

Bethesda Friends Meeting and COVID 19 Preparations

Friends,

In this time of anxiety and concern about the coronavirus, we are reaching out to you as a member of Bethesda Friends Meeting to let you know how we are planning to proceed during this time of uncertainty.

At this point we plan to continue with our Meeting for Worship (MfW), potluck, coffee hour, committee meetings and other activities. However, we will assess the situation weekly and make changes as needed.

We have set up an ad hoc advisory committee, including members of our Meeting who are in Public Health or other areas and steeped in relevant information about COVID-19. They are providing important insights and recommendations to help our Meeting discern how best to continue our worship and fellowship activities while keeping our community safe.

Below are some of the changes we are making in order to help keep our community safe while continuing to provide spiritual support and fellowship:

- Ministry and Worship has eliminated the hand shake at the end of Meeting for Worship and is substituting other ways to end our worship. Each Sunday the Head of Meeting will explain to participants how we will end our service
- For Potluck and Coffee Hour, the hospitality volunteers will wear gloves and serve the food rather than having members share serving utensils or pick up finger food. And we will be disinfecting the tables we use in Potluck before (and after) eating our meal.
- We plan to follow the lead of Sidwell Friends School and close the Meeting House and Meeting activities if the school closes down.

Our biggest concern is the health of our older population who are more prone to serious illness from this virus. If a member is frail or has a compromised immune system, we strongly suggest that they exercise extra caution and think about staying home. However, attending MfW and other Meeting activities is an individual decision.

We end with some requests to our members. Please:

- Stay home if you are feeling ill or are coughing, sneezing, and/or have a fever. If you have to sneeze or cough, do so into your arm or a tissue in order to not spread any droplets.
- Try to refrain from close contact with others at rise of meeting and at Coffee Hour – but do not let that diminish your spiritual connections!
- Wash your hands before entering the Potluck room (there are bathrooms in the Groome building entry hall).
- If you have any extra sanitizer at home, please bring it for us to use at Coffee Hour next week. We can use it as an alternative to washing hands at Coffee Hour.

In the Light

Lee Ingram and Jabez McClelland
Co-Clerks of Bethesda Friends Meeting