

## James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation Strategic Plan for Operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear members of our beloved community,

The development of this plan has been a community process with everyone invited to weigh in, and we're grateful for your feedback, questions, and concerns. At the end of this document are answers to what we anticipate will be a few frequently asked questions.

In developing this plan, we have considered not only the science but also our JRUUC principles of inclusivity and accessibility and our abiding concern for the most vulnerable, both inside and outside our congregation. You will note that our criteria for reopening are more stringent than many of the schools, businesses, and houses of worship around us. This aligns with [guidance from the UUA](#), which advises that a normally-operating congregation presents too many opportunities to spread a highly contagious respiratory virus like COVID-19. While the vaccination news is very encouraging, the pandemic is not yet behind us.

Our cautious approach in no way lessens our eagerness to return to in-person gatherings. We know that while there are risks and challenges in gathering together physically, there also are risks and challenges in prolonged solitude. We share your desire to again connect in a deep way, something that for many of us happens best through face-to-face interaction. This document addresses both indoor and outdoor gatherings, by incorporating the previously approved guidelines for outdoor gatherings. Please know that we are confident there will be many opportunities to come together safely outdoors as a beloved community, as small groups and eventually larger groups, in the warmer months. We anticipate these occasions with joy and excitement.

Because we cannot predict what course this pandemic will take, this plan is divided into "Levels of Concern" as opposed to phases. Each level is determined by criteria based upon the prevalence and direction of increase or decrease of the spread of the disease, as reported via the [COVID Act Now Metrics for Dane County](#) (see [here](#) for explanations of the metrics used). Within each level of concern, the guidelines identify acceptable degrees of physical gathering, alternative means of carrying through with our JRUUC mission, and required precautions to limit spread of the virus applied to several aspects of our congregational life.

Each level of concern is based on conditions in the community, such as the daily average of new COVID-19 cases and access to vaccines. When this plan was released in late April, we were at Level 4, the most restrictive. As community conditions improve, we will be able to move to lower levels of concern, which will allow us to loosen restrictions and return to more of the activities we love to do together. **To avoid abnormal fluctuations, we will wait until the metrics have stabilized for two weeks before shifting to a lower level.** The JRUUC COVID-19 Task Force will monitor the metrics and share the level of concern each Wednesday in the weekly email and on the JRUUC website.

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## **Level 4**

### Situational Criteria

*If any one or more actual, existing conditions are of greater severity than even one of the criteria conditions listed below, the guidelines of the next higher level are to be implemented.*

[COVID Act Now Metrics for Dane County](#) are at the following levels:

- Daily new cases per 100K “10-25” (orange) or higher
- Infection rate “1.1-1.4” (orange) or higher
- Positive test rate “10-20%” (orange) or higher
- ICU capacity used “Over 85%” (red) or higher

And/or state, county, and/or city authorities have mandated a stay-at-home order.

### Building Accessibility and Use

The building is closed.

Hand sanitizer is placed in appropriate locations throughout the building.

Entry is only permitted for essential business, which is defined as payroll, bills, check signing, access to resources, and building safety and maintenance.

If two or more individuals are required to carry out essential business within the building, they are to maintain physical distance of 6’ or more, wear masks and gloves, wash hands at each opportunity, and sanitize surfaces contacted.

The building may be used for emergency community support under the following guidelines:

- Maximum numbers by room:
  - Sanctuary (2100 sq. ft.): maximum 18 (or whatever Dane County orders permit, whichever is less)
  - Multipurpose room (800 sq. ft.): maximum 7
  - Front classroom (246 sq. ft.): maximum 2
- Wash one’s hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after one has been in a public place, or after blowing one’s nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid close contact.
- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people.
- All people over the age of 2 years will cover their mouth and nose with a mask at all times when inside the building, unless it interferes with medical treatment.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

### Congregational Life - Worship and Program

Sunday services are prepared and disseminated on-line, from home(s).

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All group gatherings, including but not limited to meetings, religious education, Covenant Groups, and choir, take place virtually, with participants at home as individuals or family groups, or outdoors in accordance with the guidelines for outdoor gatherings that appear below.

Staff Practices

All staff work remotely, except for essential business that must be conducted in the building.

All meetings are held virtually.

Outdoor Gatherings

Keep the size of the gathering to a maximum of 15 people, or split into smaller groups when the total exceeds 15. The organizer of the gathering must provide a means for pre-registration, including a way to choose virtual participation if applicable. No drop-in events.

