

# 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

### YOUTH COMMUNITY (9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade High Schoolers)

- Students and leaders will follow all General Guidelines (see above).
- As long as it is safe and feasible to do so, in-person Group Nights and youth activities will be held, provided that there is a space large enough to maintain physical distancing. Most weeks, this will mean meeting in either Hatfield Hall or Fellowship Hall; however, when possible, gatherings will be held outdoors. If regulations change and Youth Community cannot meet in person, we will change to virtual meetings and adjust our plans accordingly.
- To allow flexibility and adaptation as changes occur, a full-year planned calendar has not been prepared for the 2020/2021 Program Year. Please be watching for monthly emails to learn about upcoming activities and gatherings. We will update you about larger activities (ie., retreats and the Mission Trip, traditionally held in mid-June) as soon as we can do so with any confidence.
- Any off-site activity will require that youth be dropped off and picked up directly at the activity location. In cases where students are able to drive themselves and parents allow, students may also drive directly to and from the activity location (within Illinois state lines). Doing so eliminates the risk of traveling (packed into a vehicle) with others who are not part of one's own household. *This change may affect a number of annual activities that depend upon group travel, but alternative activities and arrangements are being planned; be watching for details.*
- Similarly, annual activities that generally result in close quarters or require entering someone else's home will be altered this year (ie., most likely held at the church in a larger space).
- Alternatives are being planned for several of our regular Youth Community Mission Trip fundraisers, to steer away from buffet-style food service. Be watching for info about ways your family can help out!
- Any other upcoming off-site activities for youth, including retreats, will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine viability and any safety precautions that prove necessary.