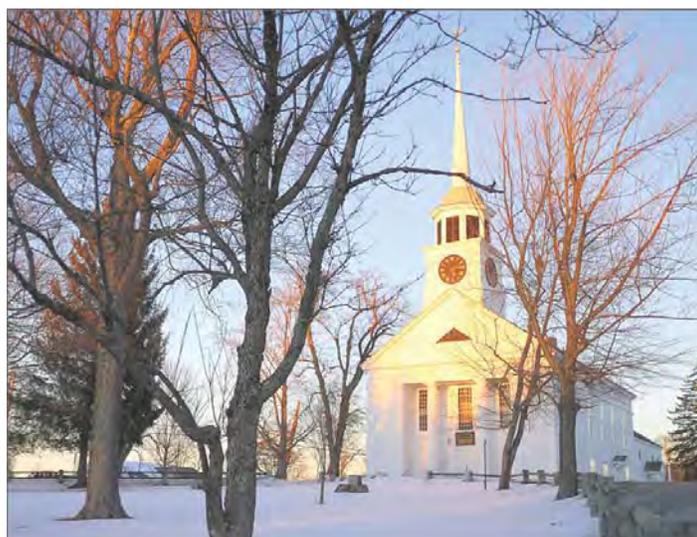


FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

## Buildings and Facilities Use



## POLICIES, PROCEDURES & RULES

Revised April 2021

*We are pleased to be able to offer the use of our historic buildings and grounds. The guidelines contained in this pamphlet have been established to insure the well-being of these properties, their contents and those who use them.*

*Please read the guidelines carefully!*

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## Priorities for Use

- The primary use of First Parish Church is to serve the needs and interests of our mission and membership. These include religious and spiritual ceremonies and events such as
  - member weddings
  - child dedications
  - funerals and memorial services
  - spiritual development
- The church buildings also serve our own outreach, committee and various church-sponsored events, as well as our own on-going administrative needs including the preservation and maintenance of our historic properties.
- Next, we give priority to religious services for non-members, including weddings, dedications, funerals and memorial services (fees apply), and occasional one-time use sponsored by a member that is unrelated to church activities.
- Fourth, space and facilities are also available for not-for-profit organizations that have principles compatible with our own Unitarian Universalist principles (fees may apply).
- Finally, for-profit individuals, companies, organizations, and groups with goals and principles that are not counter to our own may also be permitted to use our facilities (fees apply).

*Users of our facilities whose events are not affiliated with First Parish Church of Groton may not claim or imply in any form in any medium that they are affiliated with or endorsed by the Church. In some cases users may be required to state explicitly and publicly that no such relationship exists.*

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## Spaces / Facilities Available

### 1755 Meeting House

#### Sanctuary

Our 2nd floor Sanctuary is available for weddings, child dedications, funerals, memorial services and other ceremonies. Seating capacity is 250 adults. An elevator provides access to the Sanctuary from the East Wing if needed.

#### Vestry

This is a large open room on the 1st floor beneath the Sanctuary. It is suitable for gatherings of up to 100 people. There is a small stage with lighting, a projection screen and a curtain. Approximately 100 folding chairs and 20 folding tables (for 4 and 8 people) are in an adjoining walk-in storage closet. There is a small coatroom adjacent to the Vestry.

#### East Wing Meeting Rooms

Two rooms are available in the East Wing.

1st Floor: This is a moderately sized room (with a sink) suitable for up to 30 people. The room can be separated into two rooms using its sliding divider. Tables and folding chairs from the Vestry storage closet can be brought into this room.

2nd Floor: This is a small room suitable for up to 15 people, with only child-sized furniture. An elevator provides access to the 2nd floor East Wing room if needed.

#### Kitchen

This is a moderately sized full-service kitchen adjoining the Vestry. Facilities include two electric stoves, a commercial-grade dishwasher, double sink, countertop space, large coffee makers and serving carafes, pots and pans, cooking utensils, serving dishes and flatware.

## **Bathrooms in the Meeting House**

There are two very small bathrooms accessible from the Vestry coatroom, and two large wheelchair-accessible bathrooms in the East Wing, one on each of the two floors.

## **1848 PARISH HOUSE**

### **Great Room**

This is a moderately sized room on the first floor of the house. It has a capacity of 40 adults and is accessible through the main office door and through its own direct door to the outside, which is wheelchair-accessible. The room is furnished with cushioned chairs, folding chairs and tables. Its fireplace requires special permission to use (see “Candles,” page 8).

### **First Floor Classroom**

This is a small room suitable for up to 10 people with a child-size table and regular-size chairs.

### **Second Floor Classrooms**

There are two small rooms available upstairs suitable for up to 10 people with regular-sized tables and chairs. Note: the only access to the 2nd floor is a set of stairs.