Ensure a physical distance from each other of at least eight or nine feet.

Arrive at all outdoor gatherings wearing a mask. Masks may be removed if all participants explicitly express comfort in doing so.

Bring hand sanitizer. Avoid touching one's face and frequently wash or sanitize hands, if possible.

Refrain from singing, chanting, reciting prayers, playing wind instruments or performing deep-breathing exercises, as these activities carry a higher risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Refrain from bringing items for sharing with others.

Prior to gathering, discuss restroom needs. Because public restrooms carry an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19, it would be best to keep the duration of a gathering short enough so that restroom facilities may not be needed. However, restroom facilities at parks could be considered, especially if they are frequently cleaned and well-ventilated. The JRUUC building is not open for restroom use.

Special considerations should be discussed if the gathering is to include small children and others who might find it hard to observe physical distancing.

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### **Level 3**

#### Situational Criteria

*If any one or more actual, existing conditions are of greater severity than even one of the criteria conditions listed below, the guidelines of the next higher level are to be implemented.*

[COVID Act Now Metrics for Dane County](#) are at the following levels:

- Daily new cases per 100K “6-10” (yellow)
- Infection rate “0.9-1.1 (yellow)
- Positive test rate “10-20%” (orange)
- ICU capacity used “80-85%” (orange)

And/or state, county, and/or city authorities have mandated distancing and face mask wearing in public buildings.

#### Building Accessibility and Use

The building is closed for general use.

Hand sanitizer is placed in appropriate locations throughout the building.

Entry is permitted for essential business, emergency community support (with the guidelines listed under Level 4), or one to four people to record or lead worship.

All people using the building are to follow these guidelines:

- Wear a mask at all times.
- Practice social distancing of at least 6 feet apart at all times.
- Wash one’s hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after one has been in a public place, or after blowing one’s nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Limit restroom use to one person or household at a time in each of the three restrooms.

#### Congregational Life - Worship and Program

Sunday services are prepared and disseminated on-line, from home(s) or by one to four individuals in the building.

There will be no shouting, heavy breathing, singing, chanting, or playing of brass or woodwind instruments in the building. Piano, percussion, or stringed instrument music may be played and recorded in the building.

All group gatherings, including but not limited to meetings, religious education, Covenant Groups, and choir take place either:

- virtually, with participants at home as individuals or family groups, or
- outdoors in accordance with the guidelines for outdoor gatherings that appear below.

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Staff Practices

All staff work remotely, except for essential business that must be conducted in the building.

All meetings are held virtually.

Outdoor Gatherings

Keep the size of the gathering to a maximum of 15 people, or split into smaller groups when the total exceeds 15. The organizer of the gathering is responsible to implement the outdoor gathering guidelines for this level, to communicate them to participants as needed, and to provide a means of virtual participation if applicable.

All participants will sign in, and the organizer will keep a copy of the sign-in sheet for two weeks in case contact tracing should be necessary.

Ensure a physical distance from each other of at least six feet.

Arrive at all outdoor gatherings wearing a mask. Masks may be removed if all participants explicitly express comfort in doing so.

Bring hand sanitizer. Avoid touching ones' face and frequently wash or sanitize hands, if possible.

Singing, chanting, reciting prayers, playing wind instruments or performing deep-breathing exercises may occur outdoors in groups of six or fewer people, wearing singing masks and staying at least six feet apart, for a maximum of 30 minutes per small group (in addition to any other speaking time). Volume for vocal activities will be no louder than ordinary conversation.

Refrain from bringing items for sharing with others.

The JRUUC building is open for restroom use, according to the guidelines listed above.

Special considerations should be discussed if the gathering is to include small children and others who might find it hard to observe physical distancing.

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## **Level 2**

### Situational Criteria

*If any one or more actual, existing conditions are of greater severity than even one of the criteria conditions listed below, the guidelines of the next higher level are to be implemented.*

[COVID Act Now Metrics for Dane County](#) are at the following levels:

- Daily new cases per 100K “1-5” (yellow)
- Infection rate “0.9-1.1” (yellow)
- Positive test rate “3-10%” (yellow)

And/or state, county, and/or city authorities have mandated distancing and face mask wearing in public buildings.

The building ventilation is fully functional, with clean filters and appropriate intake, in the areas that will be used.

