



November 13, 2020

Dear Richfield UMC,

I hope this letter finds you well, friends. In the last week, we have seen cases of COVID-19 steadily climb in our great state of Minnesota. While the pandemic has impacted all of us emotionally and in how we live our lives, the virus has also made its way into the lives of some members and worshipers in the church, and it has reached our campus.

Last week, we were notified by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) of two lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) in two members of the community who had been on campus between October 28-30 and November 3-4. We took the following immediate measures:

- We worked with MDH to identify those persons who had close contact with the cases and communicated with them individually. The risk of exposure for others present in the building on those dates is no greater than the risk of contracting the virus in the general community.
- We contacted all paid staff, the Regathering Taskforce, the elected leaders of the Executive Team, the worship team, and anyone known to have been on campus in the above exposure timeframe and gave them a general notice of the situation.
- Caring for Children early learning center (CFC) was closed for the week of November 9-13.
- We undertook a comprehensive cleaning and sanitizing plan of CFC and other areas of campus.
- CFC is set to reopen partially on November 16 and fully by the end of the week.
- Sunday worship operations are not impacted by this situation.

The procedures we have in place laid out by MDH, licensing, the Regathering Taskforce, and paid staff to handle this situation are being followed and working, thanks be to God. **We pray for the well-being of the individuals who have confirmed cases of COVID-19. Lord, in your mercy.**

Unfortunately, in recent weeks we have learned a small number of beloved church members and their loved ones have contracted COVID-19. **We pray for all who are experience COVID-19 firsthand; Lord, in your mercy.** I am **not** mentioning this to invite rumor and speculation and if I find out my mentioning this cautionary reality leads to either I will be disappointed, friends. Instead, I mention it because this is an opportunity to say as **your pastor, I need to remind us all to please be diligent and work together in the face of this virus.** Wear your mask, keep your distance, wash your hands, and do **not** come to campus. For your convenience, I have included recommendations from MDH about what to do if you learn you have had close contact with a person who has COVID-19.

I ask everyone to please remain calm in this situation and to be diligent in minimizing the spread of illness. My gratitude to the staff and leaders who are working hard on our response to this situation. The recent surge in COVID-19 cases and related deaths in Minnesota is real. Please do your part to keep you and your loved ones safe. This is a challenging time and I know many of you may be feeling stress or anxiety. We will get through this as we get through anything: together, as a church. Please reach out to me if you have any questions and thank you.

Regards,

Rev. Nate Melcher
Senior Pastor, Richfield UMC

What To Do if You Have Had Close Contact With a Person With COVID-19

To protect yourself, your family, and your community, you must separate yourself from others, get tested and watch yourself for symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, or loss of taste or smell. Unless you have had a positive laboratory test for COVID-19 in the past 3 months, follow these instructions for at least 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the person who has COVID-19.

Separate yourself from others



Stay home. If you need medical care, it is important that you follow the instructions below. Do not go to work, school, or any other place outside the home.



Stay away from people who may be at high-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19, including older adults, those living in long-term care facilities, and people with health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, liver disease, severe obesity, and those who have weakened immune systems.



If you become sick, separate yourself from other people in your home. As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.



Do not use public transportation, ride-sharing (such as Uber or Lyft), or taxis.



Wear a facemask if you need to be around other people, and cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Wash hands thoroughly.



Avoid sharing personal household items. Do not share food, dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.



Get tested

Contact your health care provider or visit the [Minnesota COVID-19 Response website \(https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/testing-locations/index.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/testing-locations/index.jsp) to find testing times and locations near you. Get tested even if you do not have symptoms. If your test results are positive, follow recommendations for cases of COVID-19. You may need to remain at home for longer than 14 days. Even if your results are negative, you need to stay home for 14 days. If you develop symptoms after testing negative, get tested again.

Monitor your symptoms



If you develop symptoms, separate yourself from others and follow public health recommendations for staying at home when symptomatic.

To access this fact sheet in another language please visit:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html#close1> (www.health.state.mn.us)



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