

Pandemic Response Team's Report to Meeting for Business on October 9th, 2022

The Pandemic Response Team is grateful to members and attenders of Concord Monthly Meeting who shared their perspectives with regard to our COVID response at the hybrid gathering on September 25th. We also appreciate input given to us by email and in conversation with several folks who were not able to attend.

Views expressed were diverse and sometimes mutually exclusive. Some people would not feel comfortable attending worship in person if masking and vaccinations were not required of all present. Others preferred that one or the other of these requirements become optional. One person expressed that asthma prevented her from wearing a mask for prolonged periods. Another stated that medical conditions made her unable to vaccinate fully but that she is willing to test negative prior to coming to worship. Some were open to the possibility of testing as an alternative—but others expressed concerns.

The Pandemic Response Team will continue to wrestle with the conflicting perspectives shared as well as the evolving nature of the pandemic over time. As we enter the Fall Season, we expect people to spend more time with others indoors and that the incidence of COVID infection (like the Flu) is likely to rise.

While subject to change, for the moment we are maintaining all of the current restrictions. Except when eating or drinking in the Fellowship Room, masks should be worn while in the building. We expect people using the building to be fully vaccinated and appropriately boosted—including the updated bivalent omicron booster as soon as feasible. (While not required, we also recommend that individuals consider obtaining a flu vaccine.) Please do not enter the building if you feel that you may have COVID or have recently been exposed.

If you are adversely affected by any restrictions (currently or in the future) and would like us to consider making exceptions on a case-by-case basis, please contact us in person, by phone, or by email (pandemicresponseteam@concordfriendsmeeting.org) to discuss your concerns further.

We have placed an air purifier in the Fellowship Room and want to try out a smaller, quieter one in the worship space after regular worship so Friends can experience whether one or more similar units would be too obtrusive during waiting worship.

We welcome your feedback on any issues related to our work and hope that everyone remembers that even conflicting interests (safety and openness) may be advocated by those who are motivated by love.

In loving service,

Betsy Meyer, Jennifer Smith, Wendy Lapham, and Rob Spencer (Pandemic Response Team)