### Building Accessibility and Use

The building may be used by groups, which must sign up on the building use calendar; the organizer of each gathering must provide a means for pre-registration, including a way to choose virtual participation. No more than three groups may be in the building at the same time, and only in the following configurations:

- Sanctuary (2100 sq. ft.): one group of no more than 18 people (or whatever Dane County orders permit, whichever is less)
- Multipurpose room (800 sq. ft.): one group of no more than 7 people
- Front classroom (246 sq. ft.): one group of no more than 2 people

Hand sanitizer is placed in appropriate locations throughout the building.

Signs are prominently displayed indicating:

- Which parts of the building may be used, and which are closed
- The configurations listed above
- The guidelines listed below

All individuals and groups (including children/youth) using the building are to follow these guidelines:

- Sign in with their name and phone number in the log book provided, and attest to three stipulations in order to remain in the building and participate in the activity (expected participants will be notified ahead of time of the sign-in requirement, including the health questions, the attestations related to health precautions taken, and travel):
  1. They feel healthy now and have not experienced fever, chills, new cough, shortness of breath, new sore throat, muscle aches, new head ache, or new loss of smell or taste in the last 14 days.

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2. They have consistently worn a mask and maintained social distance when interacting indoors with unvaccinated people outside their household for the last 14 days.
  3. They have not traveled to areas experiencing increases of cases of COVID-19 greater than those occurring in Dane County in the last 14 days.
- Wear a mask at all times.
  - Practice social distancing of at least 6 feet apart at all times.
  - Wash one's hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after one has been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - Cover coughs and sneezes.
  - Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
  - Limit gatherings to 2 hours or less.
  - Restrict use of each restroom to one person or set of household members at a time in each of the three restrooms.
  - Do not share food; individuals may bring personal water bottles and snack items.

**Congregational Life - Worship and Program**

Sunday services are prepared and disseminated on-line, from home(s) or by a number of individuals in the building consistent with the above configurations and guidelines.

There will be no shouting, heavy breathing, singing or chanting (except as noted below for choir), or playing of brass or woodwind instruments in the building. Piano, percussion, or stringed instrument music may be played and recorded in the building.

Up to four singers at a time may be recorded in the building with singing masks, at least six feet apart and using separate microphones, with no one present except the singers, accompanist(s), and individuals recording the music.

All gatherings and meetings will include an online accessibility option for those not able to gather physically.

Religious education for children and youth takes place virtually, with participants at home as individuals or family groups. Special religious education or youth activities may take place outdoors, following the guidelines for outdoor gatherings that appear below.

**Staff Practices**

All staff may choose whether to work remotely or in the office.

Staff meetings will take place virtually, unless staff members explicitly agree to meet in the building.

If two or more staff members share the same work area:

- Meeting time is limited to an hour.
- Sharing of work tools and equipment (e.g. pens, pencils, calculators, computer keyboards, etc.) is discouraged.
- Note: Masks and six-foot distancing seem to mitigate the risk of transmission of 'particles' broadcast by a cough or sneeze. However, aerosols may still accumulate in

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the air in an enclosed area over a period of time and may be a source of transmission. Limiting the time two or more spend in a room together and increasing air circulation, by using a fan and opening doors, are actions that should be taken.

When working alone, wearing a mask is not necessary.

Should a staff member develop any COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, they must notify all other staff members; any staff members with whom the ill person has come into contact may not return to the building for two weeks.

### Outdoor Gatherings

Keep the size of the gathering to a maximum of 25 people, or split into smaller groups when the total exceeds 25. The organizer of the gathering is responsible to implement the outdoor gathering guidelines for this level, to communicate them to participants as needed, and to provide a means of virtual participation if applicable.

All participants will sign in, and the organizer will keep a copy of the sign-in sheet for two weeks in case contact tracing should be necessary.

Ensure a physical distance from each other of at least six feet.

Arrive at all outdoor gatherings wearing a mask. Masks may be removed if all participants explicitly express comfort in doing so.

Bring hand sanitizer. Avoid touching one's face and frequently wash or sanitize hands, if possible.

Singing, chanting, reciting prayers, playing wind instruments or performing deep-breathing exercises may occur outdoors in groups of ten or fewer people, wearing singing masks and staying at least six feet apart, for a maximum of 45 minutes per small group (in addition to any other speaking time). Volume for vocal activities will be no louder than ordinary conversation.

Refrain from bringing items for sharing with others.

The JRUUC building is open for restroom use, according to the guidelines listed above.

