



E-BLAST



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Coronavirus: Knowledge is Power

The Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ continues to monitor the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) within the United States. We are aware that while the prevalence of the virus in Illinois is low today, we know that can change in rapid fashion. The World Health Organization declared today, March 11, 2020, the corona virus as a global pandemic. We are increasing our vigilance and suggest your church should do the same.

It is clear that portions of our population are more vulnerable than others, and so the need to prevent the continuing transmission of the virus is of real concern to all of us who value our personal relationships.

See below for recommendations for the local churches to consider. As your congregation looks at these suggestions, you should also consider what local events might cause you to take additional actions. For instance, if the local schools choose to close for a select time that might be a sign that it is appropriate to limit public worship. You will note there are recommendations for supporting worship services using technologies that might be available.

We continue to pray for all of you and all of our partner congregations. We see no reason today for us to cancel any currently scheduled Association Meetings, or our Annual Celebration in June. We will continue to be attentive to developments and communicate any changes in our plans.

Rev. Justo González II – Interim Conference Minister

Rev. Chuck Maney – Illinois Conference President

PANDEMIC PREPARATIONS: INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW

We have been aware for a long time that there is potential for pandemics to spread across the globe. Flu A, Bird Flu, Ebola and now COVID-19 (Coronavirus). In the last few months we have seen the headlines of the spread of COVID-19. We have seen stories of

quarantine, whole communities impacted, cruise ships and stock markets. We have seen guidance and updates from the Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization. Today, Wednesday, March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared Coronavirus a global pandemic. We do not want you to panic but we do want you to be aware.

This is not the first time, nor will it be the last. And because contagion can spread before symptoms appear, we know that there is a need for common sense and caution. Information and good practices are our best antidote to panic.

Our Disaster Resource and Response Team has developed this questionnaire to help guide your churches preparations and response:

COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

- Are you aware of the emergency or pandemic plan for you community? (Check with your local emergency manager or fire department)
- What resources are in place for vulnerable populations (Check with your Council on Aging, VNA office, local health agent, town hall)
- What will happen to those who may depend on meals programs or food pantries?
- What spiritual resources might your church offer to official responders and to the general community?

SERVICES OF WORSHIP:

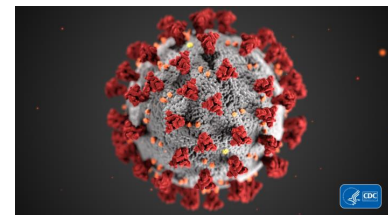
- Do you have encouragement and guidance in place for leaders and church members to stay home if they exhibit symptoms?
- Are you using precautions in worship: passing the peace by bowing not contact, hand sanitizers in pews, passing an offering or communion plate from person to person, etc.?
- Do you have plans in place so that everyone gets their own cup (plastic cups) during communion? Have you considered having pre-cut bread that is placed in the hands of folks by a Deacon? (No tearing of a common loaf or people taking their own piece.
- Have you considered having ushers wear gloves when collecting and counting the offering?

[Read More](#)

Coronavirus (COVID-2019) Resources

From the United Church of Christ Office:

[Coronavirus resources for congregations from UCC Disaster Ministries](#)



Bookmark these resources for developing information:

- [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 updates.](#)
- [CDC New travel alerts](#)
- [Free communication resources about Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Ohio Department of Health information.](#)
- [FEMA, general disaster guidance for Houses of Worship.](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) - City of Chicago](#)

From Advocate Faith and Health Partnerships

[Latest information and resources about Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) to keep you and your faith community as up to date as possible.](#)

From the World Health Organization(WHO):

[Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19](#)

[WHO Preparedness resources.](#)

Find the latest information from WHO on where COVID-19 is spreading:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>

Advice and guidance from WHO on COVID-19.;

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

<https://www.epi-win.com/>



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