### **Kitchen**

There is a small kitchen in the Parish House that is accessible to the Great Room through a hallway with a few stairs and to the first floor classroom through a hallway. It has a stove, sink, microwave, refrigerator and small countertop. The kitchen can be used by groups using the Parish House if permission is obtained ahead of time. Note: this is not a full-service kitchen.

### **Bathrooms in the Parish House**

There are two small bathrooms — one located in the hallway connecting the kitchen (*2 steps*) and the Great Room (*no steps*) and one upstairs. Neither bathroom is wheelchair-accessible.

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## **Reservations & Payment Procedure**

Use of the Church or Parish House is by permission only, granted by the Board of Trustees and coordinated by the Office Administrator. The process of obtaining permission can take days and even weeks depending on the intended use, number of people, affiliation of the individual or group making the request, and other factors. Some spaces are much in demand and dates are often reserved far ahead so it's best to make arrangements as far ahead of intended use as possible.

Both Church members and outside groups are required to submit a Facilities Use Request Form to reserve time and space for their use/event, even if there are no rental fees due or if rental fees are waived. (See Rental Fee Waivers, page 6.)

Any special setup, including the placement of tables and chairs, is the responsibility of the applicant. The church expects that all members and groups who use church space will return those spaces to their original condition upon leaving. (See Clean-up, page 8.)

### **Process**

The first step is to contact the Office Administrator to determine if your requested date and space are available. If they are, your event will be tentatively placed on the Church calendar and you will be given a Facilities Use Request Form to fill out and return by a specified deadline. If the form is not returned within the specified time frame, your space and date request will be removed from the calendar.

The Facilities Use Request Form will list the rental fee, whether a security deposit is required or not, and whether the presence of a First Parish representative is required. (See Representative of the Church Present, page 11.) If a security deposit is required, the security deposit must accompany the returned Facilities Use Request Form. If a representative of the church is required, the name of the representative must accompany the

signed Facilities Use Request Form. (See Representative of the Church Present, page 11.)

See enclosed Fee Schedule for current fees and deposits.

### **Use Fees and Security Deposit**

All fees and security deposits (if applicable) must be paid in advance for a single use. Security deposits are due when the Facilities Use Request Form is returned, and rental fees are due 14 days prior to the event. Note that the fee payment schedule for weddings is different. Please refer to the Weddings section of this pamphlet (page 12) for information on wedding fee payment deadlines.

For continuing use, arrangements may be made with the Office Administrator for monthly payments, generally on the first day of every month in which the space will be used.

### **Rental Fee Waivers**

Members of the Church may use church space and facilities for many purposes without charge. Fees and deposits may be required of members in some cases, however. For example, in the case of weddings, memorial services and other major events, Sexton and Organist fees still apply even though the facility rental fee is waived. The Office Administrator can provide details of when fees are or are not required and can coordinate special requests with the Board of Trustees.

Members who use the Church facilities must fill out and return a Facilities Use Request Form even though there may be no fees due.

Occasionally, the Church will waive the customary rental fee for not-for-profit organizations that have principles compatible with our own Unitarian Universalist principles. A fee waiver or fee reduction request is made by the not-for-profit group to the Board of Trustees through the Office Administrator. Fee waivers are taken up by the Board at their monthly meeting,

usually held on the second Tuesday of the month. Please keep this schedule in mind when making your request.

### **Payment**

All payments must be by check, payable to First Parish Church of Groton (FPCOG). Mail payment to: Office Administrator, First Parish Church, 3 Powderhouse Road, Groton, MA 01450-4700.

### **Keys**

The Office Administrator will either make arrangements to have the building(s) open or will provide a key (a refundable deposit of \$10 may be required to borrow a key).

### **Summer Rentals**

The Church year is September to June. Arrangements for use during the summer must be made prior to June 20th. If your space-need develops after June 20, leave a message on the office telephone (978-448-6307) and someone will contact you.

Note that rental arrangements made during the summer will take longer than usual to process.

### **Cancellation Policy**

In the event of cancellation of any reservation including a wedding, advance payments will be dealt with as follows:

- More than 60 days before the date of the use, or due to the Church's need for the space, all rental and security deposit payments will be refunded in full;
- Less than 60 days and up to 14 days prior to the event, 100% of the rental payment, 100% of the sexton fee payment and 0% of the security deposit payment will be refunded;
- Less than 14 days prior to the event, no payments will be refunded.

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## General Procedures & Rules

These rules apply to all individuals and groups using the Church buildings. It is the responsibility of the person signing the Facilities Use Request Form to make certain that these rules are followed.

Where "prior approval" is mentioned in the procedures and rules, it means written approval of the Board of Trustees. The Office Administrator arranges such approvals and has information about special conditions such as (but not limited to) extended hours, insurance policies, the presence of a church representative, and consuming alcoholic beverages on church property.

### Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages are not permitted anywhere in the Church buildings or on its property without prior approval. If you intend to serve alcohol at your event, approval from the Board of Trustees is mandatory. Any person or group **SERVING** alcohol must provide the church with either a Certificate of Insurance or some proof that they have insurance which provides (a) General Liability Insurance and (b) Host Liquor Liability Insurance. Any person or group **SELLING** alcohol must also obtain a one-day liquor license from the Groton Board of Selectmen, a process that takes approximately one month. Contact the Office Administrator for more information.

### Candles

Except for altar candles (smokeless only, please!) at religious services, open flames may not be used anywhere in the buildings without prior approval; this includes the fireplace in the Great Room of the Parish House.

### Clean-up

All furniture and other property must be cleaned and returned to original locations, and trash, debris, and decorations must be removed and bagged for disposal. If the kitchens in either the Parish House or the Meeting House are used, rules posted in

the kitchens must be followed. Failure to clean up may result in forfeiture of your security deposit. We ask that you respect our old buildings and return them to the condition you found them.

### **Damage**

In the event of any damage to any Church property, you must notify the Church office immediately. You can call the office at 978-448-6307 and leave a message on the answering machine or you can email the office at office@uugroton.org. Cost of repairs will be the responsibility of the person who signed the Facilities Use Request Form.

### **Decorating**

Please refrain from using thumb tacks, push pins, nails and masking tape on the walls and columns in the vestry. Rather, use surface-friendly hanging materials that FPCOG can provide for you.

### **Energy Conservation**

Please help us conserve energy! Turn off/disconnect all lights and any other devices and appliances when you leave.

Re-set thermostats to original settings. Make sure faucets are off and toilets are not running. **Close and lock all external doors.**

### **Fees**

See separate Fee Schedule.

### **Food and Beverages**

No food or beverages are allowed in the Sanctuary at any time. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the premises at any time without prior approval (see "Alcohol," page 8).

**No nuts or nut butters of any kind are allowed anywhere on Church property at any time**, due to life-threatening allergies of some members and regular users.

## **Insurance**

Some uses may require an insurance policy obtained by the user which names the Church as an additional insured. See Office Administrator for details.

## **Inside, Outside, All Around the Church**

Renters may use only the room(s)/space(s) they have reserved; the remainder of the buildings and grounds are out-of-bounds. All Church property must remain on the premises and may not be taken outdoors without prior approval.

## **Non-Church Publications**

The pamphlet racks, bulletin boards and tables throughout the buildings are for Church materials only. Please do not leave any pamphlets, brochures or fliers anywhere in the Church.

The Church maintains a community bulletin board in the Vestry entryway for posting non-church-related materials. If you have material that you would like posted on the community bulletin board, you must submit it to the Office Administrator for approval and posting. Under no circumstance should you post your material yourself.

## **Parking**

Parking on days when Lawrence Academy is in session is restricted to the parking lot sections north and south of the Parish House and east of the East Wing. In the evening and on non-school days, all parking lot sections may be used except the most southerly section adjacent to Lawrence Academy, with whom we share the lots.

## **Pets and Other Animals**

None are allowed in the Church buildings without prior approval.

## **Prior Approval**

"Prior approval" means written approval by the Board of Trustees. The Office Administrator arranges for approval.

## **References**

Individuals and groups unknown to the Church may be required to provide references.

## **Refunds**

See "Cancellation Policy" on page 7.

## **Representative of the Church Present**

If the group or individual requesting use of church space is unknown to the church, the presence of a church representative during the event will be required. The Office Administrator will notify you of this requirement at the time the Facilities Use request is initiated. The representative may be an unpaid or paid representative, with the Board of Trustees having final approval. See enclosed fee schedule for paid representative (Sexton) fee.

The Church may have a representative on the premises at any time during any use.

## **Respect**

All who use the Church buildings and grounds are expected to conduct themselves and their activity in an orderly manner, respecting the heritage of the place, its mission as a Church, and its policy of nondiscrimination in membership, staff, and guests. The Church reserves the right to terminate any activity and/or summon public safety officials at any time if in the opinion of a Church representative, there are sufficiently serious violations of policies, rules, safety, and/or manners to warrant corrective action.

## **Security Deposits**

Advance deposits on rental fees are required for some uses; see Fee Schedule for details.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on Church property.

### **Storage**

Storage is at a premium at First Parish and is not available for non-Church items without prior approval.

### **Time Limits**

All functions must start after 7:00 am and conclude by 11:00 pm unless prior approval is obtained.

## **WEDDINGS**

First Parish Church of Groton is a popular setting for weddings, and they require special planning and preparation. Weekends in the summer months are especially popular and tend to fill up early. Contact the Office Administrator for available dates and updated details of policies, procedures, and fees.

