

Victorian Conference Website update

Preparing for potential church closure FAQs

When a church initially has a member or a staff who has been in attendance at the church that tests positive, the entire church will close for 24 hours while [the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services](#) (DHHS) investigates and sets forth a plan for any further precautionary measures that the church must take to contain exposure, which may result in additional closure. During this time, the entire church building shall be disinfected in accordance with [guidelines from the Department of Health](#). Members and staff may also be placed in voluntary self-quarantine for 14 days.

[Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#)

Travel Insurance Advice

Travel restrictions have been issued for all travel to and from all of mainland China and Iran due to the spread of a new coronavirus strain (COVID-19). For more information, please visit:

[Coronavirus – Info for our Travellers](#) – Risk Management Services

[Smart Traveller - Alert](#)

Preparations and Preventions

Personal Hygiene

- Wash hands often with soap and running water, for at least 20 seconds. Dry with paper towel or hand dryer
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow
- Isolate yourself at home if you feel sick. If you take medication, ensure you have adequate supplies
- Phone your GP first if you need medical attention. They will tell you what to do
- Don't wear a face mask if you are well
- Get the flu shot (available April).
- [See 10 ways to reduce your risk of Coronavirus](#)

General food safety advice

Previous experience with outbreaks of illness due to MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV and other respiratory viruses (e.g. avian influenza) suggest that novel coronavirus may have been transmitted from animals to humans.

Transmission through food is unlikely and there is no evidence of this occurring with novel coronavirus to date, however investigations to identify the source of the outbreak, the extent of spread of the infection, and mode(s) of transmission are continuing.

Everyone should practice good hygiene when preparing and handling food.

The World Health Organization (WHO) advises people to:

- Wash hands regularly
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- Thoroughly cook meat
- Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness, such as coughing and sneezing

Potluck Lunches and Agape Feasts:

- If serving food, use disposable cutlery wrapped in serviettes. Avoid uncovered cutlery in open baskets that people dip into and search through before picking up.
- Use gloves when serving food, and beverages both hot and cold.
- Have servers serve the food instead of individuals serving themselves where everyone is touching the serving spoons.
- Serve more single wrapped or packaged items where possible.
- Should a significant breakout of the virus be declared, potluck lunches and agape feasts should be avoided.

Communion

- Take precautions to limit the spread of disease by not sharing common vessels for food and drink
- Giving adequate time for attention to hygiene practices before and after the communion.
- Wash hands after foot washing for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly.
- Pastors and elders breaking and distributing the emblems (bread and wine) are advised to wash hand as indicated above and use a hand sanitizer.
- Practice proper disposal of communion cups and use gloves.
- If Pastors, Elders, Deacons or Deaconesses are suffering from a cold or flu symptoms, they should not be serving communion.
- Individual pre-filled communion cups (including wafers) are available as per pic below \$59.99 per 100 - [click this link to buy from Koorong](#)

Preparation Ideas for Churches

- Review your church's emergency operations plans and communication plans in the context of a pandemic
- Remind your congregation that rumour control is essential. Please get information from trusted sources like state health officials and [The Department of Health and Human Services website](#)
- the government published [the Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan](#) which provides an overview of the national approach and operational plan

Resources:

Should remain the same