**UNITARIAN CHURCH OF SHARON**

4 North Main Street, Sharon, MA 02067

**Rental Use Policies and Procedures**

**Revised January 21, 2023**

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All rentals of facilities must be approved and coordinated by the Church Administrator in advance of the planned activity.

The Rental Coordinator may be either a member of the Rental Committee or the Church Administrator.

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All functions shall have a Rental Agreement completed and approved by the Rental Coordinator.  All renters will be advised of the rate schedule for the use of specific Church facilities prior to receiving an Agreement.

**Room Capacity.** The renter is responsible for ensuring that room occupancy does not exceed its capacity. The capacity of the Sanctuary is 150 people. The capacity of the Vestry is 80 people.

**Youth Groups.**  There must be responsible, full-time adult supervision for any youth group.

**Food and drink** are **not** allowed in the Sanctuary.

**Alcoholic Beverages.**  No alcoholic beverages are to be consumed on the Church premises without specific, written permission. Alcoholic beverages may not be sold on the premises.

**Trash.**  **All trash must be bagged in a sturdy trash bag before being placed in the dumpster**.

**Thermostat settings**. Renters may change thermostat settings but must restore the settings back.

**Furnishings** are not to be relocated from any room without specific, written approval in advance from the Church Administrator. Any re-configuration of furniture must be restored to its prior arrangement at the end of the rental.  Renters may not remove any furnishings or equipment from the Church.

**Candles** may be used in the Sanctuary for special services only, and their use must be approved in advance by the Church Administrator. Permission for the use of candles in the Sanctuary will not be granted for any occasion not supervised by either the Minister or an appropriate representative of the Church designated by the Rental Committee..

**Smoking** is prohibited everywhere in the Church building and on church property.

**Decorations or Hangings** may not be affixed anywhere in the building, including the sanctuary and vestry. Users may not use tape, other adhesives, thumb tacks, nails or screws on the walls or woodwork.

**Rental Area**

Apart from use of the rest rooms, renters must remain within the rooms rented per the Rental Agreement.

**Church Grounds**.  Use of Church areas outside of the building, including the front and side lawns and walkways, is limited to use specifically approved, in advance, by the Church Administrator.  This includes any signage, however temporary. Grounds must be left free of debris.

**Parking** is allowed only in designated, lined spaces in the parking lot. To comply with fire and safety codes, it is prohibited in the circular driveway. Additional parking is available in the municipal lots on High Street and in the lot behind the stores on Billings Street.

**It is expected that users will leave the Church facilities in good condition, suitable for use by others.**  The Church Custodian will be responsible for thoroughly cleaning the building after use, but renters are expected to leave the premises tidy and undamaged.   If there is damage, the church may request compensation to cover the cost of repairs. Leaving damaged or unkempt premises may mean future rental requests will be denied.

**General Policies**

1. Church facilities are available primarily for the use of the Unitarian Church of Sharon, its parishioners, its prescribed boards and committees, and other Church- or District-sponsored groups.  However, the use of the facilities by other organizations may be permitted when such use does not interfere with the programs of the Church, subject to the specific policies and regulations set forth below.
2. Preference in the use of Church facilities shall be given to organizations or groups formally associated with the Church including, but not limited to the Minister and staff; Church officers; committees and their activities as listed in the by-laws; Junior and Senior Youth Groups; and Church-sponsored groups and committees.
3. Second preference for use shall be given to members of the parish who wish to use the Church facilities for a non-Church related activity (such as a family gathering).
4. Third preference for use is given to individuals and non-profit organizations when facilities are available, when the use does not interfere with Church-sponsored activities, and if the use is in harmony with the goals and philosophy of the Church.
5. Functions by non-Church related groups involving fund raising will not normally be approved.  However, if the Board of Trustees judges that the project supports a use that merits the support of the Church, and other suitable space is not available, the request may be approved.

**Procedures**

1. Persons interested in renting Church facilities verify on the church website that the space is available, then complete and submit the rental request for. .
2. The Church Administrator will review your rental request, collect any additional information needed and determine the fee for the proposed rental.
3. If the church can accommodate the rental request, the Rental Coordinator will mail a Rental Agreement to the renter.
4. The Renter must sign the Rental Agreement and Policies and Procedures and return them with the required deposit to the Church Administrator. **The Rental is considered confirmed ONLY when the Rental Agreement and deposit are received by the Church Administrator**.
5. Full payment is due 30 days prior to the rental date.

The Rental Coordinator may require several days to complete any of the steps in these procedures.

The Church reserves the right to deny rental of Church facilities and may modify these policies and regulations at its discretion.