Special considerations should be discussed if the gathering is to include small children and others who might find it hard to observe physical distancing.

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## **Level 1**

### Situational Criteria

*If any one or more actual, existing conditions are of greater severity than even one of the criteria conditions listed below, the guidelines of the next higher level are to be implemented.*

[COVID Act Now Metrics for Dane County](#) are at the following levels:

- Daily new cases per 100K “Under 1/on track for containment” (green)
- Infection rate “Under 0.9/COVID decreasing” (green)
- Positive test rate “3-10%” (yellow)
- The vaccine is widely available (free to all, at multiple accessible locations in Dane County) for adults

And state, county, and/or city authorities have allowed indoor gatherings to resume with some restrictions.

The building ventilation is fully functional, with clean filters and appropriate intake, in the areas that will be used.

### Building Accessibility and Use

The building may be used for groups including renters, which must sign up on the building use calendar. The organizer of each gathering must provide a means for pre-registration, including a way to choose virtual participation. No more than three groups may be in the building at the same time, and only in the following configurations:

- Sanctuary: up to 40 people, spaced apart as individuals or households
- Multipurpose room: up to 10 people, spaced apart as individuals or households
- Front classroom: up to 3 people, spaced apart as individuals or households

Hand sanitizer is placed in appropriate locations throughout the building.

Signs are prominently displayed indicating:

- Which parts of the building may be used, and which are closed
- The configurations listed above
- The guidelines listed below

All individuals and groups (including renters and children/youth) using the building are to follow these guidelines:

- Sign in with their name and phone number in the log book provided, and attest to three stipulations in order to remain in the building and participate in the activity (expected participants will be notified ahead of time of the sign-in requirement, including the health questions, the attestations related to health precautions taken, and travel):
  1. They feel healthy now and have not experienced fever, chills, new cough, shortness of breath, new sore throat, muscle aches, new head ache, or new loss of smell or taste in the last 14 days.

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2. They have consistently worn a mask and maintained social distance when interacting indoors with unvaccinated people outside their household for the last 14 days.
  3. They have not traveled to areas experiencing increases of cases of COVID-19 greater than those occurring in Dane County in the last 14 days.
- Wear a mask at all times.
  - Practice social distancing of at least 6 feet apart at all times.
  - Wash one's hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after one has been in a public place, or after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - Cover coughs and sneezes.
  - Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
  - Limit gatherings to 2 hours or less.
  - Restrict restroom use to one person or set of household members at a time in each of the three restrooms.
  - Do not share food; individuals may bring personal water bottles and snack items.

**Congregational Life - Worship and Program**

Sunday services and rites of passage (weddings, memorials, etc.) are conducted in the sanctuary and attended by individuals according to the configurations and guidelines listed above, and are streamed for those not able to gather physically.

- Only vaccinated adults may lead worship, offer music, and serve as greeters and hospitality hosts in the building.
- People leading worship and offering music may remove their masks to speak/sing.
- Instrumental music may be played (other than brass or woodwind).
- There will be no congregational singing indoors, but up to four musicians may sing from the chancel during worship with a distance of at least six feet between musicians and at least twelve feet between them and the congregation.
- Offering baskets are placed in the sanctuary but not passed.
- Hymnals and paper orders of service are not used.

There will be no shouting, heavy breathing, singing or chanting (except as noted in the next paragraph for choir), or playing of brass or woodwind instruments in the building.

Outside of Sunday mornings, the choir may rehearse or record in the sanctuary for up to half an hour singing time, with singing masks and six-foot distancing, and with the same requirements as other building use.

Religious Education for children and youth resumes. All adults working with children/youth must be vaccinated. All sessions must be conducted according to the configurations and guidelines listed above, and are streamed for those not able to gather physically.

All JRUUC gatherings and meetings will include an online accessibility option for those not able to gather physically.

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Staff Practices

All staff may choose whether to work remotely or in the office.

Staff meetings will take place virtually, unless staff members explicitly agree to meet in the building.

If two or more staff members share the same work area:

- Meeting time is limited to an hour.
- Sharing of work tools and equipment (e.g. pens, pencils, calculators, computer keyboards, etc.) is discouraged.
- Note: Masks and six-foot distancing seem to mitigate the risk of transmission of 'particles' broadcast by a cough or sneeze. However, aerosols may still accumulate in the air in an enclosed area over a period of time and may be a source of transmission. Limiting the time two or more spend in a room together and increasing air circulation, by using a fan and opening doors, are actions that should be taken.

