

First Universalist Church of Essex – Facilities Use Policy

It is the policy of the First Universalist Church of Essex (FUCE) to make its building available to individuals and groups within the Church and the broader community that seek to enrich life through education, the arts, recreation, celebrations, or other activities compatible with the FUCE mission.

Permissible and Impermissible Uses and Priorities

Permissible uses of the church include, in order of priority:

1. Worship
2. Ministry functions
3. Religious Education
4. Church Boards and Committees
5. Church Administration
6. Church Ministries/Church Members (Weddings, Memorial Services, etc.)
7. Church-Affiliated Organizations
8. Other Member-Sponsored life passage events (Anniversaries, birthdays, etc.)
9. Inside Non-Church Groups, Individuals, and Organizations (PFLAG, Pilates, etc.)
10. Outside Non-Church Groups, Individuals, and Organizations (Outside Weddings, choirs, parties, etc.)

Bookings may only be accepted from commercial, for-profit groups with permission of the Board of Trustees. (Mere payment of a speaker or the sale of tickets to cover the costs of an event does not make a group a for-profit group.) With the permission of the Board, the Music Director may use the building for music lessons. Uses that jeopardize the Church's tax-exempt status shall not be permitted.

Recurring events shall take priority over one-off events.

Groups that conflict with the purpose and principles of the FUCE shall not be permitted to rent or use the facilities. Use of the Church shall not be allowed for any purpose that the Board of Trustees feels detracts from its dedicated purpose as a place of worship and reflection.

No group shall be denied use of the building because of religion, race, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or age.

Fee Schedule

No fees are payable for events in categories 1 through 6. Fees for other events shall be charged according to the following schedule:

\$50 per hour for basement/kitchen.

\$100 per hour for sanctuary.

\$100 refundable deposit against damage.

If cleaning is required after an event, it shall be charged at \$25/hour against the deposit.

The Minister may waive or adjust fees at her discretion, informing the Board at the next Board of Trustees meeting that this has been done. Fees waived or adjusted for recurring events need only be reported to the Board when they are initially waived.

Bookings, Deposits, and Cancellations

Bookings in categories 6-9 shall be made using the Facilities Booking Form and require the Minister's or Administrative Assistant's approval. Additional approval by the Choir Director is needed if the piano or sound system is to be used.

The deposit and 50% of the fee shall be payable at the time of booking, with the remainder due at least two weeks before the event. Cancellations must be made at least seven days before the event.

Deposit checks will be held uncashed and returned within 15 days of the event if no cleaning fee is due.

FUCE reserves the right to cancel or reschedule in the event of Church emergencies, such as funerals.

Piano and Sound System

If the piano or sound system is required, it must be indicated on the booking form and approved by the Choir Director.

If piano use is not approved, the piano must remain covered, and no food or drinks shall be placed on or near the piano. The piano must not be moved except with the permission of the Director of Music.

Opening and Closing the Building

Keys may be obtained prior to the event from the Minister, Administrative Assistant, or other person designated by the Minister, at a mutually agreed time and place. Keys shall be returned within one week to the Minister, Administrative Assistant, or other person designated by the Minister.

Events shall end by 11PM, out of respect for our neighbors.

Safe Sanctuary Policy and events including minors.

All groups using the building shall adhere to the UU Safe Congregations policy.

For events where minors will be present, enough responsible adults shall be present to ensure adequate supervision.

Setup and Cleanup

Setup and cleanup must be accomplished during the rental period. Furnishings may be rearranged but must not be removed from the room they are in and must be returned to their original locations by the end of the rental period.

Garbage must be bagged and placed in receptacles. Recyclables must be placed in the appropriate containers. If cleanup by the caretaker is necessary, it shall be charged against the deposit at \$25/hour

Publicity

Publicity materials for any non-Church event must not imply FUCE endorsement of the event.

Food

Stoves may only be used by prior agreement. Food must be prepared off the premises. Utensils, silverware, etc., must be washed and returned to storage by the end of the rental period.

Alcohol, Smoking, Drugs, and Weapons

Alcohol use is permitted with the approval of the Board of Trustees. Alcohol may not be served to minors. Under no circumstances shall alcohol be sold on the premises.

Smoking and drugs are not allowed anywhere on Church grounds. No weapons may be brought onto Church grounds except Police Officers during their duties.

Care of the Building

Decorations may only be attached to the walls by a non-marking method (e.g. painter's tape) and must be removed before the end of the rental.

Vehicles: Parking and Standing Restrictions

Vehicles must be parked on the street or in the public lot behind the Police Station. Please note signed restrictions on parking in the central aisle of the public lot. No vehicles may be parked in the lot of the Village Restaurant. No parking or standing is permitted in the driveway by the lower Church entrance: this driveway belongs to our neighbor and is in constant use.