



# CHINOOK WINDS REGION

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

12 March 2020

## Guidelines for Communities of Faith in Chinook Winds Region regarding COVID-19

**1. As public health professionals continue to remind us, the best defense against COVID-19 is to practice good flu season hygiene which includes:**

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve and not into your hands.
- Stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others.

**2. In terms of Worship and other church gatherings**

- encourage people who are sick or experiencing flu-like symptoms to stay home.  
Further,  
Alberta's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Deena Hinshaw requested on March 11 that people recently returning from Italy self-quarantine for 14 days and that those who have travelled outside Canada avoid large gatherings for 14 days.
- Make alcohol-based hand sanitizer available in the worship space and throughout the church building for all to use.
- find alternate forms of greetings and ways of passing the peace that don't involve skin-to skin contact.
- find alternative methods for the offering than passing the plate from hand to hand
- Take precautions to reduce the number of people touching communion elements and trays or do not serve communion.
- Use individual communion cups rather than a common cup with grape juice.

- Encourage people who use church buildings to wash their hands and post reminder signs throughout the church.
- Regularly wipe down commonly used areas touched by churchgoers, like door handles, pew tops, and railings, regularly.
- Continue to follow provincial health code regulations regarding food services and washing dishes
- Buffet-style serving of food is not advised.

### **3. Pastoral Care**

- Pastoral care visitors should take all necessary precautions in personal hygiene before and after pastoral visits in hospitals and homes.
- Remain in contact with those who may be vulnerable or quarantined to ensure that they have their spiritual, social and physical needs attended to. While it may not be possible to visit in person, phone calls and written notes are options as well as others for keeping in contact.

**4. Please stay home and get medical help if you are experiencing ALL THREE of the following symptoms of COVID- 19:** Fever; Cough; Difficulty breathing. Contact Health Link at 811 to receive direction.

**5. Planning Ahead.** In the event that health officials ask that public worship services not be held, The United Church of Canada's emergency plan suggests that communities of faith plan for alternative ways of offering worship i.e. planning prayer services that people can do at home or offering worship online.