 100% mask compliance in the Sanctuary; if you are concerned about people you see dropping their masks during the service, please consider attending services by Zoom rather than in person.

3. Groups. Committees, groups, teams, and choirs in rehearsal may gather in the church or elsewhere, masked or unmasked, at the discretion of the group.

4. Singing. For Sunday morning services, the choir and the congregation may sing with masks.

5. Air Circulation. The Lion Hall, Farmhouse Common room and office have HEPA filters installed for air circulation. The HEPA filters should not be used in these locations when the windows or doors are open. The sanctuary's two heat pumps will circulate outside air every 20 minutes; it is important to keep the windows closed for proper circulation.

6. If Symptomatic. Anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or who has tested positive for COVID-19, or who has [symptoms of COVID](#) should not participate in small group activities in person and should not come into the Sanctuary or Lion Hall. If you have COVID symptoms, consult [the BC Centre for Disease Control for information on self-isolation and self-monitoring](#). Isolation rules vary depending on whether you actually had a positive COVID test, your age, whether people you come in contact with are fully vaccinated or not, and whether you are fully vaccinated yourself.

7. Children's and Youth's Programs. Children's and youth's programs have resumed. Contact [Anna Isaacs](#) for details.

From your FUCV COVID-19 Team (Nancy Dobbs, Rev. Melora Lynngood, Kristina Stevens, Katherine Maas, and Jim Willis)