



COVID-19: United Church Statement

Posted in **Faith Communities and COVID-19**

We are called to be the Church...to love and
serve others.



Credit: Image by Jacqueline Macou from Pixabay

Published on: March 5, 2020

Last modified on March 13, 2020

Discussion about COVID-19 is growing as confirmed cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus) continue to spread. As a church, we have prepared the [Emergency Plan](#) to help communities of faith plan ahead for contingencies that may or may not arise, realizing that planning ahead is a way to reduce anxiety.

We urge communities of faith to respond to COVID-19 with compassion, prevention, and prayer.

Compassion

Overwhelming statistics outlining the number of confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19 make it easy to disassociate the numbers from the people and communities involved.

As a church, we seek a compassionate response that acknowledges the personhood attached to each statistic. We know that the people affected include not only those infected by the COVID-19 virus but also their families, friends, co-workers, and community members. We mourn with people whose loved ones have died, who have lost their livelihood through the growing economic impact, who have lost community through self-isolation and limited travel, and, who have lost a sense of security through fear of contamination or racial discrimination.

We also offer our prayers of thanksgiving for the professionals who are providing leadership in the treatment and containment of the virus, and our prayers of concern for those who put at risk their personal health to serve and support others, especially those who are most vulnerable.

Prevention

We hope the most vulnerable people in our society will be able to rely on us—communities of faith—to do all that we can to prevent the spread of both the virus and of the fears surrounding it. As faith leaders, we can familiarize ourselves with the guidelines outlined in the Emergency Plan to ensure that people are able to seek comfort in our places of worship. We can ensure that our gathering places promote good preventive practices, and when necessary, we can provide alternative programming—like online worship or Bible study, or bagged lunches for meal programs—for those who are most at risk in large group gatherings or are isolated due to vulnerability.

By mirroring the compassionate presence of Christ and providing clear and specific information, faith leaders can help to mitigate the spreading fear around COVID-19. We encourage communities of faith to

- seek and share stories from those most affected by the virus, praying with our kin around the world
- repudiate and dispel all comments about COVID-19 that are prejudiced or racist, or that attach COVID-19 to a race or ethnicity
- practise and model good personal hygiene by washing our hands often, coughing or sneezing into our sleeves, and avoiding touching our face or the faces of those who are most vulnerable
- educate community members on how they can prevent the spread of viruses

Prayer

Our faithful response of compassion and prevention needs to be surrounded and guided by our continual prayer for the well-being of all people. May we continue to collaborate and learn from health care professionals as we seek ways to honor and respect all people at all times.

For more information, see [Faith Communities and COVID-19](#).

Downloads

Attachment	Size
 The United Church of Canada Emergency Plan (Mar 2020)	550.66 KB

