***Being Church in a time of coronavirus***

- resources compiled by Heidi Regier Kreider and Kathy Neufeld Dunn, March 17, 2020

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*- Philippians 4:6-7

 As we move into a sustained period of responding to coronavirus in our congregations and communities, this is a time to pray, prepare and plan, protect the vulnerable, and nurture peace - not panic. WDC affirms that congregations follow the recommendations of our national and local authorities to practice “social distancing” and to suspend group gatherings such as worship services and other in-person meetings. (Consult your state and local health departments for specific guidance in your region). In light of this, we are collecting resources to assist congregations for ongoing ministry as you creatively address the new challenges and learning opportunities during this time.

First, here is a **manual** for congregations that provides practical guidelines for overall planning and coordination: *Preparing your Church for Coronavirus (COVID-19): A Step-by-Step, Research-Informed and Faith-Based Planning Manual*

- In English: <https://www.wheaton.edu/media/humanitarian-disasterinstitute/Preparing-Your-Church-for-Coronavirus.pdf>

- In Spanish: <https://www.wheaton.edu/media/humanitarian-disasterinstitute/Preparando-a-su-iglesia-para-el-Coronavirus.pdf>

- Related weekly webinars: <https://www.wheaton.edu/academics/academiccenters/humanitarian-disaster-institute/covid-19/hdi-covid-19-webinar-archive/>

Ideas and online resources for **worship**:

 - Record and post sermons and music on social media or your church website.

 - If you are posting music performances, use a song license: OneLicense is offering use all of their songs and hymns at no cost through April 15. See website - [https://www.onelicense.net](https://www.onelicense.net/) Register any of their music you plan to use on a given Sunday, which will provide legal copyright use.

 - Post or send out a worship bulletin, scripture readings, and prayer guides for members to use at home.

- Use the*Anabaptist Prayer Book*. The Institute of Mennonite Studies has a free download at <https://www.ambs.edu/publishing/anabaptist-prayer-book>

- Do regular posts of scripture, poetry, prayer and art projects.

- Visit other congregations’ live-streamed services, or contact them for samples and suggestions. For example, Hesston Mennonite Church has decided to retain many of the important pieces of their worship: Call to Worship, Worship in Song, Prayer of the Church, Children’s Time, and a Sermon. Their live stream can be accessed via the web at <https://hesstonmc.org/livestream> or on a streaming device (Apple TV, Roku, Firestick, Smart TV, etc) via the YouTube app via their YouTube Channel. The live stream begins Sunday around 10:15 am and the Worship Service at 10:30 am. For more information contact Clayton Gladish, [claytong@hesstonmc.org](mailto:claytong@hesstonmc.org)(620) 217-0137.

Online resources for **faith formation**for various ages:

- Anabaptist Faith Formation - Lent at Home - <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/76/21991>

 - The Gathering Place - <http://mennoniteusa.org/what-we-do/the-gathering-place/>

 - CommonWord - <https://www.commonword.ca/Home>

 - Vibrant Faith: ● “Moving Faith Formation Online” pdf from John Roberto at [https://media1-](https://media1-/) [production.mightynetworks.com/asset/9128853/Moving\_Faith\_Formation\_Online.pdf](http://production.mightynetworks.com/asset/9128853/Moving_Faith_Formation_Online.pdf)    ● Week-long conversation on“Faith Formation Online” at <https://vibrant-faithcatalyst.mn.co/posts/moving-faith-formation-online-during-the-time-ofcoronavirus-theme-of-the-week>

- Bible Project - [https://bibleproject.com](https://bibleproject.com/)

 Ideas for **pastoral care**

- *10 guidelines for pastoral care during the coronavirus outbreak*- <https://www.christiancentury.org/blog-post/guest-post/10-guidelines-pastoralcare-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

 - Stay connected through mid-week posts on social media. Ask for prayer requests publicly, but respond to prayer requests privately, e.g. by Messenger or by phone. Remind congregation members of appropriate confidentiality and social media guidelines.

 Resources for **financial giving** and support

- Encourage continued gifts from your congregation, even when you are not meeting for corporate worship. Introduce or promote online giving - see attached handout from Everence on “Congregational Online Giving.” Keep telling your congregation’s story - and tell it well! Intentionally share how your congregation is being the hands and feet of Jesus, and invite generous contributions to support that.

- *10 ideas for financial leaders* - <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/10-ideasfor-church-financial-leaders-amid-the-covid-19-crisis>

**Self-care** for leaders and members: - “Meeting Psych Needs During a Pandemic” by ServantsByDesign. <https://mailchi.mp/servantsbydesign/meeting-psych-needs-during-apandemic?e=fddb612737>

Other general resources:

 - From Mennonite Church USA: <http://mennoniteusa.org/resource/resources-for-responding-to-covid-19/>

- MC USA Executive Director Glen Guyton’s Facebook Live comments on March 17 stressed four points: 1) The Church needs to be a reliable source of information, and put out correct information. 2) This is the time to assess our faith practices, communication plans, and how we care for the vulnerable. 3) We need to over-communicate to help our congregations deal with the repercussions of not meeting for a period of weeks. 4) Don’t panic. Bring the peace! Encourage one another, help each other, Be generous and help neighbors. Church needs to rise and shine! How will we impact our communities during this time?

- MennoHealth Cast podcast - <https://mennohealthcast.fireside.fm/6> - Special episode on COVID-19 - Host Joann Hunsberger discusses COVID-19 with Dr. Dan Nafziger of Goshen, Indiana. They discuss common terminology used to discuss the pandemic and how it might affect church community culture.

- *The church’s role in a pandemic* - <https://sojo.net/articles/churchs-role-pandemic>