



Your Health. Our Hospitality.

 MOUNT OLIVET CONFERENCE & RETREAT CENTER

Updated June 15, 2020

Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center exists to nurture the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth of all people through creative and caring ministries, quiet reflections, and a reverence for life. For over 40 years, we have welcomed persons, families, churches, non-profit organizations and businesses to learn and grow together while enjoying our many amenities and beautiful grounds.

Following the latest executive orders from MN Governor Tim Walz, we now are receiving overnight and day guest groups of 10 people or less. We are able to host weddings, baptisms, and similar events for 25 people or less. We have set aside special days for private retreats, and we are hosting day-long outdoor events for larger groups so that guests can enjoy the beauty of our grounds. Details about dining options and other amenities are listed below.

Contributing to the safety, health, and wellbeing of our guests has always been our most basic and highest value. We have modified our practices in keeping with the MN Dept. of Health guidelines for opening restaurants, hotels, and outdoor recreation sites. We have implemented detailed protocols related to physical distancing; safe and healthy dining; scheduled use of amenities; maintaining proper hygiene; simplifying common spaces; disinfecting, cleaning, and laundering; ensuring sick workers and guests stay at home; and communication of protocols—all so that you can visit the retreat center with trust, ease, and peace.

Physical Distancing

From the time you arrive until the time you depart, you will be able to limit your interaction to your group. Leaders will check-in and distribute sanitized keys to their own group members in their own private meeting space. If some group members cannot attend in person, our staff can arrange an AV setup that includes them virtually.

Retreat center staff will configure indoor meeting rooms and outdoor meeting spaces to allow for 6' of distance between group participants. *Guests are required to wear masks in indoor, public spaces and are strongly encouraged both to wear masks and to keep 6' distance in all outdoor gatherings.*

Our staff will work with your group to increase physical distancing in the overnight accommodation building. We encourage single occupancy in all of our rooms, if possible. The maximum number of people in any hotel-style room (2 double-beds with a private bath) will be two, unless they are family members. Dorm occupancy will be limited unless members of the same household are staying together.

Guests are asked to follow physical distancing guidelines related to traffic flow in public buildings. Certain stairwells, for instance, have been designated as “up” and others as “down” when possible.

While playing music is encouraged and retreat center pianos are available, *public singing (individually or in groups) is prohibited* given the increased risk of infection from this activity.

Safe and Healthy Dining

The retreat center continues to offer nutritious meals prepared on-site and to serve fruits and vegetables from our own seasonal gardens. Group leaders can schedule meals to be served indoors or outdoors, weather permitting. Group members will be spread out at their own tables, placed at least 6’ apart. Tables can accommodate up to 4 people at a time unless they are from the same household, in which case the limit is 6 people.

Retreat center staff (wearing masks and gloves) will serve all meals, both food and drinks, to guests at their tables and will hand-deliver morning and afternoon breaks to private meeting rooms. Staff will bus tables at the end of each meal.

Use of Common Spaces and Amenities

Your group will have access to these common spaces and amenities at reserved times: firepit, patio, picnic tables, gazebo, prayer/meditation room, chapel, and indoor pool. Group members will have access to the main lounge and library lounge in the overnight accommodations building throughout their stay. If more than one group is in residence, lounges will need to be reserved ahead of time.

Furniture has been rearranged to allow for physical distancing. Guest should maintain 6’ physical distance from others and wear masks when using these public spaces.

A number of outdoor amenities, including hiking trails, Marsh Walk, labyrinth, swings and benches are open for unscheduled guest usage. Guests are encouraged to bring masks with them when walking on the grounds in the event that they encounter others at a close distance.

The whirlpool, sauna, and game room are closed until further notice.

Guests are welcome to bring their own outdoor and indoor games to be used in the meeting rooms, lounges, and overnight rooms. Prior to departure, group leaders will be asked to walk through all meeting rooms and sleeping rooms to ensure that no items are left behind.

