

**First Unitarian Society of Madison**  
**Plans for Coronavirus (COVID-19) Prevention and Emergency Response**

March 8, 2020

In an email blast on Friday, March 6, the UUA President, Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray reminded readers to aim to support the people in our congregations and communities who are most vulnerable, while acknowledging and working through our own anxiety.

So what does it mean to live into FUS's mission in these weeks and months ahead, and "together ... seek to be a force for good in the world" while needing to take preventive measures in response to the global outbreak of COVID-19? And what would it look like to be a community where curious seekers gather in an accepting and nurturing environment, if we needed to respond to a local outbreak of a COVID-19?

It's important to discuss how we will plan, take action and assess two very different scenarios – one in which we are actively working to prevent the spread of a pandemic, and another in which we need to significantly cut back in-person programming due to a high risk of the spread of a pandemic.

Here's what we're doing currently as we aim to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

**PREVENTION SCENARIO**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Closely monitor the pandemic by following updates from experts at the local, state, national and global level. Resources include:**
  - Public Health Madison & Dane County
    - <https://www.publichealthmdc.com/health-services/partners-providers/resources-by-disease/coronavirus>
  - Wisconsin Department of Health Services
    - <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/covid-19.htm>
  - CDC: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
    - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
  - World Health Organization (WHO)
    - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- 2. Publicly recognize the fear and concern in our congregation and community**
- 3. Create a culture that centers the concerns for the most vulnerable**
- 4. Continue our common practices that prevent transmitting colds or the flu, in some cases to a greater extent than usual.**
- 5. Share ways for people to interact and be connected remotely**
- 6. Update community members (staff, vendors, renters, and parishioners) with information about how we are responding to the pandemic.**
- 7. Provide education and encourage healthy behaviors. Promote the practice of everyday preventative actions and suggestions for how to respond to the pandemic.**

## **We recommend that all community members:**

- Wash hands for 20 seconds or sanitize hands frequently;
- Stay home if sick;
- Cover coughs with a tissue and throw away in garbage;
- Avoid touching your face, especially with unwashed hands;
- Avoid assumptions or stereotypes about who you think may be sick. Listen to people who have experienced coronavirus related racism and xenophobia here:  
<https://www.npr.org/2020/03/02/811363404/when-xenophobia-spreads-like-a-virus>;
- Avoid travel to areas with coronavirus advisories;

These recommendations are equally relevant for both parishioners, staff and friends of FUS.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE SCENARIO**

Following is our proposed plan for a scenario in which our local community is urged to limit large events and/or close physical contact of staff and parishioners.

### **PLANNING**

1. Create our pandemic flu plans.
2. Create an emergency preparation task force.
3. Strategize how to increase physical space or limit contact between community members (and staff), wherever possible (for example, teleworking and conference calls).
4. Assessing what our “essential services” are if on-site operations are reduced temporarily.
5. Establish flexible leave policies for staff during a flu pandemic.
6. Identify what barriers exist for staff in working from home and address as able.
7. Train staff and community on how to administer and use video conferencing software.
8. Continue to migrate to cloud based systems, in particular our data management software. Train staff and lay leaders accordingly.
9. Reinforce the importance of staying at home when sick.
10. Cross train staff and volunteers to cover essential tasks, in case of unplanned absences.
11. Share plans with staff, BOT and parishioners as needed.

### **ACTIONS**

Put pandemic flu plans, policies, and strategies into action, as needed.

1. **Closely monitor the pandemic by following updates from experts at the local, state, national and global level, as well as local schools for closures. Resources include:**
  - Public Health Madison & Dane County
    - <https://www.publichealthmdc.com/health-services/partners-providers/resources-by-disease/coronavirus>
  - Wisconsin Department of Health Services
    - <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/covid-19.htm>
  - CDC: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
    - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
  - World Health Organization (WHO)

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2. Publicly recognize the fear and concern in our congregation and community
3. Create a culture that centers the concerns of the most vulnerable
4. Increase practices that prevent transmitting colds or the flu
5. Limit contact between all community members (parishioners, staff, vendors, renters, etc.) or when necessary, share ways for people to interact and be connected remotely, or when appropriate, increase space between people to at least 6 feet.
6. Update community members (staff, vendors, renters, and parishioners) with information about how we are responding to the pandemic.
7. Promote the practice of everyday preventative actions and suggestions for how to respond to the Coronavirus.

### **ASSESS**

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the emergency operations and communication plans.
2. Discuss and note lessons learned.
3. Improve plans accordingly.
4. Test and update plans regularly.

If you have questions about FUS's current plans, or suggestions on how to improve it, please reach out to Monica Nolan at [monican@fusmadison.org](mailto:monican@fusmadison.org).