

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

## Twin Cities Friends Meeting

**Twin Cities Friends Meeting (TCFM)** is committed to providing a safe and healthy place of worship and work for all people who enter the TCFM Meetinghouse and grounds. We recognize that during a pandemic we cannot guarantee a completely “safe” environment, regardless of the safeguards we adopt. Each person assumes some risk of contracting an infection by the act of traveling and gathering together. The choice to gather also presents risk of spreading an infection to each other and to the wider community of friends, family, medical professionals and others. Therefore, as we make choices about when and how we gather, let us do so with a sense of responsibility and care not only for ourselves but for the wider community.

TCFM has developed this Preparedness Plan during the COVID-19 pandemic with the goal of reducing the potential for transmission of disease in our Meetinghouse, on our grounds, and in the community while providing opportunities to gather that are appropriate to the level of risk of infection present in the community. Meeting this goal requires full cooperation among all who enter the building and grounds. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our community.

On March 14, 2020, the Meeting authorized an ad hoc committee to make decisions regarding use of the TCFM building and grounds in response to the COVID-19 pandemic when it was impractical for the Meeting to make decisions as a whole (the “Rapid Response Team”). The Rapid Response Team drafted this Preparedness Plan and provided it for pre-review by the Building & Grounds, First Day School and Ministry and Counsel committees, the office coordinator and the resident caretaker (when that position is filled). It was adopted by the Meeting at its Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on July 11, 2020. All in the TCFM community and those who use our building and grounds are responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with, and providing recommendations to improve this plan.

This Preparedness Plan is modeled after the template provided by the Minnesota Department of Health. It follows guidance developed by the State of Minnesota, which is based upon the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) statutes, rules, and standards, and Minnesota’s relevant and current executive orders, including the MDH guidance for faith-based communities. The plan addresses hygiene, physical distancing, cleaning, disinfecting, identification of sick persons, communications, training, and oversight necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

## **Advisory for those over 65 years old and those with underlying health conditions**

**The Minnesota Department of Health advises persons over 65 years old and those with underlying health conditions (such as heart or lung disease or diabetes) not to participate in gatherings at this time, as these persons are in greater risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19. TCFM will continue to offer Meetings on zoom, and especially encourages those at increased risk to participate by Zoom or only in very small groups until COVID-19 is under better control.**

### **Screening**

All those entering the TCFM building and grounds are encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell. Signs have been placed at the entrances to the building, in the rest rooms and in the common areas to help remind individuals of the symptoms of COVID-19 and good hygiene practices. If anyone is experiencing any symptoms, we ask that they not enter the building or leave immediately upon experiencing symptoms.

People are asked to stay at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, for a 14-day period following close contact with an infected person, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household.

Twin Cities Friends Meeting asks that people inform the TCFM office phone 651-699-6995 or a member of the clerks' team if you are aware that someone who has been diagnosed with an active case of COVID-19 has entered the building or grounds. To the extent practical, people will be informed if they have been exposed at TCFM to a person who is reported to have COVID-19 so that they can self-quarantine for the recommended amount of time (generally 14 days).

### **Infection Prevention**

1. **Hand Washing.** Basic infection prevention measures should always be practiced. People are asked to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, and especially after using the toilet. Hand sanitizer may be used instead. People are encouraged to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer prior to or immediately upon entering the Meetinghouse.
2. **Masks.** Face masks are required to be worn during all group events within the building or on the grounds at TCFM. People are encouraged to bring their own masks. Single use disposable masks are available near each entry door for those who come without a mask.
3. **Cover coughs and sneezes.** People are asked to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in the trash

and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on signage throughout the building. Hand sanitizer, tissues, and disposable masks are available near each entry door.

4. **Library.** Books and materials in the library and hymnals in the fellowship room shall not be handled, checked out, or returned until further notice.
5. **Speaking in Meeting.** Friends are encouraged to share vocal ministry. Friends are asked not to sing until the virus is under better control. (This guidance follows the experience of dozens of people becoming ill and two dying following infection of a single individual at a choir practice.) The microphone will not be used and passed until the virus is under better control.