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### **Agreement to the Church's Policies, Procedures and Rules**

It is understood that wedding/reception applicants agree to the general use and special wedding procedures, fees, terms, conditions and rules in this pamphlet and all other written documents of the Church including the Wedding Service Request Form. Both partners in the marriage must sign the Wedding Service Request Form acknowledging this understanding.

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## Special Procedures and Rules Just for Weddings

### Reservation and Deposit

Contact the Office Administrator to determine if your wedding date is available on the Church calendar. If it is, the Administrator will tentatively “hold” your date on the calendar and provide you with a Wedding Service Request Form. The form must be returned within 60 days in order to insure your reservation. Once the 60 days expires, church availability is on a first-come basis.

A signed Wedding Service Request Form and a security deposit is required in order to confirm a wedding reservation. See the Wedding Service Request Form for the current security deposit fee. (Security deposits cannot be deducted from the facilities fee. Security deposits will be returned no later than 14 days following your wedding.)

### Fees

There are facilities fees and personnel fees associated with all weddings. Facilities fees are waived for church members and active friends. For current facilities fees, see the Wedding Service Request Form.

Personnel fees include fees for the minister, organist and sexton. It is customary for the minister to waive his/her fee for members and active friends. The Music Director’s (organist) fee is virtually never waived. The sexton’s fee is never waived. For current personnel fees, see the Wedding Service Request Form.

Facility and personnel fees include up to 90 minutes rehearsal time and up to 3 hours for gathering before the wedding, the ceremony, and after-ceremony guest-greeting and picture-taking.

The facilities fee and the sexton's fee must be paid 60 days prior to your wedding date. The minister's and organist's fees are payable by check or cash DIRECTLY TO THE INDIVIDUALS AT THE WEDDING REHEARSAL before the rehearsal begins.

### **Personnel Substitution**

The Church assumes that you will use our Minister and Music Director for your ceremony unless you tell us otherwise when reserving your wedding date. We DO allow for substitutions should you desire to make your own arrangements or should our Minister and/or Music Director be unavailable. All substitutions must be approved by the FPCOG Minister and/or Music Director. *Note that the Music Director is entitled to request his customary fee even if you choose to use a third party.*

### **Meeting with the Minister**

All couples must meet with the minister two to three months before their wedding takes place. Make appointments directly with the Minister.

### **Marriage License**

A valid marriage license issued by the Clerk of a town or city in Massachusetts must be given to the Minister at the wedding rehearsal.

### **Church Representative**

The First Parish Sexton is required to be present at all weddings and wedding receptions.

### **Cancellation Policy**

See page 7.

### **Clean-Up**

All decorations and flowers must be removed from the Church after the ceremony. See also "Clean-up" (page 8) and "Decorating" (page 9) under General Procedures and Rules.

## **Decorations and Candles**

No decorations may be attached to the walls of the Sanctuary or placed on the piano and/or organ. Lit smokeless candles are permitted only on the chancel table, chalice stand and the large candle table.

## **Floor Plan**

A floor plan of the Sanctuary with dimensions, seating and other details is available from the Office Administrator for planning purposes.

## **Flower Petals & Rice**

Silk flower petals are permitted in the aisles as part of the wedding ceremony. Absolutely no dried or fresh petals are allowed. Rice may not be thrown as part of the wedding ceremony. Birdseed is allowed outside only, on the pavement and grassy Common in front of the Church.

## **Music**

If using musicians other than the FPCOG Organist, these participants must be approved by the Music Director. The use of pre-recorded music (CDs, tapes, etc.) is not permitted.

## **Photos**

Flash pictures are allowed during the processional and recessional and other non-spoken portions of the ceremony. Use of flash cameras and video recorders with lights during the service is discouraged. Professional photographers are asked to be discreet while taking pictures. Pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary for a maximum of 30 minutes following the service.

## **Time**

Facility and personnel fees include up to 90 minutes rehearsal time and up to 3 hours for gathering before the wedding, the ceremony and after-ceremony guest-greeting and picture-

taking. An overtime charge will be assessed if more time is needed/taken.

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## Contact Information

### Minister

Rev. Elea Kemler      978-448-5106      [minister@uugroton.org](mailto:minister@uugroton.org)

### Office Administrator

Cyndy Premru      978-448-6307      [office@uugroton.org](mailto:office@uugroton.org)

### Music Director

Shawn McCann      978-433-7922      [music@uugroton.org](mailto:music@uugroton.org)

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## Directions

Take Route 119 west from Route 495, seven miles into Groton. The church is on a hill on the right, at the intersection with Route 40, adjacent to Lawrence Academy. It is a white building with a tall steeple and sits on the far side of a grassy Common.



## FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF GROTON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

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