

# CORONAVIRUS COVID-19: INFORMATION FOR PARISHIONERS

*The following information, taken from an article on Anglican Life website dated 13 February <https://anglicanlife.org.nz/coronavirus/> and updated, is offered for parishioners' information. It is also available on the parish website <http://www.stjames.net.nz/> with active links. Please note that this information may be updated at any time and follow any government announcements.*

In January 2020, Chinese authorities confirmed the presence of a new type of coronavirus known as COVID-19. Other corona viruses include the common cold, SARS and MERS.

NZ is following the guidance of both the local DHB, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The situation changes daily and continues to evolve.

The virus affects the lungs and breathing and looks a bit like the influenza or flu virus. It especially impacts the young, elderly and people already sick for another reason. At this stage there is no vaccination. It has reached New Zealand but might be contained in Auckland at present.

**It is important at this time to be aware of the situation as it develops, but not to become overly alarmed or panicked. Throughout history the church has been an agent of calm, reassurance, and compassion during times of uncertainty.**

The best source of information on the virus is NOT social media, but we can rely on information from the NZ Ministry of Health or from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

**The best advice at this stage, is to follow standard good public health and hygiene habits.** That is:

- Frequently wash hands using soap and water for at least 20 seconds (use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available)
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze (we recommend the 'chicken-wing' method rather than your hands)



The 'chicken-wing' method for covering a cough or sneeze

- If using a tissue, put it in the bin
- Stay home if you are sick (working from home may be an option)
- Avoiding close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
- If you have been in contact with an unwell person or you yourself are feeling unwell, avoid contact with young children, the elderly and anyone with a compromised immune system especially those with respiratory issues.

Two useful posters on [handwashing](http://anglicanlife.org.nz/download/handwashing/) <http://anglicanlife.org.nz/download/handwashing/> and [washing and drying hands](http://anglicanlife.org.nz/download/washing-and-drying-hands/) <http://anglicanlife.org.nz/download/washing-and-drying-hands/> are available by clicking on (or accessing) the links above. They are found at the end of this handout.

The following information “Guidance for Gathering for Worship” has been adapted from advice published by the Diocese of British Columbia.

## GUIDELINES FOR WHEN WE GATHER AT WORSHIP

### 1. Wash your hands:

Celebrants, communion administrators, liturgical ministers, and servers must, follow **proper hand washing and hand sanitising techniques**. This means washing hands prior to the beginning of worship, and the use of hand sanitisers immediately before the Preparation of the Gifts (i.e. after The Peace). Hands should also be washed after the liturgy/service.



### 2. Use hand sanitisers:

Hand sanitisers should be available at strategic locations and particularly at entrances of the church. Parishioners should be encouraged to use them before attending worship or other activities on church property.



### 3. Feeling unwell? Stay away:

Please encourage and remind your parishioners that if they are feeling ill, even mildly so, to NOT attend worship or church events. It's important to remind your community that children, elderly and those with compromised immune systems will be at high risk, including death, should this virus or influenza spread into our region.



### 4. Communion – receiving the Common Cup:

Any person distributing the sacrament from the common cup **must be trained in appropriate etiquette** and in the proper methods for wiping the vessel between communicants. In particular:

1. **Fresh purifiers** need to be used for each service and for each communion cup;
2. Purifiers may need to be **changed more frequently** depending upon the size of the congregation;
3. The purifier should be **re-positioned** so that a fresh spot is used each time it is used to wipe the common cup; and
4. Purifiers need to be washed in hot water and ironed with a hot steam iron.

5. **Communion – receiving by Intinction (dipping):**

*It is the advice of the Bishop of Christchurch that intinction (dipping the bread or wafer in the wine) is not an acceptable practice for public worship when there is concern about the spread of a contagious disease.*

A combination of current literature and expert medical advice concludes that sipping from the common cup and sharing a handshake represent minimal risk of transmission of contagion and fall within the parameters of the normal risks of daily living. On the other hand, the practice of intinction is a **higher risk activity**; fingertips coming in contact with the bread which is then dipped in the wine or fingertips coming in direct contact with the wine may contaminate the shared wine with pathogens other than those found in saliva. The choice for a communicant, then, is to share the common cup or to receive in only one kind i.e. just take the bread. *I appreciate that for some people this may be a change in practice*, but it is based upon the very best information and research. Parish leaders are asked to ensure that they take the time to clearly state the rationale for this and the approved alternatives available. While the Reformation restored the common cup to the laity, Anglican sacramental theology has always held that the benefits of the sacrament do not require the reception in both kinds.