When working alone, wearing a mask is not necessary.

Should a staff member develop any COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, they must notify all other staff members; any staff members with whom the ill person has come into contact may not return to the building for two weeks.

Outdoor Gatherings

Keep the size of the gathering to a maximum of 40 people, or split into smaller groups when the total exceeds 40. The organizer of the gathering is responsible to implement the outdoor gathering guidelines for this level, to communicate them to participants as needed, and to provide a means of virtual participation if applicable.

All participants will sign in, and the organizer will keep a copy of the sign-in sheet for two weeks in case contact tracing should be necessary.

Ensure a physical distance from each other of at least six feet.

Arrive at all outdoor gatherings wearing a mask. Masks may be removed if all participants explicitly express comfort in doing so.

Bring hand sanitizer. Avoid touching ones' face and frequently wash or sanitize hands, if possible.

Singing, chanting, reciting prayers, playing wind instruments or performing deep-breathing exercises may occur by all attendees following the requirements listed in this section, for a maximum of one hour (in addition to any other speaking time). Volume for vocal activities will be no louder than ordinary conversation.

Refrain from bringing items for sharing with others.

The JRUUC building is open for restroom use, according to the guidelines listed above.

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Special considerations should be discussed if the gathering is to include small children and others who might find it hard to observe physical distancing.

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**Level 0**

Situational Criteria

*If any one or more actual, existing conditions are of greater severity than even one of the criteria conditions listed below, the guidelines of the next higher level are to be implemented.*

[COVID Act Now Metrics for Dane County](#) are at the following levels:

- Daily new cases per 100K “Under 1/on track for containment” (green)
- Infection rate “Under 0.9/COVID decreasing” (green)
- The vaccine is widely available (free to all, at multiple accessible locations in Dane County) for adults

And state, county, and/or city authorities have allowed all in-person activities to resume with no restrictions.

Building Accessibility and Use

Building use returns to pre-COVID conditions.

Hand sanitizer is placed in appropriate locations throughout the building.

Congregational Life - Worship and Program

Sunday services are conducted in the sanctuary and attended with no restrictions, and are streamed for those not able to gather physically.

- Choir and congregational singing resume in full.
- Religious Education for children and youth resumes, with online accessibility options for those not able to gather physically.
- Coffee hour resumes with no restrictions, including the sharing of food and beverages.

All group gatherings, including rentals, return to pre-COVID conditions; JRUUC gatherings and meetings include an online accessibility option for those not able to gather physically.

Staff Practices

All staff work in their offices, but may choose to work from home as convenient.

Staff meetings will normally take place in the building, with an online accessibility option for those not able to gather physically.

Outdoor Gatherings

Outdoor gatherings are planned and attended with no restrictions.

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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### Will JRUUC members be able to see each other soon?

Yes! Especially with the warmer weather approaching, we fully expect there will be many opportunities in the months ahead for safe, socially distanced, outdoor gatherings of various sizes for those members and friends who feel comfortable coming together in this way.

### Why don't we worship outside all summer?

Outdoor worship, though lovely on a mildly warm day, brings with it many challenges. Finding a large enough space outdoors that is accessible for all, near restrooms, available on a consistent basis, and viable during hot, humid weather is not considered feasible. It would also be difficult to provide an adequate sound system outdoors or to livestream the services for those unable to attend.

### Even though our JRUUC approach is driven by metrics, not dates, what's your best guess for when we will start in-person worship again?

While we would love to provide such a date, the unpredictability of the pandemic makes it impossible to do so with any confidence. We share your frustration in not being able to have more certainty in our lives, and we pledge to move through these levels of concern as quickly as community conditions, our JRUUC values, and the science allow us to. The faster community conditions improve, the sooner we'll be able to return to in-person worship. We all play a role in this, so please continue to adhere to all health and safety protocols, including wearing face coverings in public, social distancing, and avoiding large gatherings.

### When will Rev. Karen be vaccinated and able to make in-person visits again?

Rev. Karen has been vaccinated and is now able to make in-person visits. She'll follow your lead on how to meet if you're fully vaccinated; if you're not vaccinated, she's willing to meet with you outdoors without masks or indoors with masks.

### What about our staff? Have they been vaccinated yet?

Our staff members are in various stages of vaccination, and have been given full discretion to wait until they are comfortable with returning to in-person work.