March 12, 2020

We continue to monitor news of the spread of COVID-19 (the corona virus) and we are working diligently to keep MDSC a safe environment. We ask you to review and adapt to your daily lives the precautions recommended by the Center for Disease Control.

While many public institutions, including schools and some synagogues, have closed their doors, MDSC continues at this time to remain open for those who wish to pray with our morning minyan and at Shabbat and holiday services. With a few exceptions, until clarity on virus containment and treatment is available, only prayer-related events will continue as usual. We will not be serving kiddush lunch, seudah shelishiet, or any breakfasts until further notice.

Importantly, the CDC, the Jewish Agency, and most public health organizations strongly recommend that persons over the age of 60 limit their travel, interaction with non-family members and attendance at crowded venues and events throughout this crisis. The elderly, those of any age who have chronic health conditions, those who feel ill now or are recovering from illness or medical treatment are advised to remain at home. CDC guidance for those considered to be at higher risk can be found on their website.

The CDC asks for common sense hygiene practices, including frequent hand washing and limiting physical contact with potentially infected surfaces.

These general guidelines have important implications for gatherings in our synagogue.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap & water for at least 20 seconds.
- If you cannot wash your hands, use 60% alcohol-based sanitizers.
- Cover your mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay away from public gatherings if you are ill.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid shaking hands or other forms of casual contact.

MDSC member Dr. Vanessa Elharrar is now working at the forefront of COVID-19 research. She recommends the following measures specific to attendance at our synagogue:
- Bring your own siddur, chumash, tallit, and kippah (if you have these items; if you do not, use care in selecting those belonging to the synagogue collection and wash your hands frequently)
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizers (>60 % alcohol content) after any physical contact with another person
- DO NOT at any time or in any form kiss people or things. Do not shake hands either.
- DO NOT touch or kiss the Torah scrolls
- It is suggested that you do not participate in communal meals (these are currently suspended at MDSC)
- Wherever possible, place a several seat distance between yourself and your neighbor
- Wash your hands thoroughly after touching door handles and using the rest room (door handles throughout the synagogue and especially restroom faucet and toilet handles are sanitized frequently)

Contact Executive Director Andrea Choobineh at the MDSC office (301-770-6818) if you need clarification of these details.