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## Recommendations and Suggestions about Coronavirus from the Illinois Conference Ministry Leadership Team and Rev. Chuck Maney, Conference President

There has been a HUGE amount of information about Coronavirus swirling around in the media. And the number of cases is multiplying. Major events are being cancelled and postponed (sports, entertainment, festivals, holiday activities, political rallies, for example). Destination giants, such as Disney, Universal Studios, and Broadway, along with local favorites such as museums, concert venues, and historical sites are closed until further notice. Whole states are closing their school buildings, as are colleges and universities, either suspending classes or relying on online options. Our Governor announced today that he is ordering all schools closed at least until March 30, 2020. We have received word from other denominations (currently the Archdiocese of Chicago [Roman Catholic Church] and the Episcopal Church) that they are ceasing in-person worship and activities at all their churches for an extended period of time. Caution and care for the other seems to be the prevailing interests. As you know, things are changing by the day and hour.

We, your Illinois Conference Ministry Leadership Team, have received a lot of questions about how our clergy and congregations in the Illinois Conference should respond to what has now been designated a Pandemic and a National Emergency. While some denominations' polity places the role of making these decisions on the shoulders of judicatory ministers, such determinations are made by local church clergy and lay leaders in the United Church of Christ. This is both the blessing and the burden that comes with our polity of autonomy and covenant. In other words, we can't tell you what to do! However, because folks have asked, because this situation affects us Conference-wide, and because we are called to support and resource you, we offer these recommendations and suggestions:

1. **Please consider the possibility of closing your buildings to public events, including worship.** Have this conversation with your staff and lay leaders. **Determine triggers** that will lead you to make such a decision. **Put protocols in place** so that, should such a decision be made, everyone knows how to make it happen in a manner that minimizes panic and anxiety for your congregation.
2. **Help people stay connected.** If you do cancel services, activities, and/or meetings, find ways to communicate and provide care for your congregation. Should you decide to maintain your worship and/or meeting schedule, create ways for people to connect remotely. Should folks need to stay away or prefer to practice social distancing during this time, helping them to stay connected and continue to participate in the life of the church is important. Some options you might consider:
  - a. Zoom – Zoom offers a relatively cost-effective option to set up group meetings and gatherings (they have monthly rates suitable for groups, depending on size, of \$15.99 and up). We utilize Zoom regularly for Conference and Association meetings and find it works very well. We are happy to answer questions!
  - b. Facebook Live – This is a platform that allows for live-streaming worship

and other events. We have congregations in the Illinois Conference who use it already for Sunday morning worship who could probably be resources of information for churches exploring that direction.

[Read More](#)

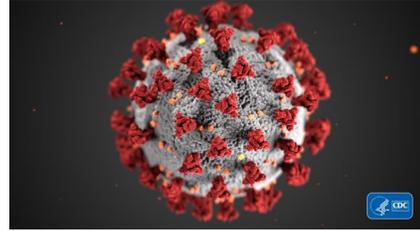
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## Coronavirus (COVID-2019) Resources

### From the United Church of Christ Office:

[Coronavirus and the Church: National Officers Speak Out](#)

[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 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [FEMA, general disaster guidance for Houses of Worship.](#)
- [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) - City of Chicago](#)

### Additional information:

- [Pandemic Preparations: Inquiring Minds Want to Know](#)
- [State of Illinois Daily COVID-19 Briefing](#)

### 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 Advocate Aurora Health Enews: <https://www.ahchealthenews.com/2020/03/12/news-about-the-coronavirus-changes-constantly-heres-where-you-can-go-for-the-latest-information/>

Advocate Aurora Health has recently launched an information page:

<https://www.advocateaurorahealth.org/coronavirus-disease-2019>

Advocate Aurora Health Faith and Health Partnerships is continually updating its page on Coronavirus resources: <https://www.faithhealthtransformation.org/coronavirus-covid-19-resources/>

### 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/>

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



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Illinois Conference of the United Church of Christ | (708) 344-4470  
1840 Westchester Blvd., Suite 200, Westchester, IL 60154