## Physical Distancing

People must maintain a 6-foot distance between people who do not reside in the same household whenever possible. People are encouraged to refrain from gathering in close groups or confined areas, including the hallways and elevators.

Chairs shall be arranged 6 feet apart in the meeting room, the fellowship room and smaller conference rooms, and shall not be moved closer except to allow members of the same household to sit together.

Non-employees are not permitted in the office occupied by the office coordinator. The office coordinator will notify people if they have mail in the office, and will make arrangements for distributing the mail. Non-employees may not use the desk, chair, pens, paper, office materials or telephone in the office used by the office coordinator.

In accordance with Minnesota Department of Health guidance, occupancy within the TCFM building shall not exceed 50% of total capacity of the building. This number shall be further reduced to a capacity that allows for six-foot distancing. Therefore, no more than 25 persons are permitted in the meeting room (50% of 180 capacity = 90; but six-foot distancing can be maintained with 25). No more than 25 persons are permitted at one time in the fellowship room (50% of 172-person capacity = 86 with just chairs; 50% of 79-person capacity = 39 with tables and chairs; but six-foot distancing can be maintained with 25 chairs without tables). If more than the maximum number of persons permitted for the meeting room arrives for a gathering, the gathering will be divided into smaller gatherings in the meeting room, fellowship room and outdoor spaces. The Ministry and Counsel person designated to close the meeting or the organizer of the gathering has the responsibility to ensure that the numbers above are not exceeded. See guidance for Phase 2 in the Appendix.

At its July 11 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, the Meeting asked that Ministry and Counsel consider requiring prior registration for Meeting for Worship or other gatherings permitted in Phase 2 to ensure that the worship space can accommodate those attending at the appropriate physical distance and without turning away any who arrive.

**Gatherings on the porch, amphitheater, and yard.** Starting in Phase 1, groups of up to ten people are permitted to gather outdoors on TCFM grounds and on the porch so long as persons maintain a physical six-foot distance and wear face masks. Please schedule use of TCFM outdoor space as well as indoor meeting rooms through the office coordinator. See complete guidance in the Appendix.

## **Cleaning**

TCFM's contracted cleaning service conducts routine cleaning and disinfecting of all high touch items, such as door handles, handicap door buttons, handrails, common ledges, tables, chairs, countertops and restrooms, as well as other areas that have a high potential for cross contamination.

## **Ventilation and Air Filtration**

When outdoor conditions permit, windows should be open during indoor gatherings.

**Ceiling fans in the meeting room shall be turned off during indoor gatherings.**

TCFM maintains air filters in the front conference room, fellowship room and in the library, and these should be **turned on** at all times.

Dehumidifiers in the Grotto and Fellowship area should be turned off while the room is in use, but turned on immediately when leaving the room.

## **Fellowship, Food and Beverages**

Food and beverages will not be served or brought into the Meetinghouse, except by the resident caretaker and office coordinator for their personal consumption.

## **Exercise Classes**

Unfortunately, gatherings that include lots of physical movement present a higher risk of spreading COVID-19 through aerosols, as in the exercise classes in South Korea where a single instructor led to an outbreak of 112 individuals. Singing, shouting and exercising all carry additional risk. Therefore, TCFM will not rent its building out to groups using it for exercise until the virus is under better control.

## **Communications**

This Preparedness Plan will be communicated by email, the weekly announcement sheet and the monthly newsletter to all on the mailing list and to renters. Additional communication will be ongoing via email as needed. A hard copy of the Preparedness Plan will be posted on the bulletin board. The office coordinator will advise renters of the Preparedness Plan and changes to the plan as they occur.

The Rapid Response Team and Building & Grounds committee members will monitor the implementation of the Preparedness Plan and will communicate any changes or needed adjustments after approval by Meeting for Business, when feasible.

