

This policy is created by the Safety Team, consisting of President Nick Hart, Vice President Jen Vandiver, Co-chair of Lay Ministry Tom Blumenthal, Director of Religious Education Beryl Aschenberg, and Parish Minister Rev. Claire Feingold Thoryn. Our policy-making has been guided by the advice of Follen member and epidemiologist Dr. Matthew Fox, DSc, MPH, information on our ventilation system from Follen's Buildings & Grounds Action Team, research on the policies of other local congregations, and the guidance on indoor performance/worship from the Town of Lexington. This policy applies to all activities at Follen Church.

Goals

1. Follow the science and update policy as appropriate.
2. Embrace all members of our community—all belong!
3. Align with Massachusetts and Lexington guidelines and metrics.
4. Minimize risk while allowing community gatherings for worship, religious education, and fellowship.

Covid-19 Data as of August 31, 2022

1. *County* – [Middlesex County metrics](#) as of August 31, 2022: 105.4 cases per 100K, 1.06% infection rate, 81.50% fully vaccinated, 47.9% boosted. Community transmission classification: Low.
2. The [Lexington Board of Health](#) continues to recommend wearing masks in populated indoor spaces, consistent with CDC recommendations.

Procedural Expectations

1. We care about each other within our community, we do our best to keep each other healthy and safe, and we expect each other to stay up to date on our Covid-19 vaccinations.
2. Masking indoors is encouraged, but not mandatory for people of all ages, including Religious Education and Choirs.
3. When leading and participating in worship, we encourage speakers, singers, and musicians to rapid test that morning. Food and beverage consumption is allowed indoors and outdoors.
4. Please continue to respect people's needs and requests for physical distancing and masking.
5. Windows shall be opened to aid ventilation in the sanctuary as well as in other rooms as weather permits.
6. If you are experiencing any current symptoms of Covid-19, please stay at home. Please follow CDC guidelines for quarantine.
7. A recorded and/or streaming service may be available as an alternative to in-person worship.

About Follen's Ventilation System

Exemplary Air Exchange in the Sanctuary

In our sanctuary, [our ventilation system is capable of completely changing the air in the sanctuary every 3-5 minutes](#). *This means that in one hour, the air in the room will be completely exchanged for fresh air 12-20 times.* This is a magnitude better than the requirements for safe singing according to an [Aerosol Study done by the International Coalition of the Performing Arts](#), which requires a minimum of three air exchanges per hour. In the Community Center, where we may gather for social hour, the ventilation system mixes a steady 25% of fresh air with internal air, leading to 2-4+ air exchanges per hour.

Note: In the sanctuary, when the heating or cooling system is running, we have fewer air exchanges but still considerably more than the 2-4 per hour recommendation.