

## **Church Use Policy**

### ***Purpose***

The overall principle for the Church Use Policy of the First Congregational Church of Bellingham is to responsibly make the best use of the church facility as a service, not only to members, but also to the surrounding community. The following policy has been adopted by the Board of Trustees and the Church Council and is to be followed by all who use the church facilities. Please contact the church office if there are questions concerning these policies.

All groups and organizations, member, non-member, and staff are required to abide by the First Congregational Church Use Policy related to the usage of the church facilities. This policy includes, but is not limited to, recognizing that the facility is the church "home" for the members of First Congregational and that all are welcomed in our home without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, economic or social status, sexual identity, or sexual orientation.

### ***General Use Policies***

1. All groups or individuals, both member and non-member, requesting use of church facilities, must complete and submit a Church Use Application and Agreement form. The church reserves the right to approve or decline any request for usage.
2. The rental use of church facilities is generally only allowed for 501 (C) (3) organizations (non-profit or academic institutions). Exceptions may be allowed, with Trustees approval, when the use is consistent with the stated mission and values of First Congregational Church.
3. Regularly scheduled church activities have precedence over any use of the church facilities from outside organizations. Secondly, those organizations with long term agreements with the church will have priority over other outside groups.
4. Church Staff and/or the Trustees Board will determine if the requestors are qualified to meet the First Congregational Church requirements for the church rental use policy.
5. Groups approved to use church facilities shall identify at least one contact person(s) on the Church Use Application and Agreement form. ***The contact person shall not be a member of the church.*** First Congregational Church will identify a representative who will serve as a Church Event Host.
6. A Church Event Host is responsible for allowing building access to group members and ensuring the facility is secured and locked both during and after the event. If a Church Event Host is unavailable the provided contact person(s) will be trained in Event Host procedures. The contact individuals will also act as the point of contact for any questions, issues, situations which may arise, and will be able to respond appropriately in the event of an emergency.
7. A deposit is required to hold the date for the event and to cover any extra cleaning or for returning the space to the condition in which it was found. Users are financially responsible for the costs of any repairs or extraordinary cleaning needed resulting from their use of the facility.
8. First Congregational Church is not responsible for any accidents, injuries or the loss/damage of personal property that may occur on the premises during a non-church activity. Any use of the facility for a non-church activity requires the user to sign a "hold harmless agreement" with First Congregational Church. The user shall also be required to provide proof of a minimum \$1,000,000 liability insurance for the event.

**Building Use Rules**

1. The use of tobacco products, or intoxicating substances, possession of firearms (except by authorized State, Local and/or Federal Law Enforcement agencies) or any illegal substance is strictly prohibited on any part of the church premises or property.
2. Activities are confined to the space and time reserved and/or assigned in the Facilities Use Form and shall not exceed the capacity limits of requested facility areas.
3. No food or drinks are allowed in the sanctuary.
4. No alterations to the walls, fixtures or furniture are allowed.
5. All church facility areas must be left in the same condition as found.
6. Thermostat settings are not to be altered by anyone other than authorized church personnel.
7. Payment of all fees and deposits must be made two weeks in advance of the function.
8. Failure to notify the church less than 24 hours ahead of cancellation may result in forfeiture of deposit.
9. Users must, always, provide safe and responsible supervision of children.
10. Children must always be in the eyesight of a parent or childcare provider. An adult must accompany any child in the church balcony.
11. Kitchen use is only available with the use of another room. Contact persons must receive kitchen use training prior to event and oversee kitchen activity during event.
12. All rooms must be scheduled with the church office in advance. Using rooms that were not requested will result in additional fees being charged. The users may be required to immediately vacate the space.
13. Use of furniture, the piano, audio-visual or any other equipment or supplies belonging to the church must be approved in advance by the Church Office manager. Furniture is not to be removed from the room in which it is located.
14. The use of the organ must be approved beforehand by the organist and the Church Office manager.
15. All activities conducted in the facility must not disturb the neighborhood nor violate any noise regulations. The individual or group reserving the facility will be responsible for any noise violations that may occur.
16. Alcoholic beverages may be allowed with prior approval of the Trustees, in accordance with the Church Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco policy.
17. Follow all posted church signs, including instructions related to the facility.
18. Set up of user's equipment or decorations must be pre-approved by the church office and is the responsibility of the user. The use of glitter is prohibited.
19. Clean up is the responsibility of the user. All rooms used should be left in the same condition as they were found.

By signing below, I understand and agree to the Terms and Conditions as they have been laid out in this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name  
Rental Party or Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name  
Authorized Church Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date