**If our community experiences a surge of coronavirus cases, or new information or personal behavior indicates that use of the building puts health and safety at further risk, the Rapid Response Team may immediately close access to the building.**

The Meeting will be informed by email of any such closures, and the Meeting will have an opportunity to review the decision at its next scheduled Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. If people see a need for change in the guidance, please contact a member of the Rapid Response Team: Gail Lewellan, Pete Rode, Barry Hanson, Steve Bougie or Pam Heggie.

## **Appendix: Phased Use of TCFM Building and Grounds**

**Friends are asked to respect this guidance as the product of discernment by the TCFM community at Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on July 11, 2020.**

**The organizer, clerk or scheduler of each gathering has the responsibility to implement and, if errors are noticed, remind people of the requirements of 6-foot distancing, wearing masks, hand sanitizing and not sharing food and beverages.**

**Phase 1: Permits gatherings of 10 or fewer people outside on the TCFM grounds, porch or in the amphitheater.**

**Implementation date: July 15, 2020**

These gatherings could include committee meetings, care and clearness committees, spiritual nurture or other TCFM groups with less than ten people attending. (This does not include use of the Ramsey Middle School parking lot, which is rented from the school for parking on Sunday mornings only.) The organizer of the gathering is responsible to 1) schedule the meeting in advance with the office coordinator; 2) ensure that not more than ten people will attend; 3) inform people of the requirements of the guidance below; 4) reinforce these requirements during the meeting; 5) provide a list of actual attendees to the office coordinator following the meeting for potential contact tracing purposes.

Guidance:

- Maintain 6' physical distance between people who are not members of the same household.
- Friends are encouraged to plan ahead so as to minimize the likelihood that Friends will

need to use the restroom or enter the building when attending an outdoor gathering. Access to restrooms is permitted, except to a restroom with a sign designated for exclusive use by the office coordinator. Please minimize time inside the building.

- Facemasks are required for outdoor gatherings and for entry to the building.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer upon entering the building and after using the toilet.
- No shared food and drinks.
- Please bring personal lawn chairs. People who need chairs may use TCFM's plastic outdoor chairs or the metal chairs from building. Please sanitize metal chairs after returning them to the meeting room using the supplies in the entryway or restroom.

**Phase 2: Permits gatherings of 25 or fewer people in the large meeting room and fellowship room, including Meeting for Worship at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. on First Day, 6:30 on Wednesday, and use by Prospect Hill Friends Meeting.**

**Possible implementation date: Not before September 1, 2020**

Guidance:

- Maintain 6' physical distance between people who are not members of the same household.
- Maximum of 25 people in meeting room at one time. When maximum capacity is met, additional people up to a maximum of 25 may meet in the fellowship room downstairs or in outdoor spaces.
- Windows should be open when weather permits. Ceiling fans, air conditioning and blowers should be turned off.
- Access to restrooms is permitted, except a restroom with a sign reserving it for staff use.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer upon entering the building and after using the toilet.
- No shared food and drinks.
- **Face Masks are required to be worn indoors and on TCFM grounds.**
- Use of conference rooms or library are not permitted, as they are smaller and pose greater risks of transmission of the virus in enclosed spaces.
- People are encouraged to socialize outdoors after Meeting, but not in hallways or in the meeting room.

**Phase 3: Use of smaller rooms for meetings and First Day School**

**Possible implementation date: To be determined as more information becomes available**

Conference rooms can be used for gatherings with 6' physical distance, but no use of the library, which is more enclosed and has blowing air from the HEPA air filter.

**Note: The upper level conference room shares air supply with the caretaker apartment, and is closed to community use.**

Unfortunately, after consultation with some members of the First Day School Committee, it appears impractical to conduct First Day School with enough age-appropriate groups while maintaining 6' distancing in TCFM classrooms, so this activity may be delayed for a long time.

Further guidance will be issued when it appears appropriate to invite sharing food, allow use by active rental groups, and adopt less restrictive physical distance or mask requirements.