



West Ohio Conference

Guidelines for Pastor Care for Funerals

(See note below regarding the Health Department) *

As the pastor, you receive a call regarding a death of person with coronavirus and you are asked to preside over the memorial service.

1. Provide care for family. See 10 guidelines for pastoral care during the coronavirus outbreak** below. Plan the service over the phone, Zoom call, etc.
2. Talk with funeral director and take the lead in advocating for the family regarding funeral arrangements.
3. Eliminate the visitation at the funeral home. Provide graveside service only. Suggest that a memorial service can be held at a later date when family members insist on a larger service.
4. As difficult as it is, you must keep in mind “social distancing” at all times. Your contact, as the pastor, with family members and funeral home will help in modeling appropriate behavior.
Do not shake hands or embrace. Keep at least 6 feet between yourself and family.
5. Use discretion regarding limiting the crowd to 10.
6. Check with funeral director in regard to viewing at the cemetery prior to the service.
7. Meet the family at the cemetery.
8. Family members with fevers or active coughs should not attend.
9. If family members have been exposed, insist on scheduling the service 14 days after the exposure. This is for the health of all involved, including employees of the funeral home.
10. When persons have been exposed, especially in the church building, here is link to the CDC website for instructions <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>
11. Wash your hands and don't touch your face. With that in mind:
12. There is no need to wear a mask. The health department recommends that those who are not infected should not wear a mask.
 - The virus is spread through touch. When someone coughs, the particles land on a surface. Then, when an uninfected person touches that surface and then touches his/or face, he/she becomes infected. Wearing a mask increases the potential of an uninfected person touching his/her face, thus becoming infected.
 - The virus is not airborne. The determined safe distance is 6 feet. When a person coughs, the particles travel less than 6 feet. Social distancing is of greater value than wearing a mask.
 - If you insist on wearing a mask, the protocol is as follows: wash your hands, put on the mask. Before removing the mask, wash your hands. Don't touch your face.



West Ohio Conference *Guidelines for Pastor Care for Funerals*

13. Remember, this is a new situation for everyone. Be the person of care and compassion who God has created you to be.

Know that your district staff is ready to assist you with any questions that might arise. Know also of our prayers as you continue to step up to be the leader you were created to be for this time in history.

NOTES:

****From the Health Department***

- The health department does not release official statements to congregations about confirmed cases of any illness out of respect and confidentiality for that individual.
- With the current virus situation, the health department discretely contacts anyone who has had contact with individuals who have tested positive, and then advises appropriate precautionary measures. They do this methodically and thoroughly.
- Secondary contact (*being close to someone who was close to someone*) is not considered a concern. (*This is in terms of health department contacting people; for some, timing and their risk factors make secondary contact a concern*)

*****From “The Christian Century”***

10 Guidelines for Pastoral Care During the Coronavirus Outbreak

By Eileen R. Campbell-Reed

Officials are arguing over whether the novel coronavirus has reached the level of pandemic, as outbreaks continue to spread globally. Meanwhile, religious leaders still must care for people—many of whom are feeling a rise in anxiety verging on panic.

How can ministers, chaplains, counselors, and educators accompany people pastorally through this...

(Read More...)