

Royal York Road United Church
Emergency Preparedness

The goal of an emergency preparedness plan is to:

- Review practices/rituals to ensure they adhere to principles of infection control
- Review services we deliver and develop alternate ways of delivering service during emergency
- Protect staff and congregants from infection
- Enhance communication with congregation about changes in practices to protect members and staff
- Determine the triggers that will necessitate changes in current services and practices
- Develop an enhanced level of comfort among the congregation regarding reduced risk, i.e. RYRUC is a safe place

Communion

Communion via intinction is more likely to spread infection, due to possible contamination while dipping bread in the cup of wine/juice. As long as H1N1 is a threat, communion should be conducted via individual glasses (thoroughly washed/disinfected, of course). Bread should be distributed by ministers at the altar, using tongs for even greater safety.

Passing the Peace

This practice will be put on hold during the current flu season.

Welcoming/Shaking Hands

Welcomers and ministers should be sensitive to those who do not wish to shake hands at the door. We will continue shaking hands as per current practice until information from Public Health indicates that this is not advised.

Property

To be addressed:

- Plenty of sanitizers available around the building (narthex, outside the office, in main meeting rooms, counting room).
- Use alcohol – based sanitizers which are the most effective in germ control.
- Make tissues/garbage cans readily available in narthex and meeting rooms.
- Are the solutions used to clean frequent-contact surfaces effective in killing viruses?
- Increase practice of cleaning door handles, railings, light switches
- Review best practices in kitchens for washing/disinfecting dishes and surfaces and make sure signage is appropriate to communicate this message.

Christian Development

Review the areas to be regularly cleaned to reduce the spread of infection – including computer keyboards and toys in transept, nursery, materials in Church School classrooms. Should food be served in classrooms at this time?

Coffee Hour

Reminder to use best kitchen practices when washing/disinfecting dishes.
Determine when time is appropriate to stop serving cookies on common plate.
Consider use of rubber gloves by volunteers when serving coffee/tea.

Music Program

Disinfect musical instruments used by children and choir.

Communication

Need to advise congregation of:

- Steps being taken to increase safety and reduce spread of viruses.
- Changes in practices to further enhance infection control
- Ways to stay healthy, tips from public health
- Pastoral care concerns regarding ill members
- Emergency situation in the congregation or in the church building

Pastoral Care

Staff and volunteers who visit should be extra careful in visiting members:

- Only visit when healthy themselves
- Do not plan personal visits to members who may be ill, not feeling well
- Continue with visits to hospitals/nursing homes/seniors' residences until the facility disallows such visits.

Should a staff member become ill, visiting, if essential, can be delegated to other staff or a volunteer.

Use of Rooms

Renters will probably determine their own plans for handling flu emergency, regarding cancelling sessions in our building. Look to the community, especially public schools, for how they are handling building closure with renters or their own schedules.