

## **Infectious Disease Response Plan**

The challenge in the face of any public health crisis is to protect the vulnerable among us without allowing fear to overcome faith. This tiered response plan seeks to implement appropriate measures to protect the health and safety of our community, without unnecessarily isolating ourselves from worship, relationships and other activities of daily living.

Based on the recommendation of governmental and denominational agencies, the determination for when to move from one stage to another will be made at the recommendation of our Public Safety Task Force, and by Session vote if time permits.

Public Safety Task Force: **NAMES**

### **Tier 1 (Flu Season)**

- Sanitize all worship, children and meeting spaces after each use, paying particular attention to door knobs, seating areas and toys.
- Remind the congregation of good hygiene practices including hand washing and covering their cough.
- Ensure that all hand sanitizing stations are in working order and up to date.
- Encourage members and staff to stay home if you or your child is not feeling well, has a cough or sneeze, or are worried about possible infection.
- Invite the congregation to Pass the Peace with our without physical contact, as they feel comfortable.
- Deacons identify the most vulnerable population in Shepherding Groups (elderly, disabled, anyone who had recent surgery, anyone pregnant). Form a plan to offer care and services to those affected by any future epidemic. Train Deacons and other caregivers on safety precautions needed to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

### **Tier 2 (Epidemic or Increased Risk)**

- Continue with all Tier 1 precautions.
- Discontinue Passing of the Peace.
- Instruct Ushers and Greeters to offer a non-physical sign of welcome instead of shaking hands.
- Utilize Offering Box and online giving instead of passing the offering plates during worship.
- No serving communal food or drink in large group settings. Invite the congregation to bring their own coffee or tea to worship.
- Communion servers hand out elements with gloves, including appropriate instruction on minimizing the spread of disease. Prepare elements wearing gloves and masks. Keep elements covered until use.
- Sanitize or remove pens from worship and communal gathering places, and replace paper in the Great Room weekly.
- Turn off water fountains and mark with a "Do Not Use" sign.
- Bulletin inserts and emails with updated information to keep people informed.

- Deacons and small group leaders contact vulnerable individuals on a weekly basis to provide information and support.
- Minimize hospital visitations and find alternative ways to offer pastoral care.
- All Food Pantry volunteers wear gloves when distributing food. Create and implement a plan for containing and serving guests who are ill.
- Allow staff flexible hours and additional work from home time as needed.
- Extend paid staff sick leave as necessary for those unable to work due to illness.
- Prepare to implement the plan if the congregation cannot gather.
- Contact local government and nonprofit aid providers and begin to plan for how our church might offer support to the community at large during an outbreak.
- Reassess weekly whether or not new precautions are needed, or when it is safe to resume normal church practices.

### **Tier 3 (Local Outbreak)**

- Continue relevant Tier 2 precautions.
- No public worship or small group gatherings unless absolutely necessary.
- Livestream our services or recommend other online options to our congregation through Facebook, the church website, and email.
- Staff work from home whenever possible.
- Hospital and home visitation of infected individuals will only occur with the strictest precautions.
- Increase church communication with updates on church activities and to maintain a sense of unity and support.
- Educate the congregation on the continued need for and means of financially supporting the church including staff salaries, facility upkeep, and ongoing mission needs.
- Deacons make daily phone contact with vulnerable individuals in their group to check on wellbeing and offer support.
- Modified Food Pantry distribution methods (bring to car, etc.).
- Continue to pay staff for their regularly scheduled work hours, even if their services are not needed.
- Reassess weekly when it is safe to reduce precautions and resume normal church practices.