

UUC launches multiplatform worship service on Nov. 7

Beginning Nov. 7, Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater will offer two ways to attend Sunday worship service — in person in the Octagon or online on Zoom.

Our Board of Trustees voted unanimously at our Oct. 27 meeting to affirm our earlier decision to return to the Octagon for worship on the first Sunday in November. Our Board also unanimously approved specific safety protocols for that return, we continue to center the health concerns of the most vulnerable among us. The service in the Octagon will be live streamed over Zoom and available to watch in real time as it is occurring. The sermon will be recorded for later viewing on the UUC website, as we have been doing for the past several months.

Those who attend in person must agree to abide by the following protocols:

Inside the Octagon

- Face masks are required indoors for everybody over two years of age. Disposable masks will be available for those who do not bring their own.
- Vaccinations are required for everybody currently eligible to be vaccinated. We will use the honor system regarding vaccinations.
- Joys and Sorrows will continue to be submitted online in advance of the service.
- We will not hand out a printed order of service. We will still provide the order of service in the E-Octagram for those who want to print their own and bring it with them.
- Collection baskets will not be passed. There will be a lock box in the sanctuary for your financial contributions.
- There will be social distancing between families/groups. We will block off every other row and ask individuals or groups to stay 6 feet apart in the pews. Everybody has permission to ask for more space around them. Everybody has an obligation to honor the safe space requests of others.
- Families with children are welcome to attend worship. We are not providing a special family/children section at this time. Children will remain with their families during the Story for All Ages

Before and after the service

- The Welcome Table will be set up outside under the portico.
- We will provide colored dots for name tags at the Welcome Table for people to indicate their level of consent:
 - Green means “go ahead and hug me”
 - Yellow means elbow bumps or handshakes only
 - Red means don’t touch or come close.
- Ushers will walk people to the name tag board to avoid crowding and then seat them. We suggest people take their name tags home to avoid crowding and maintain social distancing around the name tag board each week.

- Social hour will be outside without refreshments. You may bring your own snacks and drinks to begin with; eventually bring your own mug or thermos and we provide hot drinks and water.
- A decision about seating outside for social hour will be deferred until we see attendance and people's wants and needs. Bring your own chairs optional for now.
- Bathrooms. We encourage people to use both the sanctuary and social hall bathrooms but NOT remain indoors and socialize. If there is a line for bathrooms use the 6-foot social distancing practice in line.
- Should an attendee at our in-person worship service report later that they have tested positive for Covid-19, we are developing a system to alert other attendees so that they can take appropriate measures.

Ushers and greeters will remind attendees of these protocols. Everyone is empowered to remind others of these protocols as well. Everyone also is obligated to honor these protocols. Signage detailing these protocols will be posted throughout the buildings.

Those viewing on Zoom will be able to sing the hymns and other songs unlike those attending in person; our Worship Committee earlier decided against congregational singing in the Octagon for now because it is one of the easiest ways to spread the virus. Zoom viewers also will continue to have the opportunity to socialize in small breakout rooms after the service ends.

We have been offering online services for the past 20 months and I am very proud of the efforts of our Worship and Technology teams to find creative and enriching ways to keep us connected until it was safe to be together in person once again. We are able to provide multiplatform worship now through the hard work and dedication of many members of those teams. A very special thank you to the tech team of Rich Cann, David Feick, Ray Williamson and Jeremy Dillow; Worship Committee co-chairs Sue Boone and Mike Kahn; Music Committee co-chairs Sue Hand and Ed Kraemer; Meredith Olson, Transitional Director of Lifelong Learning; and Transitional Minister Rev. Roberta as well as her husband, Barry Finkelstein.

Our Board agreed to return to in-person worship service only after careful review of local Covid-19 cases, hospitalizations, vaccinations and other data. We will continue to monitor the pandemic's impact in Pinellas County and be ready to pivot back to online -services if the situation warrants.

Separately, our Board also voted to increase capacity limits for rental events. We are raising the capacity to 100 people inside the Octagon and to 70 people inside the social hall, effective immediately. All renters must comply with Centers for Disease Control guidelines.

Margie Manning, president, UUC Board of Trustees