

Are you ready?

www.crwrc.org/pandemic



Church Continuity & Spiritual Care

When a pandemic occurs, the operation of the church, and the spiritual care and ministries provided, will be significantly affected. It is vital that the leadership of the denomination and the leadership of each congregation establish a pandemic plan to (a) alleviate fear and panic that will occur (b) ensure continuance of spiritual care of congregants (c) ensure continuance of programs and ministries (d) ensure a cash flow for staff, programs, and ministries. Following are website resources to assist the denomination and individual churches in their planning with respect to worship services, finances and sacramental practices. It should be noted that pandemic plans by congregations should not become the responsibility of pastors but rather Church Councils.

1. **WORSHIP SERVICES:** Government may order a ban on all public meetings during a pandemic which will include worship services. This will have major impact on the spiritual and pastoral care of the congregation. With present technologies, however, creative ways may be used to maintain a meaningful and personal connection to worshippers and to others being ministered to in special ways by the church.
2. **FINANCES:** If worship services are cancelled during a pandemic, the finances at both the denominational and congregational levels will be severely impacted. Givings will plunge and also persons in charge of finances may become ill. It is crucial to develop contingency plans at both levels to ensure continuance of the ministries of the church.
3. **SACRAMENTAL PRACTICES:** The main ways that a pandemic spreads are through personal contact, contact with contaminated surfaces, infection through airborne contaminants. The CRC is encouraged to strike a special committee mandated to develop a “Safe Sacramental Practices” plan to prevent the spread of a pandemic. The resulting plan will be standardized and mandatory for each congregation to implement during a pandemic.

Following are links that are helpful in accessing resources. While many resources relate to a specific denomination they offer insight and help in formulating your congregation’s response.

I. PREPARING YOUR CHURCH

The following links are helpful in understanding the impact of a pandemic flu outbreak as it impacts a congregation and its members in various ways.

Church Response

<http://www.churchresponse.org>

Is your congregation ready for an emergency? How would you assist your neighbours? Do you know how an influenza pandemic might affect your church ministries? This website provides resources, including a pandemic checklist that will help get you started in your planning process.

Guide to Influenza Pandemic Preparedness for Faith

<http://www.library.omb.ca/dbtw-wpd/documents/FaithGroupPlanningTemplateMay2006.pdf>

The Ontario government has prepared a *Guide to Influenza Pandemic Preparedness for Faith Groups* which is intended to support the influenza pandemic preparedness efforts of faith groups and faith-based service providers.

Faith Based Check-List for Pandemic Preparedness

www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/faithcomchecklist.html

The collaboration of Faith-Based and Community Organizations with public health agencies will be essential in protecting the public's health and safety if and when an influenza pandemic occurs. This checklist provides guidance for religious organizations (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, etc.), social service agencies that are faith-based, and community organizations in developing and improving influenza pandemic response and preparedness plans.

2. WORSHIP RESOURCES

Although many of these resources were initially created for an immediate response to natural disasters, specifically Hurricane Katrina and the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia, they may also be amended slightly or may help provide ideas for similar resources for other natural disasters or for services remembering these events.

- Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
<http://www.calvin.edu/worship/services/occasion/tsunami/index.php>
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
<http://www.pcusa.org/pda/tools/resources-worshipresources.htm>
- The United Methodist Committee on Relief
<http://new.gbqm-umc.org/umcor/give/oghs/worship/>

3. PASTORAL CARE

Church World Services

<http://www.cwserp.org/reports/>

This is a Church World Service (CWS) information and resources web site for persons interested in the ministry of the religious community in disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The site gathers together reports, including disaster ministry guides for clergy and lay leaders in congregations.

4. RESOURCES FROM VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS

Lutheran Church in US

<http://www.elca.org/disaster/pandemic/congregations.asp>

Roman Catholic United Kingdom

http://www.lancasterrcdiocese.org.uk/bishop/Pastoral_planning_for_a_flu_pandemic_RevNickDonnelly.pdf

Kalamazoo.Michigan

<http://www.kalcounty.com/php/6keyissues.htm>

United Methodist Church

<http://new.gbgm-umc.org/UMCOR/work/health/birdflu/churches/>

Evangelical Lutheran Church

<http://www.elca.org/disaster/pandemic/faithfulresponse.asp>

Presbyterian Church (USA)

<http://www.pcusa.org/nationalhealth/healthinfo/pandemic.htm>

Canadian Mennonite University

<http://www.cmu.ca/church-community/pandemicResources.html#faithgroups>

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

http://www.nvoad.org/articles/Light_Our_Way_LINKS.pdf