



The First Spiritualist Temple of East Aurora

A Member of the National Spiritualist Association of Churches, U.S.A.

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Special Newsletter, November 20, 2020

Pandemic Restriction Changes. As you have probably heard on the news, Governor Andrew Cuomo moved most of Erie County to “Orange Zone” status for pandemic precautionary measures, announced mid-afternoon Wednesday, November 18, 2020. (A few weeks ago, we were in “Yellow Zone” status.) Businesses must comply with the new restrictions starting today, Friday, November 20.

What we will do at First Spiritualist Temple of East Aurora. **On Sunday, November 22, 2020, we will be open for Sunday services.** There will be a few changes:

- Healing service will remain open from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., with quiet music and time for meditation. However, we will ask healers to sit at the front of the worship area to send healing. Those attending are asked **not to come to the front of the room** for a hands-on healing. Instead, healers will send healing remotely from the front of the room.
- We must limit the number of people upstairs to 25. If more than 25 people wish to attend, we will seat a handful of additional people downstairs, where they can participate in the service by remote, closed-circuit broadcast.
- We’ll have someone at the front door asking screening questions (and soon, asking for a quick touchless temperature check). As always, if you are feeling unwell or have reason to quarantine, please do not attend in person.
- Mask requirements will be strictly enforced. Please wear your mask over your mouth and nose; face shields and masks with breathing valves are not acceptable.

What we will do in coming weeks. The board and pastoral committee will monitor additional changes to determine whether we can safely remain open each Sunday.

- If we need to close the church for in-person services, I will email everyone as soon as possible. If you’re reading this information on email, you’re on the list to get updates.
- If you’re reading this information by postal mail, someone will try to call each church member to let you know we’re closed, using the phone number you’ve supplied us as a member. If we cannot speak with you directly, we will leave a message on your voicemail. If you need to update or check your phone number, please feel free to call me (information below).
- We will post closing notices on our website, Facebook and MeetUp sites. It does not appear that local TV stations are offering “crawls” on their broadcasts for closures.
- **If our “Orange Zone” designation changes to “Red,” assume church will be closed.** The board and Pastoral Committee will discuss ways to continue bringing church to you, probably through Facebook livestream (as we did between March and June this year). However, we’re



scrambling to keep up with what the news is, and how we can best respond to it—please be patient as we hammer out details.

Another consideration: Christmas Bazaar. Sadly, we're postponing the Christmas Bazaar until we can safely bring this event to you. Even with a controlled, limited traffic flow for viewing and bidding on baskets downstairs, we're not certain we can assure everyone's safety during "Orange Zone" restrictions. Further, we cannot tell whether Erie County will transition into "Red Zone" status by the date of the bazaar—which would mean we could not legally open even with limitations. Given the suddenness with which the "Orange Zone" was declared, we don't want to risk a last-minute cancellation.

How we did the math. Although official state websites are slow to post the information, we've been able to learn that for "houses of worship," this means we must limit attendance to 33% of capacity, or 25 people, whichever is less. Our capacity in the worship area is 80 people. That means we are limited to attendance of 25 people. (For comparison, our numbers in October 2020 were between 26 and 31 people.)

Some context. East Aurora's transmission rates are relatively low—around 4%, in line with most of the rest of Western New York. However, some of the surrounding townships are much higher—pushing 12%. We have people attending our church from all over the region, which means that the likelihood of transmission is increased within our church. Our primary concern is keeping us all safe.

This virus is a killer; ECMC is gearing up for more hospitalizations soon, and the healthcare system in parts of the country is swamped. People who do not show any symptoms may still be infected, and can spread the disease to others. The primary means of transmission is aerosolized droplets—fine particles of moisture from your mouth and nose, which can remain hanging in the air for many hours.

Stay safe and healthy. If you need information on church business, you can text, email or call me at president@firstspiritualisttemple.com, 716-876-4805 (home/land), or 716-208-0624 (cell).

Love, light and laughter – Jeanne P. Laurel, President, First Spiritualist Temple of East Aurora