

AN UPDATE ON IN-PERSON AND HYBRID WORSHIP AT THE CHURCH

First, we should be clear that, throughout the pandemic, church leadership has exercised extreme caution in our approach to managing the church building, requiring staff to mask while indoors and asking all church groups to meet remotely, including the worshipping community.

We feel that the rapid spread of the coronavirus Delta variant puts everyone at risk for infection. We know that some people in the congregation have not yet been vaccinated. Younger children have not yet been cleared to receive the inoculation and others have opted not to receive the vaccine. Because many in our community are elderly, cancer survivors, and some are otherwise immune-compromised, we feel that the need for extreme caution must continue, at least until the recent spikes in infections subside. The CDC recommends not singing indoors with others and we will abide by their guidelines. The Southern New England Conference of the UCC, whose offices remain closed and whose staff remains gathering/worshipping virtual-only, has been pivotal in guiding our cautious approach.

We have purchased all of the equipment for hybrid worship except the monitors that will display the virtual congregation worshipping on Zoom and the other graphics that we have used throughout the pandemic such as hymn lyrics and videos. We are waiting for electricians to wire the sanctuary for the monitors. This is a big job because most of the walls are composed of several layers of thick plaster and have hard cores of insulation behind them. Our expectation is that all of the equipment will be in place within the month – thanks to the good, hard, faithful, and stress-filled work of Keith Nogueira, our esteemed building manager. While we had hoped to begin hybrid worship as soon as the equipment was ready, we now feel we need to continue our all-virtual format until the public health situation improves.

We look forward to the day when we can all be together again. Until then, we thank you for your patience, support, and resilience as we muck our way through this unprecedented moment in our common life.

With faith, hope, and love,
Pastor Mark Seifried, Interim Senior Pastor
Lynn Chick, Moderator
Margaret McComish, co-chair of the Deacons
Julie MacDonald, chair of the Stewardship Ministry Team

