

Message from Our General Presbyter Concerning the Coronavirus

To the Presbytery of Shenandoah:

As a people of faith and responsibility many of us are trying to make decisions that are best for our congregations and gatherings in this pandemic of Covid-19. Each congregation, with their session, needs to make the decision as to whether they will continue to meet during this time or not. As of this writing there have been no confirmed cases reported in the western part of Virginia or West Virginia. I have not heard of any of our churches closing their doors this week but that may need to change in the coming weeks.

Please follow the guidelines that have been broadcast in a variety of ways:

- If you don't feel well - stay home.
- Wash your hands frequently using soap and water and lathering for twenty seconds.
- Sneeze/cough into a tissue or your elbow (throw tissue away immediately)
- Don't shake hands
- Stay out of crowds (100 is considered a crowd) especially if you are over 60 and have underlying medical conditions.
- Respect people's personal space
- Drink plenty of water and take your vitamins (that was provided by my son living in NYC).

[Attached are guidelines from the Virginia Department of Health](#)

As communities of faith we need to address how we will serve communion or postpone communion for the time being. Do we pass the offering plates or shall we ask folks to come forward or put the offering in the plate as they leave? Make sure that door knobs and handles are wiped down. If worship needs to be canceled how will that be communicated? (Maybe the same way when there is bad weather). If we aren't meeting on a Sunday how will the session continue to check in with folks and their wellbeing?

Friends, I believe that with common sense practices, God will guide us to appropriate decisions about our life together. So please talk about this in church on Sunday, make your plans, think of what is best for your congregation and stay well.

Blessings,
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