

Mt. Zion United Methodist Church

Policy on COVID-19 Tracking

The health and safety of our Mt. Zion family – church members, volunteers, staff and all those who use the Mt. Zion facilities – are of paramount concern as we navigate through the coronavirus pandemic.

In November 2020, the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church (BWC) issued guidance on how to respond if someone tests positive for COVID-19 while participating in church-sponsored activities. This policy incorporates and expands upon that guidance. It is also in accord with the recommendations of Mt. Zion's Reentering Well Task Force.

Scope

This policy applies to all groups and individuals using church facilities – both indoors and outdoors – during the pandemic. This includes internal church groups such as the Youth Group, Open Doors Food Pantry, and Sandwiches for Martha's Table, as well as outside groups using church premises, such as the Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts and Brazilian SDA congregation. This policy also applies to Mt. Zion staff.

In addition, this policy includes church-sponsored events that occur off church premises.

The Mt. Zion Christian Preschool follows its own detailed protocols as required by the Maryland State Board of Education and the Howard County Health Department and therefore is not subject to this policy.

This policy will remain in effect until the COVID-19 state of emergency for the state of Maryland is lifted.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) has primary responsibility for developing COVID-19 tracking policies and procedures and monitoring implementation. The Lead Pastor has primary responsibility for overseeing implementation of the policies and procedures. The Trustees have responsibility for cleaning and sanitation of the Mt. Zion building(s) as necessary following a report of exposure from a COVID-positive person. The Church Council has overall authority for approving and revising this policy.

Tracking Procedures

All groups using the church must create a sign-in form with contact information to include the name, telephone number, and email address of all attendees at every event.

The group leader must ensure that participants understand they are expected to notify the group leader if they test positive for COVID-19.

Persons Testing Positive

Group leaders should follow these steps:

1. Encourage the person testing positive to contact their healthcare provider for guidance and to follow the guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for self-isolating. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>.
2. Encourage the person testing positive to notify the Howard County Health Department COVID-19 Health Information Line (410-313-6284) to facilitate contact tracing.
3. Contact the other group members present at the event to let them know that they have potentially been exposed to COVID-19.
4. Notify the Lead Pastor and one of the SPRC Co-chairs and provide the list of attendees at the event (with contact information) where the exposure occurred.
5. The SPRC representative will notify the chair of the Trustees, who will assess the need for deep cleaning or other sanitation procedures, consulting with the Howard County Health Department as needed.

Persons Exposed to Someone Testing Positive

1. The Lead Pastor will direct the Office Administrator to prepare letters (or emails) to the attendees notifying them that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 while participating in church-sponsored activities. The letter will ask them and members of their immediate household to self-isolate and self-monitor for symptoms, according to the appropriate guidelines from the Howard County Health Department.

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=KZ1N9sWyBuY%3d&tabid=1931&portalid=0>

The letter will ask anyone who develops symptoms to:

- follow the appropriate guidelines from the Howard County Health Department <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=KZ1N9sWyBuY%3d&tabid=1931&portalid=0>
- notify the church that they are experiencing symptoms and provide the names of anyone else *in the church* they have had contact with since the original exposure.

2. The Office Administrator will send a letter (or email) to any additional church members so identified who may have had secondary exposure to COVID-19.

Staff and Individual Volunteers

If a staff member or individual volunteer who uses the building for routine business tests positive, the Lead Pastor will follow the tracking procedures outlined above to notify the Howard County Health Department and persons potentially exposed to the virus.

Outside Groups

The SPRC is responsible for communicating this policy to any outside groups using church premises, such as the Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts and Brazilian SDA congregation.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of any persons testing positive for COVID-19 must be maintained in all church correspondence.

Related Links

Centers for Disease Control

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/318271-A_FS_KeyStepsWhenWaitingForCOVID-19Results_3.pdf

<https://covid19.apple.com/screening>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>

Howard County Health Department

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=KZ1N9sWyBuY%3d&tabid=1931&portalid=0>

For further information, please contact:

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Approved by SPRC on 1/19/21

Approved by Church Council on 1/26/21