

How First Church of Lombard UCC is Keeping Children and Youth Safe From COVID-19

September 2020 through December 2020

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL AGES

1. **First and foremost, we are paying attention!** These guidelines are being written using all the direction available as of this writing, with sources as wide-ranging as the CDC, the state of Illinois, the United Church of Christ, and First Church of Lombard's own previously adopted guidelines. And we are continuing to listen, which means that these policies are subject to change as the situation develops. *While these guidelines are thus intended to be reviewed as needed, our expectation is that these parameters will remain accurate for the remainder of 2020. Be watching for any updates.*
2. Our primary concern is demonstrating agapē love in all we do – which right now, often includes staying home if we are not feeling well. **Parents are responsible for monitoring the health of their students and keeping children and teens at home if they are feeling unwell, have a fever, or any other symptoms that may be COVID-related.** No additional health checks will be performed upon arrival at the class/meeting.
3. Attendance records for in-person events will be carefully kept to help with contact tracing. ***If someone in your household tests positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of attending an FCL function, please contact both Val Sutton (vsutton@firstchurchoflombard.org) and Pastor Jill Terpstra (PastorJill@firstchurchoflombard.org) immediately.*** We will follow the direction of the health department at that time.
4. **Masks and physical distancing will be standard at all programming, inside and outside the church building.** All students, leaders, and teachers will be required to wear a mask properly covering their nose and mouth, and we will all work together to maintain the recommended six feet of distance from others. Maintaining that distance may require changing meeting spaces/classrooms, either semi-permanently or on a meeting-by-meeting basis. Be watching for information directing students to different spaces – or even outdoors, which will be our preference while the weather allows.
5. **Hand sanitizer will be available in every area where groups are meeting and frequent use will be encouraged, especially upon arrival.** Handshakes, hugs, and similar greetings will not be allowed, with alternatives suggested.
6. **Activities will be planned with distancing in mind.** For example, if students are put in small groups or pairs for a game or discussion, enough space will be allowed to ensure that a 6-foot radius can be maintained. *See ministry-specific guidelines for more details.*
7. **Snacks, when served at all, should be individually wrapped rather than served communally or family-style. Drinks will also be served in individual packaging (bottles, cans, etc.) or directly from a tap into a cup or reusable container.** Handwashing will be required when snacks are served. Once someone has finished eating or drinking, they must immediately put their mask back on.
8. **When possible, we will keep supplies separate for each student's use from week-to-week, avoiding shared use of craft supplies, writing implements, Bibles, and more.**
9. **Training will be provided to volunteers to ensure they are familiar with these guidelines, as well as measures for sanitizing high-touch surfaces.**

MINISTRY-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

EXPLORERS (6th Grade Middle Schoolers)

- Students and teachers will follow all General Guidelines (see above).
- No weekly online or e-learning version will be offered, though occasional activities may allow for students to participate virtually. Be watching for details about those opportunities.

FIRST YEAR CONFIRMATION (7th Grade Middle Schoolers, generally)

Because FCL's Confirmation program kicks off with a number of activities that rely upon in-person gatherings, the Youth Ministry Team has decided to delay the start of this year's First Year Confirmation class to January 2021. It is hoped that we can either begin the program as planned (in-person) at that time, or adapt it in the interceding months to allow for a distanced approach. Adaptations will also be made to allow Confirmands to complete the program in the spring of 2022, which is when they would usually complete the program.

In the meantime, several social-yet-safe gatherings will be planned throughout the fall to help these students feel connected to the program, to First Church of Lombard, and to each other. These may include fellowship opportunities, serving projects, and other introductions to the Confirmation program.

SECOND YEAR CONFIRMATION (8th Grade Middle Schoolers, generally)

- Students and leaders will follow all General Guidelines (see above).
- As long as it is safe and feasible to do so, in-person meetings will be held, in a room large enough to maintain physical distancing. When possible, classes will be held outdoors.
- Adaptations will be made to allow students and leaders to attend virtually if needed, whether or not others are attending in person.
- Any off-site activity will require that parents drop off and pick up students directly at the activity location, to eliminate the risk of traveling (packed into a vehicle) with others who are not part of one's household. For this reason, the Fall Confirmation Retreat at Tower Hill will not be held this year. Other social-yet-safe activities will be substituted for the loss of this retreat; be watching for details.