Maintaining Proper Hygiene

Retreat Center staff will regularly wash their hands before and after cleaning, going from one building to another, interacting with staff and guests, and after touching their faces. Guests are asked to do the same.

The retreat center has public bathrooms in each building which should be used as handwashing stations. Portable hand-sanitizer stations are located in each building. In addition, wall-mounted hand-sanitizer stations are located in each dorm room, the dining room, the chapel lobby, and the kitchen. Tissues for proper cough/sneeze etiquette have been placed in all meeting rooms and lobbies along with no-touch trash and recycling bins.

Simplifying Common Spaces

We have simplified common spaces in each of our buildings, significantly reducing high-touch surface areas and removing items that would be difficult to disinfect.

In lieu of the beverage bar and snack bar, drinks (coffee, tea, water) and snacks will be served directly to groups in their meeting rooms or at their assigned dining tables. Our “wall of mugs” has been temporarily removed. Any condiments that cannot be served individually will be disinfected after each meal.

We have removed decorative pillows, magazines, newspapers, books, and brochures from meeting rooms, guest rooms, lobbies, and hallways. Site maps and other information about retreat center amenities can be found online on our website or can be sent electronically to group leaders upon request.

We have culled our books, games, and puzzles, leaving a handful of the most popular ones for guests to use during their stay with us. We encourage you to bring your own journals, hymnals, bibles, books, puzzles, games, and crafts.

A limited selection of gift shop items can be viewed in an electronic PDF file and purchased upon request. Staff members will retrieve these from inventory.

Guests who need computer access should bring their own laptops to the retreat center, and leaders should bring handouts and other printed materials with them. White boards and flip charts will be assigned to specific rooms and disinfected upon guests’ departure. Guests also are encouraged to use their own personal phones as needed while on retreat. Public phones, located in the overnight accommodations buildings in the upper floor stairwell and in the lower hallway of the main lodge, are available for emergencies.

Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Laundering

Retreat Center staff follow a documented sanitation schedule and check list for all restrooms, meeting rooms, kitchen, and dining room, and common area (both indoor and outdoor). All high-touch items are disinfected multiple times a day.

Disinfectants used to clean the retreat center meet the EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2. If a staff member or guest becomes ill with COVID-19, the retreat center will be disinfected immediately following CDC guidance.

Pillows, towels and bed linens are provided. Extra linens will be delivered to rooms upon request. Prior to checking out, guests are asked to bag all linens in their rooms (towels, sheets, blankets) to eliminate excess contact when staff members transport items to the laundry facility. Bags are provided by the retreat center.

Ensuring Sick Guests and Workers Stay Home

The retreat center provides forehead thermometers for both guests and staff. Group leaders are asked to review and follow COVID screening guidelines for all group members and to direct any group members who are ill to refrain from attending the retreat or event.

Retreat center staff will have their temperature taken at the start of each shift, and anyone with COVID-19 symptoms will be sent home immediately. Those who have been in close contact with a household member with COVID will not be at work until their quarantine period is finished.

Any guests who are "high risk" and vulnerable are encouraged to participate virtually in their group retreat. Retreat center staff are available to help facilitate this online participation.

Communication

Group leaders will be informed of all protocols related to guests' safety, health, and wellbeing prior to their arrival at Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center. They will be asked to share this information with all group members prior to their arrival. Group members will be welcomed to the retreat center with a virtual orientation to answer any questions. An abbreviated list of instructions for guest, including an overview of the above, has been placed in each lodging room. These instructions will be discarded and replaced when guests depart and rooms are cleaned.

We look forward to welcoming you to Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center in the near future. In the meantime, please reach out to us with any questions about scheduling or planning an upcoming retreat. Visit our ["Retreat Where You Are" site](#) for resources to support you during these times.

May peace, health, and safety be yours in abundance.

Rev. Dr. Theresa F. Latini
Executive Director