

Dear Members and Friends,

For the last two months we have found ourselves in a whirlwind of changing circumstances due to Covid-19. We have lived with a patchwork of stay-at-home orders and have a new understanding of social distancing practices. As congregations, we've found new ways to gather and have done our best to stay connected. There is much to absorb; undoubtedly we will come out of this experience changed in many ways.

It has been eight weeks since we updated you on our churches' plans to stay safe during these unprecedented times. With Governor Hogan's latest directive released Wednesday, it feels timely to share our current thoughts on how to best 'do church' for the next few months.

Our goal is simple: to stay safe. While the new state advisory offers some flexibility for religious groups to meet in-person with limitations, we do not see it would be prudent yet to re-open our physical spaces for Sunday worship. Our sanctuaries are small and appropriate distancing would be a challenge, singing and sharing food (both highlights!) are risky practices that we'd need to avoid, and many of our members (including our minister!) are over sixty or for other reasons are considered in high risk categories.

For now, UUCR and UUFE will not be holding in-person services. We will continue to offer ways to gather online on Sundays and will explore additional ways to connect virtually during the week. As we learn more, and consider guidance from authorities and the Unitarian Universalist Association, we will revisit these plans.

We feel so privileged to be a part of congregations which have found ways to adapt with grace, humor and love. If you are interested in volunteering to help with new initiatives that will keep our congregations vibrant and meaningful, please let us know.

Please stay safe and stay in touch.

In care,

Rev. Sue Browning  
David Biehler, President UUCR  
Emily Cranwell, Co-President UUFE  
Dr. Christina Drostin, Co-President UUFE