



FAITHFUL + BOLD + SERVING

Virginia Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Virginia Synod 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic Office Protocols Updated July 2020

“Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.” - Philippians 2:4

While much has changed with the spread of COVID-19, the core values of the Virginia Synod, Christ, peace, community, and compassion, remain constant and provide guidance as we respond to the pandemic.

As a Synod, we are committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for our staff and our volunteers. To assist in creating a culture of safety and care, the Synod has drafted COVID-19 Pandemic Office Protocols for each phase of the Virginia Forward Plan.

The goal of these protocols is to promote a safe working environment and to mitigate the potential transmission of COVID-19 or any illness as we undertake the ministry of the Virginia Synod through telework and in-office work.

Our plan addresses:

- Telework and In-Office Policies
- Screening and Policies for COVID Impacted Individuals
- Hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Administrative tactics for social distancing
- Housekeeping – cleaning, disinfecting, and decontamination
- Prompt identification and isolation of sick persons

Telework and In-Office Policies

While our desire to gather in-person and to return to ‘normal’ patterns of office life may be strong, COVID-19 remains a significant risk to the health and well-being of our entire community. Out of concern for the broader community and in the interest of health and safety, the Virginia Synod Office has developed Telework and In-Office Policies to match the Phases Outlined in Virginia Forward.

Phase 1

- The Offices are closed.
- All staff work remotely.
- All staff meetings by Zoom.
- All travel and in-person meetings/events suspended.
- Since certain essential functions, like sorting the mail, making deposits, and writing checks, require a staff presence in the Salem Office. Staff will establish a staggered schedule so that no more than two people are in the Salem Office at the same time.

Phase 2

- The Offices are closed.
- All staff are encouraged to work remotely.
- All staff meetings by Zoom.
- Travel and in-person meetings/events are not recommended.
- Since certain essential functions, like sorting the mail, making deposits, and writing checks, require a staff presence in the Salem Office. Staff will establish a staggered schedule so that no more than two people are in the Salem Office at the same time.

Phase 3

- Staff may work in offices, but are encouraged to work remotely whenever possible and to exercise an abundance of caution and care for one another in their interactions.
- All staff meetings by Zoom.
- Staff will establish a staggered schedule so that no more than seven people are in the Salem Office at the same time.
- The offices are not open to non-staff members.
- As a general rule, travel for in-person meetings, preaching at in-person congregational worship services, attendance at in-person ministry events is suspended.
- In considering whether to make an exception to the suspension of travel and in-person meetings, staff should consider the following questions:
 1. Is it possible to conduct this meeting/event digitally?
 2. Is this meeting/event critically important or could this meeting/event wait until there is an effective treatment and vaccine for COVID-19?
 3. Does this meeting/event create a public health risk by encouraging individuals who are potentially at-risk or who are caring for at-risk individuals to gather in-person?
 4. Will all participants agree in advance to wear a mask and practice social distancing guidelines?
 5. Will the meeting/event take place in an outdoor setting and follow social distancing protocols? (Indoor, poorly ventilated places should be avoided.)
 6. Does this meeting/event require the in-person presence of a Synod staff member for theological or ecclesiological reasons?

Phase 4

- Staff are permitted to return to offices, but are to maintain social distancing protocols including wearing a mask in all public office spaces.
- Staff are encouraged to work remotely whenever possible.
- All staff meetings by Zoom.
- Given the space limitations of the Salem Office, any in-person meetings deemed necessary should be limited to 4 or less people and should take place in the Bishop's Office.
- No more than 2 volunteers are permitted in the office at a time and the total headcount in the Salem Office should not exceed 10 people.
- When staff are in the office, the exterior door is to remain closed and locked to prevent unintentional gatherings of people.
- As a general rule, travel for in-person meetings, preaching at in-person congregational worship services, attendance at in-person ministry events is suspended until there is a widely available and clinically effective treatment and vaccine for COVID-19.
- In considering whether to make an exception to the suspension of travel and in-person meetings, staff should consider the following questions:
 1. Is it possible to conduct this meeting/event digitally?
 2. Is this meeting/event critically important or could this meeting/event wait until there is an effective treatment and vaccine for COVID-19?
 3. Does this meeting/event create a public health risk by encouraging individuals who are potentially at-risk or who are caring for at-risk individuals to gather in-person?
 4. Will all participants agree in advance to wear a mask and practice social distancing guidelines?
 5. Will the meeting/event take place in an outdoor setting and follow social distancing protocols? (Indoor poorly ventilated places should be avoided.)
 6. Does this meeting/event require the in-person presence of a Synod staff member for theological or ecclesiological reasons?

Screening and Isolating Sick Persons

Stay home if you're feeling sick.

As a synod staff member, 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 (note: Portico Benefits covers testing 100%).

Self-screening:

Before coming into the office, 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?
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 workday, 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](#)

COVID-19 PREVENTION

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.
- For your protection, guests will be asked to do the same.

Respiratory Etiquette

If you are in the same area with another person, everyone in the room will wear a mask to protect one another. Avoid touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

Social Distancing

You and our guests are required to maintain six to ten 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);
- No more than 7 people in the office until further notice;
- Signage is posted at the entrance of each building providing notice of social distancing and mask requirements
- Avoid riding in or sharing vehicles with other staff;
- Avoid eating as a group.
- Avoid passing items to one another.

Protective Equipment

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

- Wear a face mask outside of your office space and inside your office space if you will be closer than six feet away from another staff member or volunteer;
- Roanoke College requires individuals to wear a mask outdoors when maintaining 6 feet of distance is not possible, that means to be prepared to wear a mask when present on campus, even in outdoor settings;
- Plastic or glass shield installed at the front desk;
- Hand sanitizer and masks will be provided;
- Wear gloves when disinfecting.

Hospitality

We welcome anyone who wishes to visit the synod office **beginning in Phase 4** and beyond and who can follow the following handwashing, respiratory etiquette, social distancing, and face mask policies outlined in this plan.

For tracing purposes, any guest visiting the office must sign in.

Until COVID-19 is under control,

- Guests must wear a face mask
- Staff and the guest are required to wear a face mask throughout the meeting;
- We ask any guest who is 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.

While the office will be cleaned regularly by the cleaning staff, the Synod asks that staff members adhere to the following guidelines to help keep everyone safe.

- Disinfect your work area right prior to leaving your office space;
- For frequently touched surfaces in shared areas such as copier, workroom surfaces, and breakroom, disinfect surfaces following use;
- If you host a meeting with a volunteer, you as the host is responsible for disinfecting the touched areas.
- If a staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the office will be closed and thoroughly cleaned.

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 Becky. We support the CDC's recommendation that anyone traveling to "high-risk regions" should self-quarantine for 14 days.

If you test positive for COVID-19, please alert the Bishop and/or Becky immediately.