

BLOORDALE UNITED CHURCH
PANDEMIC EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POLICY
OCTOBER 2009

Background: A pandemic outbreak of the H1N1 flu strain is a real possibility. Churches are advised to have protocols in place which will serve as a guide to keeping the congregation healthy and reduce the possible spread of infection.

Objective: Bloordale congregants will:

- (1) be aware of and practice universal precautions;
- (2) Refrain from attending church services and or committee meetings if they have a respiratory infection.

In the event of a pandemic Toronto Public Health usually issues recommendations regarding the continuation of, and/or the suspension of group activities in the community. (These are only recommendations and common sense must prevail).

To ensure our congregation stays healthy it is recommended that the following practices be adopted should a pandemic or other outbreak be declared.

The existing telephone and e-mail tree will be utilized. This will be activated in the event of an outbreak of a respiratory disease or other serious communicable disease. Information will be communicated regarding church services and or committee meetings/group activities.

Alternatives to Passing the peace and Visitation will be implemented These will include but not necessarily be limited to: Bowing to each other with hands clasped in a prayerful stance. Visitation to be limited to telephone contacts except for pastoral visits of an emergency nature. Our occasional practice of using the method of intinction for communion will be suspended.

- 1 Members should refrain from attending church services if they are experiencing symptoms of the flu. Both ordinary flu and pandemic flu are spread in the same way. (Coughing, sneezing, air-borne droplets) Practice the sleeve sneeze. Use the crook of the arm (inside elbow) to cover the nose and or mouth when coughing or sneezing. If a tissue is used discard as soon as possible and wash hands.
- 2 Our hands serve as vectors of diseases so we have to vigilant in reducing the risks of spread of disease. While hand washing is the preferred method of keeping hands clean hand sanitizers may help reduce the spread of infection.

Therefore:

Hand sanitizers are placed strategically throughout the building. Congregants are asked to use same on entering and leaving the sanctuary.

Method of use: Apply some sanitizer into the palm of one hand rub hands together until dry.

Rationale: Decrease the spread of infection while greeting others, during the exchange of the passing of the peace, greeting each other (if there is hand contact) and, after touching surfaces.

- 3 Congregants are asked to refrain from attending church service if the following symptoms are present:
- Fever
 - Runny nose
 - Productive cough

Rationale: These may be symptomatic of an infection which could be spread especially to our more senior population.

It is recommended that each person discuss with their doctor the need for a flu shot.

- 4 Children who are ill or are in the recovery phase of a minor communicable disease e.g. Chicken pox should not attend Sunday School. Toys used in the nursery should be sanitized by spraying with Benefect a safe botanical disinfectant (product info attached)

Parents are urged to teach children proper hand washing technique.

Method: Teach the when - after using the bathroom, before meals, after playing in the dirt etc. Teach the how - wet hands, apply soap, and rub hands together (while singing the birthday song!). Ensure they rub between fingers, rinse, use paper towel to turn off taps and open doors etc.

Rationale: Children play closely together and also put toys etc. in their mouths which make it easy to spread infections.

The best defense against the spread of infections is proper and frequent hand washing. Toronto Health has provided posters outlining the proper techniques. These can be found in the bathrooms. A good idea is to keep hand sanitizers nearby for daily use, ie. in the car or in purses.

Occasional information sessions on this policy will be provided for the congregation.