

MEMO

CORONAVIRUS HOTLINE: 651-201-3920

Date: June 2020 **Staff point: Eric Howard, C: 928-701-1954**
To: MAS Staff
From: Eric Howard, Executive Assistant to the Bishop
Subject: 2020 COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

Minneapolis Area Synod 2020 COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

Dear Minneapolis Area Synod employees,

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy office work environment for you and our volunteers.

As part of our continued response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the synod has drafted a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. The goal of our plan, which follows the CDC and OSHA standards related to COVID-19, is to ensure you understand how we will restore daily operations in a way that mitigates the potential transmission of the Coronavirus or any illness at the office.

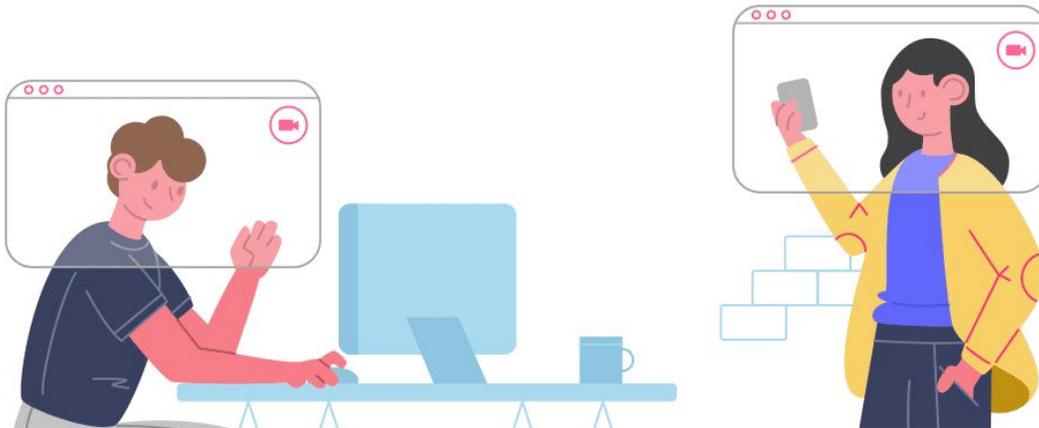
As an employee, you will continue to have opportunities for collaboration to shape this plan via staff meetings and one on one checks-ins with Management to ensure a smooth transition back into workspaces.

Our Plan Addresses:

- Phases to returning to the worksite
- Hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Administrative tactics for social distancing
- Housekeeping – cleaning, disinfecting and decontamination
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons
- Communication to staff
- Management and supervision

Sincerely,

Eric Howard
Executive Assistant to the Bishop



There are significant public health implications for bringing employees and volunteers back to the workplace, which is why we are doing so in a cautious and phased approach.

Our approach aligns with Governor Tim Walz’s [“Stay Safe Minnesota”](#) measure which requests anyone who can work from home to do so except for “essential needs and services.”

For tracing purposes, any volunteer visiting the office must sign in at the front desk.

Phase 1: June 15 - August 1, 2020 (25% capacity)

- All employees continue to work from home/remotely unless an in-person meeting (no more than 5 people) is deemed essential or necessary;
- Essential or necessary in-person meetings of over five people should seek approval from the COVID-19 Staff Point person, Eric Howard and follow this plan’s guidelines;
- To ensure office visits stay below five people at a time, please post the day/time of your visit on Slack’s #general and follow our guidelines, coordinate appropriately;
- All staff meetings will continue to take place via Zoom;
- Update Phase 2 based on feedback from staff and intel from health experts.

Phase 2: August 2 - September 30, 2020 (50% capacity)

- Employees and volunteers may return to the synod worksite on a staggered basis (no more than 10 at a time without approval) to allow proper social distancing guidelines;
- Vulnerable employees who wish to stay at home should consult their supervisor;
- All staff meetings will continue to take place via Zoom;
- Update Phase 3 based on feedback from staff and intel from health experts.

Phase 3: October 1 - December 31, 2020 (capacity TBD)

- All staff meetings will continue to take place via Zoom

Example of **“essential”**: signing checks, filing, or utilizing office-specific equipment

Example of **“necessary”**: pastoral care meeting, extremely time sensitive projects/collaboration



Stay home if you're feeling sick.

As a synod employee, we expect you to monitor your own health and screen yourself for COVID-19 symptoms.

