

Coronavirus Update / Guidelines for Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church

1. Status of the Situation

- a. Currently in many areas around the world and as well as in the DC area we are experiencing the spread of the “Novel Coronavirus” also known as “COVID-19,” the scientific nickname of this strain of virus. We at Metropolitan SDA Church want to reach out to you with some important information for our Church Family.
- b. First and foremost, our all powerful, all knowing, and all loving God is in control.**
- c. For this reason, no matter what you have heard and no matter what happens in the future, we should not panic. God has given us many individuals with talents to help one another in this time of need, and so we must also use these talents and wisdom through this time, as well as maintain our faith in God to cover and provide for us. While there is a lot of information flowing around we encourage you to get your information from reputable sources. One of the most important sources is found at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus. More information will be included below. While we should not panic we should take serious precautions, to help reduce our own risk and the risk for our loved ones and our community.
- d. For those that may not know, this strain of coronavirus started in Wuhan China at the end of 2019 and has since spread to many countries across the globe. At this time it has been officially called a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). The effects on different individuals can vary widely from very mild or almost no symptoms, to very severe. It has caused fever, difficulty breathing, and in some cases serious illness and even death. The elderly are at the highest risk of severe effects. We have never seen this strain type before, and because it is spreading very quickly, and because the time between exposure and illness is from 2-14 days, there has been a shift to limit all mass gatherings by local, state and federal governments. Things may get worse before they get better. It is important to be prepared but not panic.

2. **What we should do as individuals** - much of what we need to do may seem unnatural, but preventing and slowing-down spread of this virus will limit the number of who gets sick, and help the healthcare system keep up with caring for those that do become ill.

a. Avoid Infection and Transmission

- Wash Hands - this is the most critical recommendation. Wash hands after touching frequent touch surfaces, when entering or exiting from the public, or encountering a potentially ill individual. Wash hands for 20 seconds by rubbing palms together, rubbing between fingers, and back of hands (It may help to do this while singing the entire first verse of Amazing Grace.) This helps remove potential virus from your hands, and can also actually break apart the virus and inactivate it. Soap and water is superior to hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer is an appropriate secondary alternative, or home made hand sanitizer with at least 60% isopropyl alcohol.
- Avoid and Disinfect Surfaces Frequently Touched - doorknobs, keyboards, phones, handrails, etc. with solutions that contain alcohol or bleach.
- Avoid Touching Your Face - Eyes, Nose, Mouth. Also cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze with your arm, not with your hands.
- Avoid Touching the Face and Hands of Others
- Barriers - General masks are not effective for preventing spread, but can be used to prevent you from touching your face. Disposable gloves may also be useful especially if you need to enter areas with increased risk of transmission.

- Social Distancing - Limit Mass Gathering, Work from home if possible. Maryland Governor Hogan has declared statewide cancelation of any gathering greater than 250 people. It is important to keep yourself and others safe to limit other gatherings as well.
 - Maintain Good Health Habits - Get at least 8 hours of sleep, stay well hydrated, eat health food, stay mobile, and take all needed medications unless advised differently by your doctor.
 - Protect the Most Vulnerable - Elderly and those with medical issues are most vulnerable. Cancel nursing home visits, and limit non essential person to person contact. Monitor your symptoms closely. Here is an excellent article with advice for those over 60 (and those caring for them): <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/12/health/what-60-older-need-to-know-coronavirus-wellness-trnd/index.html>
 - Seeking Medical Attention
 - If you have recently traveled out of the country or have come into contact with someone that has been ill, monitor your symptoms very closely, and limit contact with others as much as possible.
 - People who have mild symptoms should self quarantine and limit exposing others. Wash your hands very often, and be mindful of surfaces you touch and who you come into contact with. Use tele-health or call your primary care provider, and if need be go to an urgent care center. If you are in doubt, seek medical attention. See information below for more details on what to do.
 - If you are having difficulty breathing, or you are having more mild symptoms but are of older age, have multiple chronic medical problems, or are immunocompromised due to medication or illness, seek care sooner via urgent care or going to the ER. See information below for details.
- b. **Avoid Misinformation** - Almost as bad as the virus, bad information can lead to panic, and sometimes even action that could cause harm or cost people their lives. Avoid listening to and spreading inaccurate or misleading information. See this article on 5 COVID-19 Facts You Should Know to Stop the Spread of Rumors - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts.html>
- c. **Building up Resources** - it is important to be prepared but not panic. Preparation is most important for vulnerable people. Make sure you have extra medication to last you for several months to reduce frequency of needing to enter public spaces. Also make sure you have enough non perishable and frozen food. Ensure you have soap as well. Handwashing is most important, although you can use hand sanitizer, isopropyl alcohol, and bleach as disinfectants. Please see information below.
- d. **Care for the Heart and Mind of Yourself and Others** - This is a trying time. We are concerned about getting sick, running out of money food and other resources, losing jobs, and may feel stress from having to figure out how to keep health social distance. You may not currently directly feel panic, anxiety, frustration or loneliness, but others may, and you might in the future. Go beyond praying FOR someone and pray WITH them. Reach out and stay connected to each other. Call or text friends who may live alone, or who may be struggling. Spending time singing and in prayer with one another and finding different things to talk about or share. This is an opportunity to get to know one another and support each other in a different way than we are used to.
3. **Coronavirus - General Information and what to do if feeling symptoms**
- - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - World Health Organization – [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Outbreak](#)
 - U.S. State Department – [Current Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - Local Action

- DC Department of Health - <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>
- Maryland Department of Health - <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Novel-coronavirus.aspx>
- Fairfax County Department of Health (Virginia) - <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus>

4. **Seventh-Day Adventist statements on Coronavirus**

- AEC - Allegheny East Conference Corona Virus Information - <https://www.visitaec.org/covid19>
- Adventist Risk Management Information - <https://adventistrisk.org/en-us/safety-resources/information-regarding-coronavirus>
- NAD Statement - <https://www.nadadventist.org/news/nad-administration-shares-information-regarding-covid-19-and-division-response>