

## Coronavirus recommendations for churches

The global Church of the Nazarene and the Board of General Superintendents have provided the following information in light of the global coronavirus pandemic.

As the coronavirus continues to spread globally, we want to ensure our people around the world follow general safety measures and heed the instructions of local health officials. Although events on the ground are changing rapidly, we should not panic but take precautions and be prepared.

- **Personal hygiene:** Maintain good personal hygiene by washing hands often using soap and water. Hand sanitizer may also be used.
- **Physical contact:** Avoid shaking hands, hugging, kissing, and other forms of physical greeting.
- **In case of symptoms:** If you are feeling ill or experiencing any potentially contagious symptoms such as fever or cough, please avoid church gatherings.
- **Non-essential gatherings:** Consider postponing non-essential gatherings or conduct them virtually by phone or video conferencing when possible. The concept of social distancing—reducing the number of times and places that people gather in large numbers—has been shown to slow a disease outbreak. By slowing the spread of the disease, medical facilities are better able to handle the demand as it arises.
- **Preparing for gatherings:** Clean surfaces thoroughly before and after use, especially door handles, tables, and chairs.
- **Worship:** Consider using a projector to display song lyrics or choose familiar favorites to avoid passing hymn books or song sheets.
- **Offering collection:** Avoid passing an offering plate; instead, consider implementing electronic giving.
- **Communion:** If your church continues serving Communion, consider the following precautions. The elements should be individualized when possible. The practice of “intinction” (dipping the bread into the juice), using the “tear and share” method of distributing bread, and sharing a communal cup should be avoided. Instead, churches may use pre-packed Communion cups or prepare individual servings by cutting the bread into small pieces or pouring small servings of juice. Anyone who handles food should thoroughly wash their hands or wear protective gloves.

Please contact your district superintendent for more information about risks in your area and any additional steps that should be taken.

We are holding in prayer our church leaders, administrators, pastors, and congregants who are making important decisions and dealing with those affected by the sickness. We are aware of the difficulties and uncertainties surrounding the situation, but we are called to trust in a God who holds our lives together in His love no matter the situation.

We are praying for all medical personnel and the facilities caring for those affected, especially the elderly and the vulnerable. We have hope in God and need to extend compassion through our calling and services while also being practical in following instructions given to us by local, state, and national health professionals and agencies who deal with such situations. Let us not stray away from our faith in fear during these hard times, “for the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7).

For the latest information on the COVID-19 global situation, visit the [World Health Organization](#).