



New Castle Presbytery

Coronavirus Preparation and Response

Public health conditions and available information about the coronavirus are changing by the hour. Recognizing that we all need to have the best advice available and that the health of our members and the entire community, we'd like to share with you the resources and suggestions listed below.

- **PCUSA**
 - [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Guidance for Congregations in Response to Severe Infectious Disease Outbreak](#)
 - [A Pastoral Statement on the Coronavirus/COVID-19 from the PCUSA Office of Theology and Worship](#)
- **Center for Healthy Churches**
 - [Center for Healthy Churches: What Is Your Church's Plan for the Coronavirus?](#)
- **Centers for Disease Control**
 - [Centers for Disease Control "About Coronavirus Disease 2019"](#)
 - [Centers for Disease Control Preparedness Checklist for Faith-Based and Community Organizations](#)
- **National Institute for Health Infectious Disease**
 - [Resources from the NIH on the Coronavirus Disease](#)
- **Christian Century**
 - [Ten Guidelines for Pastoral Care during the Coronavirus](#)
- **The Atlantic**
 - <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/03/coronavirus-what-you-can-do-help-slow-outbreak/607369/>

Immediate actions for pastors and sessions to consider:

1. Close every other pew in the sanctuary to create space between worshipers.
2. Discontinue "coffee hour" after the service.
3. Shut off all water fountains and put signs on them stating that they are restricted due to health concerns.
4. Disinfect every handrail and door knob/handle in the church on a weekly (minimum) basis. Preferably as late in the week as possible.
5. Request that anyone feeling ill should stay home – guilt free and knowing that they are showing their care and concern by not being around others.
6. Discontinue the use of name tags.
7. Reinforce "Passing of the Peace" as non-contact gestures.

8. Print the hymns and Bible passages in the bulletin to eliminate need for hymnals and Bibles. Encourage use of individual electronic devices or projection instead of a printed bulletin.
9. Be sure that all lavatories have ample supply of soap and paper towels.
10. Change method of communion to insure social distancing is maintained and be prepared to discontinue communion if necessary.
 - a. Discontinue common cup and use trays with disposable or washable communion cups.
 - b. Provide a basket for disposal of the cups.
 - c. Cut bread into one-inch square pieces. These could be gently dropped into a worshiper's cupped hands by the celebrant who will wear gloves.
 - d. Insure that all persons handling any of the elements have gloved hands including:
 - i. Handling/cutting the bread
 - ii. Handling/filling the cups
 - iii. Presiding and serving
11. Elders and staff should contact groups using the church to ascertain their readiness and preparedness protocol. Church maintains the right and responsibility to close regardless of a group's needs or plans.

In the event of closing:

1. Session will want to communicate electronically or telephonically to all members.
2. Churches may consider providing audio or video worship service.
3. Pastor contact information should be provided to the congregation, especially in the event of pastoral care needs.

NOTE: You may also want to review your church by laws to allow for session meetings and other committee meetings to be held electronically. The Stated Clerk will have more information on that issue in the coming days.

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