

Coronavirus – Response

12th March 2020

You will be aware that there are daily changing numbers of confirmed cases of the Coronavirus in England and here at TRM we are taking our responsibility seriously.

We are aware that the effects of this virus is causing anxiety and fear for many people around us and we need to be praying for all those currently affected. We will continue to pray for those who are working around the clock to both protect and heal, as well as for those who working to find a vaccine, and for our communities and our families.

Here at TRM we are following the advice of Public Health England & the Methodist Church.

Should I come to Church? If you're feeling ill - fever, cough and difficulty breathing or displaying symptoms of a cold, please stay at home. Contact 111 and follow their advice. **If you have a confirmed case of Coronavirus please inform the minister or a member of the Church leadership team.**

If you are taking part in the leading of worship in any way and are unwell, please don't struggle through but stay at home and get well. Even if you would normally go to church with a cold, the words of 1 Corinthians 8:11 may be useful here: "Think of your weaker (brother/sister)"

Welcoming: Welcomers should refrain from using a handshake to welcome people into the service, but greet one another with a friendly smile.

Communion and Pastoral visiting: The Methodist Church has produced specific guidance relating to Communion and pastoral visiting – Please see over

Good practice: We recommend that at the start of every public gathering here at TRM a reminder should be given for all those present to follow the guidance of Public Health England in order to minimise the spread of the virus.

Worship and events held at this Church will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Minister and Church Stewards and may need to be cancelled or postponed at short notice if it is thought appropriate or we are advised to do so

REMEMBER

Do

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

Don't

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
-
- .

The Methodist Church: Coronavirus Guidance for communion and pastoral visiting:

Those administering Communion must wash their hands or use hand sanitiser immediately prior to distribution. If the Common Cup (chalice) is used for Communion, only the Minister should receive the wine, and communicants receive Communion in one kind only - the bread. The practice of 'intinction' (dipping the bread into the wine) should be avoided as this may spread the virus.

If individual glasses are used for wine, **the communicant should pick up their own glass** rather than servers handing it to them.

Bread should not be passed around via the 'tearing and sharing' method but should be prepared by a single user who has thoroughly washed their hands before cutting the bread up in to small pieces and ideally who wears disposable gloves.

It is probably a good time to remind Communion Stewards that communion wine once poured out should never be returned to the bottle to be reused later. Any remaining elements should be reverently consumed or put to ground.

Ministers (preachers and leaders of worship) should refrain from shaking hands with people as they leave.

Pastoral concerns

Churches may want to consider carrying out pastoral 'visits' by phone. In any case it may be worth calling the person you are due to visit to check they are comfortable with you being there. Now is a good time to be thinking proactively about who in the Church might need extra help should they decide or be required to self-isolate. Is there the need to create a plan for shopping for more vulnerable members of the community for example?

The latest Government advice is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#diagnosis-and-analysis>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-home-isolation>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19>

Praying for our sisters and brothers around the world

Remember that the Methodist Church is wider than Britain We are learning from our sisters and brothers around the world who are dealing with a difficult and uncertain situation and we would ask that you hold them in prayer, particularly those in affected areas.