

## Reopening Task Force Board Report

April 2021

### Submitted by the Reopening Task Force

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#### Benchmarks for reopening:

There is no scientific guidance that provides a safe benchmark for our congregation to use when setting our threshold for returning to in-person worship services. Criteria for reopening must provide a safe environment for our congregants at highest risk of adverse outcomes from Covid-19 infections. So that our decision-making is transparent, the data and process that we use to make these decisions should be easy to understand.

UUA has recommended that in-person congregations not meet until after May 2021 (2) and after the pandemic has ended (1). The CDC and federal government are intentionally silent on limiting religious gatherings. Davidson County policy allows for business to arrange gatherings for 50-150 people once the city enters phase III of the opening plan (4). Due to economic needs, businesses in Davidson County will open for similar sized gatherings before the Covid-19 pandemic has declined to the level that FUUN can safely recommend in-person worship gatherings. The UU congregation in Reston, VA has set a threshold of daily Covid-19 cases less than 1:100,000 (1). This threshold is too low for a large metropolitan area like Davidson County. This very low threshold also does not acknowledge the reality that Covid-19 may follow the natural course of other Coronaviruses that cause the common cold and become endemic once the pandemic has resolved (5).

The Covid Act Now dashboard is an on-line tool that provides easy to view data on the current state of the Covid-19 pandemic (3). An aggregate infection rate is provided for the counties that make of the Nashville metro area here:

<https://covidactnow.org/us/metro/nashville-davidson-murfreesboro-franklin-tn/?s=1609553>

The Covid Act Now Dashboard provides a Daily New Cases (incidence rate) of infections (##:100,000 residents). This is the key measure that indicates a likelihood that a group of 50 congregants at FUUN will include one or more people in a presymptomatic but infectious period of SARS-COV2 infection. Also included is an estimated infection rate, test positivity rate and vaccination rate. Infection rate ( $R^0$ ) is the estimated number of people a single person with Covid-19 is likely to infect. An infection rate of  $<1.0$  suggests that the daily infections are decreasing, since a person with Covid-19 will spread it to less than 1 other person. Test Positivity Rate provides information about the reliability of the reported Daily New Cases. A low Test Positivity Rate provides reassurance that the reported Daily New Cases is a result of decreased infections and not due to insufficient testing and undiagnosed viral spread. Higher Vaccination Rates should be reflected in a lower Infection Rate and lower Daily New Cases.

The Reopening Task Force recommends that the church will open for in-person services following the below schedule as long as the Covid Act Now Dashboard shows Daily New Cases for metro Nashville of less than 25:100000, an Infection Rate of <1.0 and a Test positivity rate of <10%.

### Schedule for Phased Reopening:

The following is a basic outline of the recommended phased on campus reopening.

In order to reopen the following assumptions are made:

1. Davidson County risk level remains low.
2. Guidelines for risk mitigation will be followed.
3. Registration and attendance recording required for services and gatherings.
4. Contact tracing will be conducted in case of a known infection.

### **May – August: Getting Ready, Starting Small**

Sunday Services: continue offering services through live streaming.

Small group gatherings:

- Outdoors only with specific spaces identified to be reserved for use.
- The size of the group will be dependent upon the space being used and how many people the space can safely accommodate considering social distancing needs.
- All spaces must be reserved through the church office.

Small 'Spiff Up' groups will begin to work on building and grounds projects such as getting the sanctuary building spruced up and ready for in-person worship. Specifics will be reviewed which will include the number of individuals in a space, vaccinated individuals, masks required, etc.

### **September – December: In-Person, Starting Slowly**

Sunday Services: Alternating weeks between live streaming and in-person which will include the following;

- All-ages worship with supervised play\* available.
- Limited number of persons with social distance spacing based upon current recommendations.
- Recorded music.
- Service will continue to be live streamed.

Small group gatherings:

- Continue outdoors as weather permits.
- Indoors on a case-by-case basis.
- Space use will be dependent on the number of people the space can safely accommodate considering social distancing needs.
- All spaces must continue to be reserved through the church office.

## January – and forward: Together Again

Sunday Services: In-person weekly

- Choir/congregational singing will be determined based upon the latest science at the time.
- In-person CRE programs\* with a remote option (lots of technical issues to work out)
- Service will continue to be live streamed.

Small group gatherings: can continue.

\*Additional thoughts from the DLRE

- The CRE committee decided to continue remote classes on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday through August. The current programs they offer on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays will end in May. When thinking of alternating weeks this should be kept in mind.
- Immediate concerns are around safe congregation policy compliance and a potential increased need for volunteers at a time when it is already difficult to have enough volunteers to maintain a reduced program.
- The safe congregation policy requires adults watching children to be vetted. If we offer supervised play as an option put on by the church during church services, it needs to fall into one of these 2 options.
  - Option 1: Parent supervised, with specific communication to families that parents/guardians must accompany child/ren because church supervision will not be provided, or
  - Option 2: Supervised per safe congregation requirements by vetted adults, with standard procedure of signing in and out.
    - Option 2 would be dependent on getting volunteers, which is an unknown at this time, and would mean the possibility, with little to no notice, of canceling if volunteers cannot be secured.
- There is a need for different skill sets for in-person vs remote volunteers which could mean an increase in the needed number of volunteers.
- Additionally, the ability of children to observe social distancing needs and masks could mean an increase for more than the usual number of volunteers to help the children observe these needs.

If the Daily New Cases remain increased above 25:100000, or there are cases of likely Covid transmission during in-person Services, we will return to the prior phase.

The Reopening task force recommends that the Board review available data on a scheduled monthly basis to determine if the opening plan can continue safely.

## References:

1. UUA Guidance on Gathering In-Person When COVID-19 Subsides  
<https://www.uua.org/safe/pandemics/gathering-guidance>
2. Susan Frederick-Gray; From The UUA President: We Remain Committed to Public Health and Safety; January 28, 2021. <https://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/committed-public-health-and-safety>
3. Covid-19 ACT Now Risk levels & key metrics
4. Davidson county Road Map for reopening Updated November 2020:  
[https://www.asafenashville.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Updated\\_RoadmapforReopeningNashville\\_11.02.pdf](https://www.asafenashville.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Updated_RoadmapforReopeningNashville_11.02.pdf)
5. Amber Brenza;What Is an Endemic Virus? WHO Warns COVID-19 'May Never Go Away; Updated February 20, 2021; <https://www.health.com/condition/infectious-diseases/coronavirus/what-is-an-endemic-virus>
6. CDC Self-Quarantine guidance; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

## Appendix A: Interventions to reduce transmission risk for in-person services

### *Brainstorm (reviewed 4/7/2021)*

- Face to face attendance will require pre-registration with a cap on attendance for initial services.
- Check temperatures at the door and ask anyone with a temperature >100.0 to participate on-line only.
- Provide easy access to hand sanitizer in public spaces and disposable masks for those who may not have one of their own to wear.
- Incorporate testimonials from people describing their experience with getting vaccinated into services to encourage vaccination of the entire congregation.
- Signage:
  - Please wear masks when inside buildings.
  - Please stand/sit 6 feet away from people not in your household.
  - Please take advantage of our outdoor spaces if it is difficult to maintain social distancing in the Social Area.
  - Please use discretion, if in the last 2 weeks you've been in an environment placing you at high risk of exposure, by not participating in the face to face Services.
- Identify volunteers to provide a physical presence for staff that elect to participate remotely.

## Reference:

CDC Considerations for Communities of Faith: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>