Monitoring your health:

[Click here to review symptoms](#) identified by the CDC. Your health care provider can determine if you should be tested and can recommend a testing site from the [Minnesota Department of health's list of testing facilities](#) across the state (*note: Portico Benefits covers testing 100%*).

Self-screening:

Before coming into the office worksite, please complete this self-screening questionnaire based on current CDC guidance. **Questions:**

1. Within the last 14 days, have you had close contact with a person who has been diagnosed/confirmed with COVID-19 by a medical professional?
 - If yes, how many days has it been since your last contact?
2. Have you had at least two of the following symptoms in the last 72 hours: fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat or loss of taste or smell?
 - A fever is defined as a temperature of 100.4 or higher
3. Do you have new or abnormal symptoms of respiratory illness like cough or shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?

[Or take this short questionnaire from the CDC & Apple Inc.](#)

Our office guidelines:

- If you answer “yes” to any of the above questions stay home, inform your supervisor, and contact your health care provider to inquire about being tested for COVID-19.
- You may be able to work remotely if you answered “yes” and believe you feel well enough to work.
- We strongly advise you to take your temperature before coming into the worksite.
- If you experience symptoms or feel sick during the work day, please notify your supervisor. You will be asked to work off site and to contact your healthcare provider.

[CDC's guidelines for treatment](#) | [Portico COVID-19 Support Page](#)

We've got your back.

We've implemented leave policies that allow you to stay home if you become sick, if a household member is sick, or if/when a health care provider asks you or a household member to stay home. Accommodations for workers with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions have been implemented.

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA or Act\)](#)

- The FFCRA Act requires us to provide you with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave due to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from the effective date through December 31, 2020.

[Church Mutual Insurance](#)

- Church Mutual Insurance provides workers compensation in the event an employee becomes severely ill or injured due to work-related activity.
- If an employee contracts COVID-19 and becomes severely ill, the employee may file a claim with Church Mutual Insurance if he or she suspects the virus was contracted due to work-related activity. Claims will be considered but coverage is granted on a case by case basis.

[Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#)

- The coronavirus qualifies as a "serious health condition" under FMLA.
- Although MAS as an employer is not subject to the requirements of the Family Medical Leave Act, we will follow its model in terms of granting job-protected leave for employee/family medical reasons with the continuation of group health insurance coverage.

We are subject to [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) requirements.

What do I need to know about Portico Benefit Services?

Portico recently launched a [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) and added new resources on the ELCA Primary Health Plan.

- **98 point 6:** Text-based primary care from board-certified physicians, 24/7/365, for all ages.
- **Dr. on demand:** a video visit feature with your doctor to avoid exposure to COVID-19.
- **Learn to Live:** Utilizes Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Coaching programs offer phone, email, or text - No out-of-pocket cost

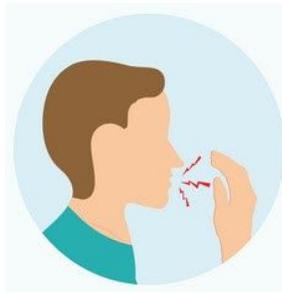
Questions? Contact: Deacon Terri Endres, Regional Representative, C 952.221.2000, tendres@PorticoBenefits.org



Handwashing

20 seconds of hand washing with soap and water throughout the day can keep the doctor away. Tips:

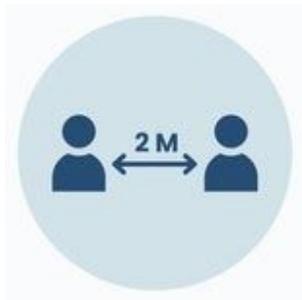
- Before and after work, using the restroom, and eating
- After handling money or objects
- Hand sanitizer (greater than 60% alcohol) can be used in place of washing. Sanitizer bottles will be provided throughout the office and ordered on a regular basis.
- For your protection, guests will be asked to do the same.



Respiratory Etiquette

Cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve or a tissue to avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes. Wash or sanitize your hands immediately afterward. Tissues will be made available throughout the office and ordered on a regular basis. Respiratory etiquette posters are visible in the kitchen.

Run out of supplies? Request more in the **#OfficeSupplies** Slack channel.



