

UNITY REOPENING POLICY & GUIDELINES July 15, 2021

To our beloved Unity community:

Yesterday, Unity of the Valley's Board of Trustees met to consider our policy and guidelines for reopening Sunday services to the public on July 25th and beyond.

Our greatest wish has been to honor the various perspectives within our Unity family while also providing clarity and reassurance as we take this next step together. We are aware, for example, of different beliefs about the safety and necessity of vaccinations and mask wearing. We realized early on that no approach would likely satisfy everyone. To better understand how we could serve as many people as possible, we conducted a survey so everyone who wanted to share input had the opportunity to do so.

Based on the survey results, as well as guidance from our Ministerial and Shared Leadership Teams, our Board came to a difficult but unanimous agreement:

With deep respect for all viewpoints in our community, Unity of the Valley will reopen for in-person Sunday services on July 25th initially for those who have verified that they are fully vaccinated. Families with children too young to be vaccinated may attend services on a reservation basis. This reopening policy is being reviewed on a regular basis.

Before we detail our guidelines for verifying vaccinations and other safety precautions, we would like to address those who feel left out by this policy.

1. **We understand.** We wish there was a solution that gave everyone what they wanted. Please know this is only a first step, and we will loosen restrictions as soon as possible.

2. **In this unpredictable situation, we've been cautious in protecting people's health since the start.** We didn't want to be one of those places (and there were many) that opened too soon and got people infected. While some disagree with this approach, overall it's been strongly supported.

Your voice counts. If there is any information or feedback you feel the need to share, please feel free to contact Jon West (541-683-7664 and jwest97405@gmail.com) or Serenee Smith (928-533-1646 and sereneeheart@yahoo.com).

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING OUR REOPENING POLICY

1. **Livestream Services will Continue.** Whether you are able to attend services in person or not, you are a valued member of our community and we want to stay connected with you. Maintaining our livestream services on Facebook is an important part of that. With our congregation returning, we will be investing in a camera system that can be mounted on the wall. Until that happens, please watch out for tripods and any platforms supporting the cameras.

2. How to Verify That You've Been Vaccinated:

- A. Our goal is to gather as many photos or copies of vaccination cards in advance as possible.
- B. Once these are received by emailing unityval@riouusa.com, we will add your name to a Sunday check-off list.
- C. For those who don't get on the list in advance, on Sundays you can show your card (or copy or image of the card on your cell phone) and we'll have a sign-up table where you can add your name to our list.
- D. Once your name is added to the Sunday check-off list, we will discard any record of your vaccination card.
- E. We are exploring making your entrance into Unity even more efficient. Perhaps we can give people wristbands or other simple identifiers that don't require checking your name on a list.

3. Masks are Very Welcome, Not Required

- A. Because of the other precautions we are taking, we feel that a free-choice approach to masks is reasonable. For this reason, some greeters and ushers may be masked, others not.
- B. Those on the platform are generally unmasked because they are at a distance from the congregation; because there are at most only about 7 people on the platform; and because of the difficulty of presenting with a mask on.
- C. **HERE'S A GOOD PRACTICE:** If you're concerned about people singing around you, consider bringing a mask so

you can put it on whenever you like. We will also have masks available at the door in case you forgot to bring your own.

D. If you are experiencing any cold, flu or extreme allergy symptoms, rather than attending with a mask, we ask that you please stay home and join us online.

4. Advance Reservation for Families with Children Too Young for Vaccination:

A. Since there are no youth classes in the summer (and we need to recruit paid teachers for the fall), some youth may choose to attend our adult services. Everyone 12 or older will need to verify their vaccination.

B. For families who want to bring younger, unvaccinated children, please notify us by the previous Thursday at 541-345-9913, ext. 11 or unityval@rioussa.com. We will set up some chairs for your family somewhat apart from other congregants.

C. Please have any unvaccinated children wear a mask for everyone's safety.

5. Other Precautions We Intend to Take:

A. AIR QUALITY: As we have done since we began livestreaming, we will have one or more windows open on one side of the sanctuary and a fan blowing air out on the other side. There is also a fresh air intake out of view behind an air vent, and we will explore keeping the fan activated in the air conditioning unit.

B. REFRESHMENTS: Coffee and cookies will be available outside the back door after the service (those serving on our Sunday morning teams may access coffee earlier.)

C. WHERE TO ENTER: Entering the building before and during the service will only be through the front door, except for those who have a need to use the back door for physical reasons. If that's you, please contact Géna (541-345-9913, ext. 11) so we can plan for this accommodation.

D. CLEAN UP: We will have an assigned crew disinfecting commonly used surfaces, particularly doorknobs.

E. PHYSICAL CONTACT: There will be reminders about respecting people's right not to hug, and we will not be holding hands to sing the Peace Song.

F. THE OFFERING: While limiting attendance to vaccinated people goes a long way toward safety, there may still be some concern about passing offering bags hand-to-hand. So we will ask ushers to be available at the end of several aisles where people can place their gifts. We hope this will help avoid a traffic jam around the offering baskets that will be available at both exits.

G. GETTING THE WORD OUT: Along with our written and livestreamed announcements about our initial vaccination verification policy, we will place signs outside. If you can help us spread the word, that would be great!

We thank you for your patience, understanding and cooperation as we gradually rebuild an active, vibrant congregation founded on Divine Love and Wisdom.

Your Unity Board President and Ministerial Team