

March 12, 2020

COVID-19 Update

Caroline Furnace is a place set apart, where you can get away from everyday schedules and stress to come together as a community and grow in your faith. We believe in the power of small group ministry and recognize the importance of time spent on retreat, especially in times of high anxiety as caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. We are your outdoor ministry, providing unforgettable faith, education, and renewal experiences in God's creation for all God's people.

We are here, we are open, and we are prepared to serve you. We will continue to monitor CDC, VDH, and ELCA updates on COVID-19 (coronavirus) and will share additional updates via email, social media, and our website as needed. **Coronavirus poses no immediate concern for Summer Camp 2020.** Spring retreat groups should use good judgement based on group size and participant age.

Note for Spring Retreat Groups: We understand the importance of community during this anxious time and trust that you'll do proper screening of your group. If you determine COVID-19 to be a threat to your participants, your deposit may be transferred to new, available dates anytime before February 1, 2021 (after Feb 2021 by exception only). To encourage voluntary home isolation, your estimated group size will be updated 10 days prior to your retreat but we will continue to allow adjusted invoices until 24 hours prior to arrival.

What we know about COVID-19:

- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
- The immediate risk of being exposed to the virus is low. There is not widespread circulation in most communities in the US.
- Those over 60 or with compromised immune systems are at the greatest risk.
- As a preventative measure, the CDC recommends rescheduling or cancelling large group events.
- There are no local or regional travel restrictions as of March 12, 2020.

As we continue our busy retreat season this spring and prepare for another exciting Summer Camp season, we'd like to share with you our procedures for mitigating communicable diseases such as coronavirus (COVID-19), pinkeye/conjunctivitis, the stomach bug, and other illnesses:

Most of our spaces and activities are either outdoors or in well ventilated areas, with exception to sleeping areas. We train, facilitate, and practice everyday health and cleanliness prevention measures with all staff, volunteers, retreat participants, and summer campers. These measures include isolation, cough/sneeze etiquette, personal hygiene, and environmental health actions as recommended by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). More details and specific practices are outlined below.

New Practices for 2020

- Improvements are being made to the health center with the help of some generous donors. The health center will include two separate bunk spaces for sick campers, improved air conditioning, and more.
- Staff will clean and sanitize cabins and common areas daily, in addition to camper and retreat group cleaning responsibilities. Staff cleaning will include commonly used (and easy-to-miss) surfaces such as doorknobs, lightswitches, sink fixtures, and toilet handles.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be available in every building in addition to soap and water.

Current practices at Caroline Furnace

- All retreat leaders and participants are responsible for understanding the health of their community prior to arriving at our site. Any group with minors is responsible for their own healthcare policies, procedures, and parental release forms. Parents and adult participants are expected to practice good judgement on voluntary home isolation when exposed to illness or experiencing symptoms.
- Each summer, we hire a Healthcare Coordinator (nursing or pre-med student) whose primary responsibilities are to keep camper health records organized, dispense medications, care for campers who aren't feeling well, and assist at the lakefront.
- Immunization records are required for summer campers, staff, and volunteers during summer camp registration to mitigate preventable diseases.
- All staff are certified in First Aid and CPR. Each counselor carries a first aid kit, and there are additional stationary kits located throughout camp. AEDs are located in Moyer Lodge and the Office, and the Office AED is transported to the lake during swim times.
- Any camper with a fever or symptoms of illness is taken to the Health Center and receives care from our Healthcare Coordinator. If needed, the camper is separated in isolation until they recover (if non-communicable such as dehydration etc.) or are picked up by a parent, guardian, or emergency contact. In the unlikely event of a medical emergency, Caroline Furnace is served by the Fort Valley Fire Department and is located 20 minutes from the hospitals in Woodstock and Luray.

Environmental Health Actions

- Retreat participants, summer campers, and staff are expected to work together to clean their sleeping space each day, and are on a rotating schedule to assist with cleaning in multi-use spaces.
- Disposable wipes and/or sanitizing spray and washcloths are available in multi-use areas for wiping down commonly shared items. More info on cleaning/disinfection in sleeping areas can be found below.

- In the Cabin Village, water bottles are sanitized with the commercial dishwasher to promote cleanliness. Sharing of water bottles is highly discouraged.

Personal Hygiene Actions

- We encourage cough/sneeze etiquette, meaning that individuals are expected to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then dispose of the tissue properly. When outdoors or in spaces without tissue, coughs and sneezes are to be shielded by the person's elbow and away from other people.
- There are restrooms and/or handwashing stations in every facility, with the exception of St. John's Chapel, which has an outdoor handwashing station nearby in the Spring Field. Regular handwashing is encouraged, and required when campers are helping to "hop" - set tables before a meal.
- All seasonal staff who may help to prepare and serve food in the kitchen have a ServSafe Food Handler certification, which is standard in the restaurant industry.
- Out-trips - Every rest, meal stop, and campsite has a handwashing station with soap and water plus hand sanitizer. A buddy with clean hands operates the handwashing station, which is a two-step process to minimize fecal-oral contamination (the highest risk of illness on out-trips).

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Caroline Furnace Staff & Board of Directors

We encourage you to continue using trusted sources for the most up to date information:

[VDH \(Virginia Department of Health\) Coronavirus Update Page](#)

[CDC COVID-19 Situation Summary](#)

[CDC Checklist for Community & Faith Based Organizations](#)

[ELCA Presiding Bishop addresses concerns about COVID-19](#)