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Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Faith-Based Leaders

Community- and faith-based organizations are encouraged to prepare for the possibility of a coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in their communities. These recommendations are based upon what is currently known about COVID-19. Please stay informed about local COVID-19 information and updates. You can stay informed by using the resources described in this document. **Please be aware that as of March 21, 2020, at 5:00 p.m., all public and private gatherings in the State of Illinois of 10 people or more are prohibited for the duration of the Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation. This includes faith-based events.**

Recommended Preventative Actions

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Currently, no vaccine exists to prevent COVID-19. Communities are encouraged to promote and follow everyday preventative actions.

- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care. Restrict visitors and staff with fever or acute respiratory symptoms.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow. Throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds — especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands, especially your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Thoroughly and repeatedly clean high-touch surfaces and objects using diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, or EPA-registered household disinfectants.
- Review your process for planning events, programs, and services. Identify actions to take if you need to temporarily postpone or cancel events, programs, and services.
- Plan ways to limit person to person contact at your organization. Keep at least 6 feet between people.
 - Discontinue the offering of communion at this time.
 - Forgo greeting times and passing out bulletins
 - Create an alternative to collect offering
 - Consider limiting access to your organization by non-essential visitors.
- Plan ways to continue essential services if on-site operations are scaled back temporarily. Provide web- and mobile-based communications and services, if possible. Increase the use of email, conference calls, video conferencing, and web-based seminars.
- Identify space in your facility to separate individuals who may become sick and cannot leave immediately.
- Stop any stigma related to COVID-19 by knowing the facts and by sharing them with others in your community.

Ways to Receive Updates on COVID-19

- Please utilize Ford County Public Health Department's website and Facebook page to keep current on COVID-19. www.fordcountyphd.org
- FCPHD encourages faith-based organizations to provide our office with a contact person that can be placed on our communication list. This will ensure that the institution receives up to date press releases and recommendations.
- Please utilize Illinois Department of Public Health Department's website. www.dph.illinois.gov or www.coronavirus.illinois.gov. Additional guidance may be found at: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/business-guidance>
- Leaders may find it helpful to review the guidance provided by the CDC in its "[Interim Guidance: Get Your Community- and Faith-Based Organizations Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\).](#)"