

**The United Church of Christ, First Congregational**  
**11 West Main St., Norwich NY 13815**  
**(607) 334-3434**

**POLICY FOR USE OF CHURCH BUILDING AND GROUNDS**  
(updated 08/28/23)

Our church's mission includes making our building available to various social, civic and charitable groups. We affirm this as a ministry to the community and as a forum to address issues of concern. Permission for use of our building does not imply approval of all the activities or positions of any particular group. However, we reserve the right to refuse use of the building to groups which we believe promote values that are destructive of the spiritual, physical or mental health of the community and individuals in it.

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**COVID-19 Safety Protocols**

**Items that pertain to outside groups using the building:**

- Face coverings in the church building are optional.
  - Social distancing of 6 feet is still recommended.
  - Singing is permitted; social distancing between family groups is recommended.
  - Hand sanitizing stations are located near the Nave entrance hall and in each pew. Please wash your hands or use sanitizing stations frequently.
  - We ask that if you are not feeling well and /or may be exhibiting cold or flu-like symptoms, that you refrain from attending until you feel better.
  - Disinfection Plan: our Custodian will disinfect all high touch surfaces, including rest rooms and seating areas frequently.
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Many people use this building every week and we need the cooperation of each group to make this space available to all. We ask that you observe the following guidelines:

1) Scheduling:

- Schedule the room you need with the Parish Coordinator through the church office (334-3434) as soon as you know the time and date. A Building Request form can be obtained from the Parish Coordinator or downloaded from our website and can be submitted after you check the date availability.
- Allow enough time for set-up and clean-up when you set the time limits.
- The Parish Coordinator is responsible for routine scheduling of the building facilities. Within the Parish Coordinator's discretion, requests for use may be referred to the Board of Trustees for review and final approval before such use shall be allowed. Major events requiring use of several rooms or more than one day will be referred to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- Church groups are expected to schedule their meetings and, except in an emergency, cannot expect to use space at the last minute that has previously been reserved.
- Ordinarily scheduling is on a first-come, first-served basis, however church groups and meetings have priority and occasionally other events may have to be rescheduled. The church reserves the right to withdraw permission for previously scheduled use of facilities that are required for the worship needs of the church such as a funeral or when weather or maintenance problems require closing the building.
- The chair of the Board of Trustees or the Moderator may be asked to resolve scheduling conflicts.

2) Church facilities are not to be used for private fund-raising purposes.

3) Designate a named individual to be the responsible contact with the Parish Coordinator and have him/her visit the church prior to the event to become familiar with the facility and to pick up a key during regular office hours. This individual is also responsible for seeing that the building is secured and all lights are out after the meeting and for returning the key promptly.

4) Restrict activities to the requested rooms.

5) Please leave the rooms as found. Furniture should be returned to the original arrangement. The kitchen should be left clean and in good order. If any damage or malfunction happens, please report it to the office as soon as possible.

6) If you are the last group in the building, please be sure that both outside doors are locked and the lights are off.

- 7) Kitchen use: Please provide your own coffee and beverage supplies unless prior permission has been granted to use church supplies. Directions for using the coffee machine are posted on the wall. Make sure the coffee machine is turned off before leaving.
- 8) Please refrain from playing the grand piano or organ unless permission has been granted to specifically named persons in advance.
- 9) All youth and children should have adequate adult supervision. Adequate supervision is considered to be the presence of adults who are able to restrain running, horseplay, and occupancy of rooms not requested for use.
- 10) The nursery is not available unless specifically reserved. Adequate supervision must be provided for children playing there. It should be left clean after use. Please do not leave soiled diapers in the room.
- 11) Parking: Due to limited space, permission to park in the church lot is **not** granted with use of the building. Unless your group has specifically been granted parking privileges, please ask all persons not needing handicapped space or unloading supplies to park elsewhere.
- 12) Please respect our wishes that there be no smoking in the church building or on church property.
- 13) Do not store anything in the basement without clearance from the Parish Coordinator.
- 14) Do not prop open the outside doors to the church. This leads to problems with birds, insects and bats.
- 15) Fees: No fees are charged for the use of church facilities except in unusual circumstances. A \$20 per hour custodial fee may be charged when the church is not left in satisfactory condition.
- 16) Special Requests Needing Extra Approval:
  - Portable Sound System - A portable sound system is available for use in the Nave.
  - Audiovisual Staff and equipment for church sound system and livestreaming (see below)
  - Grand Piano (Nave)
  - Organ (Nave)
  - Large Screen TV (Nave)
  - TV with DVD Player (portable)
  - Projector for use with a laptopExtra tables and chairs or a special set-up can be arranged with at least two weeks notice.
  - Parking Lot
- 17) Use of the Pianos by Outside Organizations (Music Committee January 2011) - Costs for tuning the piano for a concert by an outside organization will be shared between the church and the organization. In the event of financial need by the organization, the church may consider waiving the shared cost, at the discretion of the Director of Music Ministries. **Requests for tuning must be made through the church office at least 30 days in advance of the event.** If the request is made with less than 30 days notice, any additional charges assigned by the piano tuner will be the responsibility of the organization.
- 18) Livestreaming
  - You are welcome to livestream any event with your own device.
  - To use the church's livestream capabilities, arrangements can be made through the Parish Coordinator to request our staff to stream your event using our cameras, microphones and computer equipment. Appropriate licensing permissions and music copyright information will need to be discussed and submitted to the Livestream Director prior to the event. The AV staff will be paid by the church, but a donation to offset these costs is appreciated.
- 19) Insurance:
  - As a condition of use, UCC, First Congregational must be held harmless from and against any claims, demands, liabilities or actions of any nature which may arise from or be claimed or connected in any manner from this use. If you, your group or organization is covered by a policy of liability insurance, the UCC, First Congregational must be added to that policy as an "additional insured", and proof of compliance provided by attaching a Certificate of Insurance to the Building Use Request form.
  - Organizations wishing to bring property to the church for display or other purpose must arrange for their own adequate insurance protection.
- 20) Fill in and sign a Building Use Request form, stating you have read and agree to these guidelines.
- 21) EMERGENCY CONTACTS:
  - Chris McSweeney – 607-373-5463
  - Pete Williams, Moderator – 607-244-9271
  - Rev. Jason Boyd – 607-371-3615