



**HOPEDALE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY
OXFORD, OHIO**



Understanding COVID Pandemic Risk Factors and Event Guidelines

In keeping with Unitarian Universalist Principles and with respect for one another as well as our larger community, medical science, and health-care professionals, the Hopedale Unitarian Universalist Community will observe best practices for gathering in person as guided by respected pandemic transmission risk indicators for the duration of the COVID pandemic. UUA President Susan Frederick Gray has said, “In the midst of all the difficult news in our world, our role as religious communities to nurture joy and resilience and tend to the spiritual well-being of our families and communities is vital.” UUA guidance may be found at <https://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/guidance-delta-variant>.

We expect participants in Hopedale activities to be vaccinated, and any unvaccinated persons to be masked when in proximity to others. Because we wish to be particularly welcoming to vulnerable community members and families with children without COVID vaccination options, and to take care for the safety of all, during periods of medium to critical pandemic risk we ask all of those attending events in person to wear masks while interacting with those not in their household or established group.

A Hopedale In-Person Gatherings Task Force has been exploring appropriate practices under these circumstances. They recommended a flexible protocol to guide our in-person gatherings that is keyed to pandemic risk as reported daily via [covidactnow.org](https://www.covidactnow.org). This website has four risk categories that the Task Force adopted into a chart that provides Hopedale with event guidelines for each of the four levels of risk. The Hopedale Board has approved this guidelines chart, and it will guide a three-person committee composed of the In-Person Gathering Task Force Chair, the responsible event planner, and the President as they decide if and how specific events should proceed. For particular events, the responsible event planner will typically be the Sunday Service Committee Chair, the Religious Education Coordinator, or the Stewardship Vice-President. For the duration of the pandemic this small committee will monitor risk indicators for Hopedale events and, if necessary, make decisions regarding cancellation, postponement, or relocation outdoors. This will be done at least two to three days before a scheduled event in order to fully notify the community if plans change.

When in-person activities occur during the pandemic, a safety coordinator will be designated for each event. Those attending who are not listed in the *Hopedale Directory* will be asked to provide contact information for potential contact tracing. An attendee who experiences COVID symptoms or tests positive within ten days of an event must inform the safety coordinator for appropriate contact tracing.

This is not a rigid system, and best judgments will be involved in decision-making. There are four categories of pandemic risk especially important for consideration. Trending directions of pandemic risk will also be viewed as important. Typically the highest-risk category will guide decisions about in-person meetings. However, at any point changing risk circumstances may warrant more or fewer restrictions, and no decision will be lightly made.

The In-Person Gatherings Task Force and the Board strongly desire that the pandemic, which to date has lasted some twenty months, will soon subside so these protocols will no longer be necessary. As public health conditions improve, our approach will allow restrictions on in-person gatherings to be lifted. For now, please be aware of the following guidelines.

Neil Danielson, Lead
Hopedale In-Person Gatherings Task Force

Curt Ellison, Board President
Hopedale Unitarian Universalist Community