

Coronavirus: what to know, how to help

The first cases of Coronavirus, officially known as COVID-19, were diagnosed in China in December 2019. Since then, the illness with pneumonia-type symptoms, has spread to 37 nations to-date, including countries where United Methodists reside and attend church.

While places where people gather in close proximity, such as worship services, may be vulnerable, there are [simple steps to take to limit risks](#), according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Above all, anyone feeling unwell should stay home and seek medical care.

We also want to call to your attention the option of viewing our services on our Facebook page live. Both the 8:30am traditional and the 11am Anew services are available. If you aren't able to attend live you can also watch it at your convenience.

Other tips include:

1. Wash your hands frequently. Use soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Maintain social distancing. Keep 3 feet or 1 meter between yourself and anyone who is sneezing and coughing.
3. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Viruses can live on surfaces, where your hands may touch. Once on your hands, the virus may enter your body.
4. Practice respiratory hygiene. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of used tissue immediately.
5. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early. Call ahead for an appointment to limit your exposure to others.
6. Stay informed and follow advice given by your healthcare provider. Stay up-to-date on Coronavirus by checking reliable sources, such as the [WHO](#), [National Institutes of Health](#), [Centers for Disease Control](#), and [Global Health Tracker](#).

Staying healthy is in our DNA

Discussing health in the church dates back to John Wesley, who wrote extensively about staying physically healthy, as well as spiritually healthy. Bishop Elaine Stanovsky, in a recent blog post, reminds United Methodists that holding spiritual and social holiness together is a “mark of Methodist distinction.”

Particularly as we move through the Lenten season, Stanovsky [encourages all United Methodists to practice reasonable precautions to stay virus-free](#).

Staying calm tops of the list of how to respond to Coronavirus, [writes Bishop David Bard](#). The Michigan bishop has asked the Conference Disaster Response Coordinators and the Conference Committee on Finance and Administration to consider how congregations can best respond to the global health crisis.

“There is no need for immediate action,” Bard writes. “But now is a good time to calmly assess the possible impact on our local churches if an outbreak occurs in Michigan.”

How to help

The United Methodist Church, through UMCOR, has been helping with the crisis in China since early February when the United Methodist agency issued an [emergency grant to an organization working to limit the spread of Coronavirus in China](#).