



Second Congregational Church of Boxford

United Church of Christ

The Reverend Laura A. Gronberg, Pastor

Worship Regathering Covenant

We at Second Congregational Church of Boxford (Second Church) believe that part of our Vision as a family of faith is to “gather together to worship and serve our loving God.” During the Covid-19 Pandemic, we have found wonderful ways to worship by video and in our Worship Garden. Now, we look forward to gathering in our church sanctuary for worship, following guidelines necessary to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and keep everyone as healthy as possible.

We affirm that all may participate in our worship services via our livestream or video recordings, even if some are unable to join us in person for worship in the sanctuary. The worship link will be on our website: www.secondchurchboxford.org.

We affirm that certain conditions exclude some from attending worship in person. All Second Church worship leaders, congregants, and visitors should not attend worship in person if any of the following are true:

- We are experiencing any symptoms such as fever (100.0 and above) or chills, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, runny nose/congestion, new loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
- We have had “close contact” with an individual diagnosed with Covid-19. “Close contact” means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for Covid-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for Covid-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for Covid-19 for 15 minutes or more, or coming in direct contact with secretions (e.g. sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for Covid-19, while that person was symptomatic.
- We have been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by a doctor or public health official.

We covenant together that those who gather in person adhere to the following guidelines:

- **We sign up for worship using an electronic platform:**
 - Sign-ups are constrained to the number of pews that can be appropriately distanced in our sanctuary and limited to no more than 60 gathered persons including leaders. See Covid-19 Precautions Worship Service Seating Document (September 30, 2020).
 - Sign-ups are by household pew and include the number of attendees from the household and their names. Contact information for one person is required.
 - Persons who find the sign-up full are encouraged to use the Waiting List in case a pew becomes available. Further, those on the Waiting List have the opportunity to sign up first for worship the following Sunday.
 - Sign-ups include a consent to abide by our Regathering Covenant and a brief attestation that attendees are not experiencing Covid-19 symptoms.

- **We wear face coverings during worship.** Face coverings are required for all, with the following exceptions:
 - An individual who has a medical or disabling condition which prevents it. We ask anyone unable to wear a mask to consider wearing a face shield.
 - Children younger than 2 years of age for whom face coverings are not advised.
 - Children ages 2-5 who follow the discretion of their parent or guardian.
 - A worship leader who may remove a face covering while conducting the service, provided a safe distance (more than 6 feet) is maintained from others present.

- **We maintain appropriate distancing between persons in the sanctuary:**
 - Persons who are not part of the same household must be seated 6 feet apart. Sign up for worship guides the pew assignments.
 - Persons in the same household are encouraged to share a pew.
 - Most pews have a maximum capacity of 4 persons (from the same household), though a couple of spots can accommodate larger families. Some families are smaller, and their pew seats the 1, 2, or 3 persons in their household.
 - Some pews are blocked off and remain empty for sufficient distancing.
 - Because all of this is confusing, an usher greets those entering the sanctuary and directs the household to be seated in a particular pew for best distancing between families. *Yes, that means that we covenant to sit in a pew other than “our pew” during worship. We can do it.*
 - Another usher assists persons in the sanctuary to their seats.

- **We enter and exit in a way that maintains our safety:**
 - All persons who are able to enter by the main sanctuary doors (Washington Street) are encouraged to do so.
 - Distance is maintained outside if we have a line of people waiting to enter.
 - Use of the touchless hand sanitizer dispenser at the entrance is encouraged.
 - Parishioners enter through the marked door on the right (piano side) of the sanctuary and follow the arrows to the appointed pew.
 - Those who need the accessible lift may enter through the side lobby doors. They enter the sanctuary by the organ, receive directions from the usher in the sanctuary, and follow the arrows to their pew.
 - Once seated, all remain in their pews throughout worship.
 - Following worship, the ushers dismiss pews one at a time.
 - The main exit is through the marked door on the left (organ side) of the sanctuary. As appropriate, people may leave through the door to the left of the pulpit to access the lift.
 - Those seated in the balcony also follow an entrance and exit pattern, entering through the stairs on the right and exiting on the stairs to the left.
 - We covenant not to congregate or visit in the sanctuary or Parish Hall, but instead visit outside after worship while maintaining a safe distance between us. *Yes. That means we can’t hug our neighbors, which may be even harder than giving up “our pew” in the sanctuary! We can do it.*

- **We covenant to maintain airflow in the sanctuary and dress appropriately:**
 - The ventilation fan in Parish Hall will be used during worship.
 - Windows near the rear of the sanctuary will be ajar to best promote air movement throughout the building.
 - The doors on either side of the pulpit will be left slightly open to promote air flow.

- **We covenant to adopt safe practices for our worship service:**
 - We consent not to sing together as a congregation during worship.
 - Any soloist may sing at a distance of 15 feet or greater from congregants. A plexiglass stand adds another layer of protection.
 - The Pulpit and associated microphones will not be shared.
 - An additional microphone for a lay worship leader is available on the floor by the organ, at a safe distance (more than 6 feet) from others.
 - Offering plates are not passed during worship. Our generous givers are encouraged to give online or to place their contributions in a plate in the Narthex as they exit church.
 - Our Order of Worship is available for download prior to the service or for our livestreaming and video congregation. Some printed copies are available for attendees to pick up as they enter the sanctuary.
 - When Holy Communion is shared, individual servings are used. Masks are lowered or removed after everyone is served and raised once everyone eats and drinks. The disposable communion cups are deposited in a receptacle at the exit.

- **We covenant to keep the church building clean and disinfected:**
 - The bathrooms outside Parish Hall and the base of the Narthex stairs are available for use before, after and during worship. The gendered bathrooms by the lower level classrooms are not to be used.
 - Sanitizing spray is in the bathrooms for each occupant to use when done.
 - Following our worship gathering, all high-touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected, including light switches, doorknobs, handrails, and bathrooms.
 - We consent to allow Sunday School programs (however there will be no Nursery care availability) with 15 or fewer persons. All such gatherings adhere to the “Sunday School Procedures for Meeting in Parish Hall” document.

- **We covenant to review our practices and revise them as events dictate.**
 - Leadership of the church will meet on a regular basis and as events dictate to review our practices and revise them as needed.
 - We welcome feedback from our church congregation as we work to make our worship gatherings as holy, safe and comfortable as possible.

October 9, 2020



173B Washington Street P.O. Box 508
 West Boxford, MA 01885 • (978) 352-2127
www.seconchurchboxford