

COVID-19 Guidelines for Local Churches

Pastor:

- Use words like mitigate, not prevent.
- Initiate changes rather than discuss them to decrease anxiety and get things done (you do not need a committee or taskforce to do these things).
- You do not need to implement all of these things now, rather think about what you might do should the situation worsen.

Offices/buildings:

- Disinfect door handles, counters, and desktop surfaces.
- Keep tissue and hand sanitizer on desks.
- Avoid drinking fountains.
- Wipe down cell phones, phones, computer keyboards, and other office tools (such as copiers) regularly.
- Keep trash cans available throughout your campus.

Nursery:

- Sanitize and disinfect your nursery.
- Keep toys picked up, putting out a few at a time, and not allowing children to share toys if possible. Use duplicates for second child.
- Wipe down surfaces.
- Wipe runny noses, then clean child/worker hands with hand sanitizer.
- Avoid snacks when possible.
- Adult handwashing after skin contact with children.
- Wipe down all chairs, counters.
- Have cleaning supplies handy for adults, out of reach of children.
- Use hand sanitizer after changing diapers.

Choir:

- Wipe down hymnals, folders weekly.
- Use large fans positioned to suck air out of choir room in windows or doorways during practice.
- Consider practicing in a larger room to spread people out.

Offering and Worship

- Collection procedures might need to change.
- Sanitize plates or have designated plate collection sites at exits.
- Ushers use hand sanitizer before/after handling offering.
- Avoid passing out any items to children during children's time.
- Greeters: greet members with a squirt of hand sanitizer, but no hugs or handshakes.
- Discourage hugging and handshakes, find alternative ways of greeting (elbow bump, bow).

Communion:

- Hand sanitizer should be used all servers and pastors.
- Use alternative methods of handing out bread (tongs or tweezers)
 - DO NOT LET CONGREGANTS TOUCH THE BREAD.

- Avoid drinking from a common cup.

Pews:

- Hand sanitizer on small stand as enter each door of sanctuary.
- Hand sanitizer AND hand soap clearly marked in bathrooms. Hand sanitizer doesn't work like soap.
- Tissues on pews.
- Baby wipes to clean backs of pews where people grip when standing.
- Clean all public counters several times a day.
- Wipe down hymnals after services.
- Handwashing: Birthday song x2 or alphabet song and don't touch face.
- Stay home if sneezing, coughing, runny nose.

Emergency planning:

- Have a plan to manage staff (including choir director, nursery worker, accompanist) should they call in sick and need the 14-day quarantine.
- Have a financial back up plan should a temporary city-wide quarantine be implemented in your area (know where you can make cuts and how to pay your people).
- If possible, explore ways to hold services online, or in smaller group gatherings (this would only become necessary if there is a city-wide quarantine).
- Have a plan should the pastor become ill.

The Conference is also working on guidelines and plans, so keep checking the website for the most up to date information.

Here are some additional links to resources also available at <https://dscumc.org/disaster-response-resources/>

CDC Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

An emergency plan resource from the United Church in Canada: <https://www.united-church.ca/leadership/church-administration/emergency-planning>

Pandemic preparation guide from the Presbyterian Church:
<https://pda.pcusa.org/pda/resource/disease-guidance-for-congregations/>