6. **The Peace and greetings:**

Personal touching will always be a matter of individual choice but banning the Passing of the Peace would be an over-reaction at this time. However, people's own needs should be respected, and nodding or bowing are quite acceptable ways of sharing the Peace, if so desired. We are not yet at a stage where we need to go beyond these general health guidelines. In the event that there is a wide pandemic, we will issue guidelines for a highly infectious environment.

7. **Rest Rooms:**

It is also important to ensure our toilet/rest room facilities are clean and functional for washing hands. If using cloth hand towels, change them regularly and wash them in hot water.



### Be prepared at home

- Have a plan—who can help if you are ill?
- Build up your emergency supplies kit
- Visit the CD website for more information about [getting your home ready](https://getready.govt.nz/prepared/household/)  
<https://getready.govt.nz/prepared/household/>
- See the [flu pandemic pamphlet](https://www.healthed.govt.nz/system/files/resource-files/HE1717_Getting%20ready%20for%20a%20flu%20pandemic_0.pdf) [https://www.healthed.govt.nz/system/files/resource-files/HE1717\\_Getting%20ready%20for%20a%20flu%20pandemic\\_0.pdf](https://www.healthed.govt.nz/system/files/resource-files/HE1717_Getting%20ready%20for%20a%20flu%20pandemic_0.pdf) for ideas

### Prevention in the workplace

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, employers have a legal duty to ensure the safety of employees while at work. In the context of this virus (and any others like it), this means taking measures to prevent both employees who are travelling to, or coming back from, affected areas from contracting the disease or allowing others in the workplace to contract it from an infected person.

Please read the ***Getting ready for a flu pandemic*** pamphlet [https://www.healthed.govt.nz/system/files/resource-files/HE1717\\_Getting%20ready%20for%20a%20flu%20pandemic\\_0.pdf](https://www.healthed.govt.nz/system/files/resource-files/HE1717_Getting%20ready%20for%20a%20flu%20pandemic_0.pdf) put out by the MoH. This is still the appropriate action to take. There is also the MOH ***flu information*** pamphlet <https://www.fightflu.co.nz/sites/default/files/2018%20Flu%20Brochure.pdf>.

WHO advise people to follow basic principles to reduce risk of the virus spreading. These are:

- Avoid close contact with people suffering acute respiratory infections
- Wash hands frequently, especially after contact with ill people or their environment
- Avoid close contact with sick farm animals or wild animals

People with symptoms of respiratory infection should practice cough etiquette:

- Maintain distance
- Cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing
- Wash hands frequently

What happens if an employee is returning from an affected area? Read the current advice from the ***Ministry of Health*** <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

## **World Health Organisation**

The WHO, from their headquarters in Geneva, provide regular and updated information on this 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak. Visit their website or you can read their daily situation report for 28 February 2020 here: [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200228-sitrep-39-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=aa1b80a7\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200228-sitrep-39-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=aa1b80a7_2) .

## ***Resources and acknowledgments:***

[https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200201-sitrep-12-ncov.pdf?sfvrsn=273c5d35\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200201-sitrep-12-ncov.pdf?sfvrsn=273c5d35_2)

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

<https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/get-ready/prepared-for-an-emergency/>

[https://www.cecc.org.nz/CECC\\_Public/BusinessSupport/Corona\\_Virus\\_-\\_what\\_you\\_need\\_to\\_know.aspx](https://www.cecc.org.nz/CECC_Public/BusinessSupport/Corona_Virus_-_what_you_need_to_know.aspx)

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS INFORMATION MAY BE UPDATED AT ANY TIME, AND FOLLOW ANY GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS.**