Social Distancing

You and our guests are required to maintain at least two meters or six feet away from each other. When this is not feasible physical barriers or other methods may be implemented. Social distancing tactics:

- Staggered office schedule (one person per room at a time);
- Less than 10 people in the office until further notice;
- Signage is posted at the entrance of each individual office to indicate where to stand;
- Avoid riding in or sharing vehicles with other staff;
- Avoid eating in the kitchen as a group.



Protective Equipment

Depending on your job duties, Personal Protection Equipment may be required. What exactly does that mean?

- Wearing face masks outside of your office space, or if you can't predict if you will be closer than six feet away from another employee or volunteer (inside or outside the office space);
- Plastic or glass shield at the front desk;
- Gloves when disinfecting.



Hospitality

We welcome anyone who wishes to visit the synod office and can follow the following handwashing, respiratory etiquette, social distancing, and face mask policies outlined in this plan.

For tracing purposes, any volunteer visiting the office must sign in at the front desk.

During **Phase 1 and Phase 2:**

- Visitors must wear a face mask before entering the MCC building and in the synod office lobby (the synod will not provide face masks for visitors or employees);
- Depending on the type of visit, you and the visitor may be required to wear a face mask throughout the meeting;
- We ask any visitor who are COVID-positive or symptomatic to arrange a call in lieu of an in-person visit;
- Signs regarding these requirements will be posted on building entrances and exits as well as the synod's website.



Housekeeping

All of us have a responsibility to routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces throughout the week.

Phase 1: If you visit the office, you are responsible for disinfecting the work area right after touching it. Hand sanitation and Coronavirus killing hand wipes are placed near frequently touched surfaces.

Phase 2: With up to nine people in the office in a staggered schedule, we will ask that each person sign up for a morning or afternoon shift to disinfect frequently touched surfaces. What else?

- Disinfect the work area right after touching it;
- Keep your office area routinely disinfected;
- If you host a meeting with a volunteer, you as the host is responsible for disinfecting the touched areas.
- [Prevention methods](#), a description of [COVID-19 symptoms](#), and information on [how the virus spreads](#) is posted in the lunchroom.

Phase 3: TBD and communicated in September, 2021.

Frequently touched surfaces:

Office desk, workroom surfaces, the copy/postage machine, door handles, phones, keyboards, touch screens/smartboard, elevator panels.

Other Preventative Measures

Report travel to impacted areas: anyone planning to travel to [impacted areas](#) must review the [CDC's Travelers Health Notices](#) and notify the Bishop and/or Eric. We support the CDC's recommendation that anyone traveling to "high-risk countries" should self-quarantine for 14 days.

Cleaning and notification if a COVID-19 outbreak occurs: if you test positive for COVID-19, please alert it to the Bishop and/or Eric *immediately*. All synod staff will be notified as soon as possible via **email and Slack** and told to stay/return home until the office is disinfected by building management.

The Minnesota Council of Churches (MCC) building managers have been asked to alert the Bishop if someone in the building has a confirmed COVID-19 positive test result or a presumptive COVID-19 diagnosis from a health care provider. In a severe outbreak, the MCC building managers will consult with local health officials and may close until further notice.

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was communicated through a staff meeting on Wednesday, June 10 and emailed to all employees on Friday, June 12. All staff had signed their approval via [this Google form](#) which has been printed and placed in each employee's personnel file. Additional communication and possible training will be ongoing through staff meetings and one-on-one check-ins with supervisors. All feedback will be shared with the COVID-19 staff point person, Eric Howard, and considered at the end of Phase 1 and 2 for adoption.

This plan has been certified by the Bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod and was posted throughout the workplace on Tuesday, June 16, 2020.

Ann Svenningsen
Bishop, Minneapolis Area Synod

Resources

Who to contact at MAS/MCC if infected with COVID-19				
Minneapolis Area Synod office	Eric Howard	Executive Assistant to the Bishop	928-701-1954 (cell)	e.howard@mpls-synod.org
MCC Building	Doug Swanson	Chief Operating Officer	612-230-3201	doug.swanson@mnchurches.org

Worldwide:

- [World Health Organization](#)

National:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#)
- [Ready.gov website](#) offers tools to help you make and practice a preparedness plan.

Minnesota:

- [Minnesota Department of Health website](#)
- [BeReadyMN website](#)
- **Live updates on cases and number of tests in Minnesota:**
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html>

ELCA:

- [The ELCA resources](#)
- [Lutheran World Federation](#)
- [ELCA Public Health](#)