

Opening Task Force
Report for the UUCB Congregational Meeting
May 22, 2022

43 meetings since September 2020. That is how many times the Opening Task Force (OTF) has met so far to formally help UUCB respond to the COVID pandemic and plan for a safe and responsibly phased reopening of UUCB.

OTF Mission Statement: The UUCB Opening Task Force (OTF) assists UUCB staff and leadership in planning and implementing the phased reopening of UUCB by engaging scientific and expert input and member concerns, wants and preferences.

The Task Force has been guided in its effort by the following principles:

- 1) The common good and the health and welfare of our congregants is foremost in our deliberations.
- 2) We commit to listen deeply to congregants.
- 3) Draft reopening plans will be shared for review and comment with key UUCB entities, e.g., Board of Trustees, Program Council, Executive Advisory Team, Buildings and Grounds, Family Ministry, Music, Social Justice, Pastoral Care.
- 4) Reopening will be consistent with congregational risk levels and tolerance and based on science based health indicators set by the county, state and World Health Organization (WHO).
- 5) The congregation will be kept informed of reopening efforts and have the opportunity to share concerns and suggestions.

To respond to its mission and honor its principles, the OTF:

- Created an OTF website for the UUCB home page so congregants and others could quickly access UUCB COVID status and reopening plans
- Established an email address for congregants to communicate directly with OTF members – planning@uucb.org
- Submitted 23 Beacon columns to help keep the congregation informed of activities and developments
- Contributed several Week Ahead articles when developments required increased congregational awareness of next steps in our COVID response
- Formally surveyed the congregation twice to seek input to the development of COVID safety protocols
- Conducted a Town Hall to inform the congregation of current COVID status and projections and to receive congregational feedback
- Continually researched and monitored COVID expert resources, e.g., World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Johns Hopkins

COVID Resource Center, COVID Act Now, California Dept. of Public Health, Alameda and Contra Costa County Health Departments, and the Unitarian Universalists Association (UUA)

- Developed phases and protocols to guide decision making for the gradual, safe reopening of UUCB that mirrored the mantra of Vaccination + Mitigation Stops Replication, based upon that research
- Also based upon that research, identified and implemented needed physical plant improvements to enhance the safety of the church environment
- Presented updates to the Board of Trustees, including policy recommendations for action to promote the safe reopening of UUCB, at relevant moments in the process
- Established procedures commensurate with Board action for vaccine verification and advance registration for Sunday services, with the possibility of safely reopening UUCB to Sunday service
- Recruited and trained volunteers to implement the reopening procedures

The OTF is pleased to have helped the congregation arrive today safely participating in Sunday services with responsible safety protocols still in place, e.g., masking, sign in to enable contact tracing if needed, use of colored name badge lanyards to respect individual preference on social distancing, safely spaced Sanctuary seating..

We are thankful for the patience, consideration, input, and resilience of the congregation in our journey. Given the increased cases with the COVID variant, we may feel finished with COVID but COVID is not finished with us. With significant vaccine compliance in our community, we look forward to responsibly expanding our in person activity to other Sunday prime time programming in a manner that continues to recognize the continuing presence of COVID and its variants in our midst and respect for member safety preferences, especially members who cannot be vaccinated, e.g., children and immune compromised members..

Current OTF Members: Patrick Cullinane (Chair), Sheldon Jones, Lisa Maynard, Rev. Catherine Boyle, Tess Snook O'Riva, and Rev. Michelle Collins. (Earlier Participants: Greg Lemieux, Rev. Catherine Boyle)