

## **Peanut/Tree Nut Policy**

"In order to maintain a safe environment and continue our efforts to be welcoming to all, we, the Board of Trustees of FPC of Stow & Acton, approve becoming a peanut/tree nut allergy-safe congregation as of January 1, 2018, with the intention of providing ongoing communication of the policy."

The intention of the board's policy is to educate the congregation with regard to peanut and tree nut allergies. Although we are not making any guarantees of safety, we are attempting to make our events safer and more welcoming to our members with allergies. It will still be the ultimate responsibility of our members and friends with allergies to make the best decisions for themselves with regard to both participation in church events and consumption of food at events.

## **FAQs**

### **Will this increase our risk of legal issues if we fail to live up to this policy?**

We have spoken with our church insurance provider and they do not have any concerns related to liability and if anything think this policy further protects us from liability.

### **What is a tree nut?**

The FDA definition of a tree nut:

<https://www.fda.gov/ForIndustry/FDABasicsforIndustry/ucm238807.htm>

Almond, Beech nut, Brazil nut, Butternut, Cashew, Chestnut (Chinese, American, European, Seguin), Chinquapin, Coconut, Filbert/hazelnut, Ginko nut, Hickory nut, Lichee nut, Macadamia nut/Bush nut, Pecan, Pine nut/Pinon nut, Pili nut, Pistachio, Sheanut, Walnut (English, Persian, Black, Japanese, California), Heartnut, Butternut,

### **Is a peanut a tree nut?**

Tree nuts grow on trees, whereas peanuts grow underground and are considered legumes.

### **Food labeling/Ingredient Lists**

In addition to providing tree nut and peanut free food for events, we ask that FPC members and friends provide an ingredient list or recipe when available but do not expect that everything brought into the building will contain an ingredient list. We leave it to the members with allergies to decide which foods are most likely safe and which they should avoid.

### **What are the guidelines are for commercially- prepared food brought in? Are we expected to do a thorough read of the ingredients list? If so, what, makes a product unacceptable?**

If the ingredient list includes peanuts or tree nuts, or if the product is processed in a facility that processes peanuts and tree nuts, we ask that you not bring these products to the church.

### **If an FPC event is off campus, for example a service auction dinner, are we now expected to make it nut-free so that every FPC member feels equal access?**

No, we do not expect all off campus events such as auction events to be tree nut or peanut free. We hope that you will ask your guests about their dietary restrictions but that is up to the host/hostess.

### **If the FPC women's cookie swap were moved off campus, would it no longer need to be nut free?**

It is our expectation that a community wide event, like the FPC Women's Cookie Swap, would be tree nut/peanut free no matter where it is held, to allow full participation by all members.

**What about Fair Trade products that are sold during coffee hour?**

These products are sealed up in packaging and are okay as long as they remain in their packaging are not opened in the church building.

**Does this policy extend to our renters?**

Yes, we will include our policy in our rental agreements. We do not plan to police or monitor this policy but we hope renters will take it seriously and we will continue to clean the building and facility with procedures already in place.

**Why tree nuts and peanuts and not other allergens?**

We know that there are adults and children in our congregation who have life threatening allergies to tree nuts and peanuts, so that is the issue we are currently trying to address. If there are other life threatening issues to members, the Board will be happy to address those issues as well.

**What about hand soap?**

It was brought to our attention that sometimes there is hand soap in the restrooms with almond or shea in it. These products will no longer be purchased for church use and we ask members to be aware if they are donating items for use in the church bathrooms or kitchen.

This policy does not remove the need for the person with an allergy to be diligent. We are simply trying to make it a little easier to participate, and thus make everyone feel welcome.