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BALTIMORE DISTRICT


MANAGING MINISTRY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

A Primer for Pastors and Leaders

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“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV)

WHAT IS THE SITUATION?



OUTBREAK OF RESPIRATORY DISEASE CAUSED BY A NEW CORONAVIRUS FIRST DETECTED IN CHINA AND NOW SEEN IN MORE THAN 100 LOCATIONS GLOBALLY INCLUDING THE US



IN THE U.S. 647 CASES HAVE BEEN DETECTED AND 25 DEATHS REPORTED



36 STATES HAVE AT LEAST ONE (1) CASE AND IN THE DMV, ROUGHLY 20 CASES OF COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) HAVE BEEN DETECTED



WHILE CORONAVIRUS PRESENTS REAL CHALLENGES TO EVERYDAY LIFE AND IMPACTS OUR FAITH COMMUNITY, IT IS ONLY ONE OF A RANGE OF EVENTS THAT COULD PROVE DISRUPTIVE TO THE CHURCH. NATURAL DISASTER, FIRE, FLOOD AND INCLEMENT WEATHER ARE AMONG MANY OTHERS.

THE QUESTION THAT WE MUST ANSWER IS...

ARE WE PREPARED?

WHAT IS OUR ROLE?

Our role as churches, leaders and compassionate Christians, is to:

- **Combat fear** with knowledge (FACTS) in order to encourage preparedness and decrease anxiety, fear and stigma
- **Maintain operational continuity** and continue expressions of Christian discipleship and congregational life in the case of quarantine and disruption
- **Show God's compassion and care** to those in our communities who are affected

WHAT DO WE NEED TO PREPARE FOR?

1. How we (NAME OF YOUR CHURCH) will reduce people's chance of getting sick or dying from an epidemic.
2. How we (NAME OF YOUR CHURCH) will respond to needs of those who are sick, anxious, in economic need, and/or grieving.
3. How we (NAME OF CHURCH) will adapt our operations and respond to social disruption if many people are ill, or health officials recommend distancing measures including complete closure.
4. How we (NAME OF CHURCH) will help the church and community recover once the crisis is over.

WE MUST LEAD!

REDUCE CHANCES OF PEOPLE GETTING SICK

- **READ** and **SHARE** Bishop Moore's Episcopal Letter addressing Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Visit www.cdc.gov and follow the CDC's Guidelines.
- Encourage your congregation get the FACTS, practice good hygiene and be careful.
- **STAY** home when YOU are (or feel) sick!
- **Wash** your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

REDUCE CHANCES OF PEOPLE GETTING SICK

- **When visiting members with chronic illnesses (e.g. Diabetes, Heart or Lung disease) or those with compromised immune systems, ASK the healthcare provider on duty if you need to wear a gown, mask and /or gloves AND follow their advice!**
- **Replace** handshakes, kisses, hugs, and fist bumps with the peace sign, a foot tap, slight bow or air kisses!
- **To the extent possible, avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places** - elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, handshaking with people, etc. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something.

REDUCE CHANCES OF PEOPLE GETTING SICK

- **Clean and disinfect** your home, office and the church to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks & cell phones)
- **Avoid crowds**, especially in poorly ventilated spaces. The risk of exposure to respiratory viruses like COVID-19 may increase in crowded, closed-in settings with little air circulation if there are people in the crowd who are sick.
- **Avoid all non-essential travel** including plane trips, and especially avoid embarking on cruise ships.

RESPOND TO NEEDS

- **READ and SHARE** Bishop Moore's Episcopal Letter addressing Coronavirus (COVID-19). Other clergy, Class Leaders and Deaconess should receive Bishop's letter and be urged to read it carefully.
- **Educate Membership** - Invite a health care professional to brief your congregation on Coronavirus (e.g. phone conference, webcast)
- **Review Membership** - Identify and directly communicate with those who are considered at higher risk. Make sure they know the FACTS, encourage them to stay home and find ways to support them through this crisis period.

RESPOND TO NEEDS

- **Leverage Class Leader System** - Ensure Class Leaders regularly reach out to your most vulnerable members (3 x a week via phone, text or email).
- **Be the Church** - Offer to deliver (or arrange delivery) of food, supplies and prescription meds as needed. Mobilize your Class Leaders, Deaconess Board, Clergy and Outreach Team as needed.

Every church is different!
Think about how **YOUR** church
operates AND plan accordingly!

