

# ***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

## **Epidemic Outbreak Policy and Procedures**

Policy # 033

Revision # 000

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### **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy covers FPC's management of outbreaks of major (epidemic) illnesses in the community, specifically outbreaks that may have been spread by one or more members while on the FPC campus or attending FPC off-site events. The policy uses the COVID-19 pandemic as a reference. Future outbreaks will follow a similar protocol.

### **II. SCOPE**

When a member or other visitor who has recently been in one or more of the FPC buildings tests positive for COVID-19 or other epidemic disease ("the Reporting Person"), they must immediately notify the FPC Contact Tracing Team (CTT) by emailing [covid-response@fpc-stow-acton.org](mailto:covid-response@fpc-stow-acton.org) and calling/texting one of the CTT members (names of team member will be posted and on the website) until they reach a member of the team (no voicemails).

In either case, when a person who has been in the FPC building or at an FPC event has tested positive for COVID-19 or other epidemic disease within 3 days after being in the FPC building or at the FPC event, the following steps shall be taken by the FPC CTT:

- **Obtain a Contact List:** The CTT member who is notified of the positive test results by the Reporting Person shall obtain a list of FPC members, friends, and visitors who the person has been in contact with (defined as having been within 6 feet of the reporting person for more than 5 minutes, even if both parties were masked). This can be obtained via discussion with the Reporting Person and by reviewing the Contact Tracing Sign In Sheets, located at the connector and Vestry entrances (if in use).
- **Report the Incident to Public Health Authorities:** A CTT member shall report the incident, along with the Reporting Person's name and the contacts' names, to the Board of Health associated with the town in which the Reporting Person lives.
- **Report the Incident to FPC Leaders:** A CTT member shall notify the Minister and either President or Vice-President of the Board that a case has been confirmed and that contact tracing is being performed. The names of the Reporting Person and the people contacted should not be provided by the FPC contact tracing team.
- **Contract Tracing Done:** A CTT member shall contact each of the people the Reporting Person was in contact with while at FPC or at FPC off-site events.
- **Privacy Parameters:** The Contact Tracing Team shall use at least the following rules when communicating:

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- It is normal policy to inform the minister about illnesses in the congregation. If for some reason the Reporting Person asks their name be kept private from the minister, the Reporting Person must inform the CTT.
- No one else should know who the Reporting Person is, including the Board President/Vice President or other members of the team, unless a more severe danger could result from lack of this knowledge.
- Communications only need to be made to the entire congregation if a congregation-wide event is occurring that must be canceled or if it is not possible to definitively identify all potential contacts of the reporting person (e.g., the Reporting Person attended a gathering at church where many people might have been exposed). All communications to the congregation are anonymous. For communicating with the contacts, a phone tree can be implemented if more than 3 people need to be contacted (e.g., an SGM group) with the understanding that the name of the infected person is not to be shared. People helping with contact tracing should only tell the folks being contacted that they have been reported as a close contact...including how that is defined..of a person who tested positive; the date of exposure can be shared (because they can't get tested until 3 days after exposure); the name of the person and the other close contacts should not be shared unless there is a compelling reason to do so.
- **Secondary Contact Tracing:** There will be no secondary contact tracing at FPC. The local Board of Health will be responsible for any other follow-up of the incident.
- **The Reporting Person's Responsibility:** Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or another epidemic disease shall not return to the building or FPC events for at least 10 days and after at least 24 hours with no fever (unmedicated) and symptoms have improved. The duration of quarantine for COVID will vary depending on vaccination status (only 6 days away from the building or events is required if vaccinated). No negative test is required. The duration of quarantine for other epidemics will depend on the period of communicability of those diseases.
- **Contacts:**
  - People who are fully vaccinated should get tested 3-5 days after exposure, and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result. Vaccinated close contacts may alternatively enter the building if they have no symptoms and a negative daily rapid antigen test. If they test positive, they should self-quarantine and follow their health care provider's instructions.

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- People who are not fully vaccinated should quarantine and be tested as soon as possible after being identified. If they test negative, they should continue to quarantine until tested again in 5–7 days after the incident or immediately if symptoms develop during quarantine. If they test positive, they should self-quarantine and follow their health care provider’s instructions.
- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered, as long as they do not develop new symptoms, do not need to get tested.
- For other epidemics, contacts will be defined by the CDC.
- **Building Closure, Cleaning & Event Cancellation:** The building shall be closed until the contact tracing is done, in order to prevent further exposure of FPC members to each other, and the following steps have been taken:
  - **If the Reporting Person attended an outside small event:** No further building closure is required after contact tracing is done, provided none of the contacts have been at another FPC event since their possible exposure.
  - **If the Reporting Person attended an indoor event in an FPC building:** If the Reporting Person has been present in an FPC building, the building shall be closed while areas the person has been present in are aired out for 2 hours. Special cleaning may be required if the space needs to be used after this airing, depending on what the Reporting Person may have touched. FPC will follow state and CDC guidelines in determining how long the building will be closed.
- **Large Event, Outside or Inside:** If more than ten members of the community may have been exposed, the building will be closed for 24 hours to allow time for word to reach the larger FPC community of their possible infection, in order to prevent further mingling of FPC members. All in-person FPC events will be canceled and FPC will follow state and CDC guidelines in determining how long the building will be closed.

### **III. RESPONSIBILITY**

FPC Members, Friends, and Building Users must sign in on the Sign In Form provided at the major entrances to the campus. They must include the date, where they were in the building, and their name.

FPC Contact Tracing Team: The FPC Board of Trustees shall designate members of the FPC CTT on an ad hoc basis, to be active during pandemics. The team members will decide how best to share duties and responsibilities and how best to communicate within the team. For example, the team may have their own email group that includes name, email and phone

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contact. They may set up a schedule based on dates depending on how many members are on the team (one person covers it for the first 8-10 days of the month, the second for the next 8-10 days, etc). They can alternatively manage this as the FPC Announce moderators do...whoever sees the message first responds to it. This second method ensures the fastest response. The FPC CTT shall coordinate with the Board to decide when they can disband.

If a member or visitor instead contacts an FPC leader first, that leader will inform the Contact Tracing Team.

### **IV. DEFINITIONS**

COVID-19: A form of coronavirus that was discovered in 2019 in China which spread rapidly to the entire world as a pandemic, killing over 728,000 people in the U.S. by October 20, 2021 (the date this policy was created).

Epidemic: an occurrence of a novel, highly contagious, or dangerous infectious disease in a community at a particular time

FPC Contact Tracing Team (CTT): The group of FPC members who share responsibility for receiving communications from the Reporting Person and following the actions listed in this Policy.

Pandemic: a disease that is prevalent over a whole country or the world.

Reporting Person: a member or other visitor who (a) has recently been in one or more of the FPC buildings and subsequently (within 10 days of being at FPC) tests positive for COVID-19; and (b) reports the positive test result to a member of the CTT, staff, or other leader at FPC.

### **V. REFERENCES**

None.

### **VI. APPROVAL SIGNATURES**

  
12/21/2021

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Originator / Date

***First Parish Church of Stow and Acton***

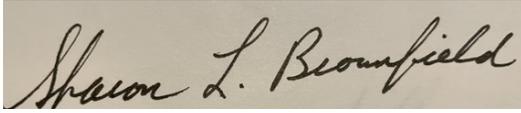
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On behalf of the Board of Trustees:

A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Sharon L. Brownfield".

12/21/2021

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FPC President / Date