STRENGTHEN OPERATIONS NOW

- **BANKING:** Ensure online access to all accounts including investment accounts (in case of a cash shortage)
- **COMMUNICATIONS:** Update member database with cell numbers and email.
- **COMMUNICATIONS:** If you don't already have one, find a service (e.g. Call and Post) that allows you to send voice, text or email messages to members quickly. Develop specific lists that allow you to communicate with specific boards, organizations or segments of your membership (e.g. Trustees, Stewards, Clergy, Class Leaders, Deaconess and Departments).
- **GIVING:** Use Givelify, PayPal or some other online giving platform to receive contributions. If you don't currently have an account, set one up and provide training for your members so that they know how to enroll, set up their own account and use the platform NOW!

STRENGTHEN OPERATIONS NOW


- **HOUSEKEEPING:** Disinfect doorknobs, tabletops, pews, instruments, etc. to 3-4 days a week.
- **MEMBER CARE:** Make sure your Membership rolls are updated (including email, cell and home phone numbers).
- **MEMBER CARE:** Ensure Class Leaders are in touch with the most vulnerable members. Address critical needs as Class Leaders report back.
- **MEMBER CARE:** Adapt/Amend communion process (e.g. no self service, additional hand sanitizing during distribution of elements, use of gloves by Ushers, Deaconess).

STRENGTHEN OPERATIONS NOW

- **MINISTRY CONTINUITY:** Understand and respond to the needs (e.g. Food Bank/Delivery, Prescription med pick up and delivery, Pet care, etc.) for the most vulnerable in your community.
- **MINISTRY CONTINUITY:** Reduce the number of in-person meetings by using technology (e.g. phone, Zoom) for board meetings, etc.
- **SERVICE/WORSHIP:** Provide gloves for ushers, greeters, deaconess and others who are **MOST** likely to come into direct contact with members as part of their ministry duties.

PLAN AHEAD

Use this crisis as an
opportunity to develop
your church's
"Business Continuity"
Plan



A wise man thinks ahead;
a fool doesn't, and even brags
about it!

Proverbs 13:16

A BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN



Addresses what will be done if your church is closed for an extended period due to public health concerns (e.g. COVID-19), natural disaster, damage, etc.



Allows you and your leaders to anticipate the spiritual, physical and operational challenges that will be experienced.



Helps to identify areas in the ministry/church that need immediate attention in order to function effectively.

THINGS TO CONSIDER – BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- **Auto Ship Deliveries** - What accounts will be suspended? Will we incur penalties if we must suspend? How much lead time is needed to suspend an auto-ship/auto-deliver service? Do we have a complete list of accounts with contact information easily accessible?
- **Building Systems** - How will we adjust our HVAC, water and other infrastructure systems?
- **Communication** - Can we forward the church line to someone else? Who? How will voicemail, email and our social media platforms be monitored? How do ministry leaders stay connected?

THINGS TO CONSIDER – BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- **Decision-making** - Who determines when or if we close? How is that decision made? Who else is involved?
- **Finance** - How long can we manage financially (if we close completely)? What adjustments will we have to make to our ministry plans, budget, etc.?
- **Financial Reporting** - How will we document funds received? How will reports be generated? Is our network secure enough to transmit financial information?

THINGS TO CONSIDER – BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- **Giving** - Do we have Givelify, Cash\$App, PayPal or Direct Deposit? Do our members know how to use these platforms? How will we receive/deposit checks that are mailed?
- **Mail** - Do we have a P.O. Box? How will USPS mail and packages be picked up? Distributed?
- **Ministry Activities/Schedule** - How will we notify members, community partners, participants, etc. of changes in our schedule? What alternatives might we be able to promote?
- **Payroll** - Will staff be paid? Where will funds come from?

THINGS TO CONSIDER – BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- **Security** - How do we ensure the safety of property?
- **Worship** - Do we have the capacity for online worship? Will anyone be physically at church? What would the worship experience look like? Who **MUST** be involved and what is their specific role? Do we need a “dry run” before we go live?

HAVE A POST-DISRUPTION PLAN

- What **criteria** will we use in determining when to reopen?
- Who must be involved in the **decision-making process**?
- How will we **communicate** about our re-opening?
- What **MUST** be done to **prepare the building/physical structures and systems** for re-opening? Who is responsible for each task?
- **How long after re-opening** will normal ministry activities/scheduling resume? What sequence will be followed in restoring our church to full strength? How long will it take?
- **Others?**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>
- <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs/rightnav/coronavirus.html>
- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>