

COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) UPDATE – Anglican Diocese of Wellington

Current status

The risk posed by COVID-19 to individuals remains low. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide regular updates should the level of risk escalate.

Guidance for churches

Current Government advice is that individuals should follow good hygiene practices including:

- carrying tissues and using them to catch coughs and sneezes, and binning the tissue;
- washing hands with soap and water (for 20 seconds) or using sanitiser gel to kill germs.

We recommend consulting the [Ministry of Health's dedicated COVID-19 webpage](#) for the latest information in the first instance.

Long-standing government advice has been that in a pandemic, it makes good sense to take precautions to limit the spread of disease by not sharing common vessels for food and drink. COVID-19 has **NOT** been declared a pandemic.

Churches **should already be following best-hygiene practices** that include advising parishioners with coughs and sneezes to refrain from handshaking during The Peace and to receive Communion in one kind only.

It is also best practice for churches to have hand-sanitisers available for parishioners to use. In addition, priests presiding at the Eucharist, communion administrators and servers should wash their hands, preferably with an alcohol-based (minimum 60%) hand-sanitiser.

Intinction is **not** recommended (even by celebrants or communion-administrators) as this represents an infection transmission route as well as a risk to those with certain allergies.

Best hygiene practice should continue to be observed in all pastoral contacts.

Current advice from the Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health recommends that you should follow the usual precautions including:

- If you feel unwell, stay at home, do not attend work or school. Use Healthline's dedicated 0800 number for COVID-19 health advice and information (0800 358 5453).
- Avoid close contact with people with cold or flu-like illnesses.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with water and soap and dry them thoroughly:
 - before eating or handling food
 - after using the toilet
 - after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or wiping children's noses
 - after caring for sick people.

Advice has also been issued to travellers who have returned to New Zealand from several countries (mainland China, Iran, northern Italy or the Republic of Korea). **Anyone** who has returned to New Zealand from any of these areas should self-isolate by staying indoors and avoid contact with other people for 14 days from the date of departure.

MISSIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 – Anglican Diocese of Wellington

Diocesan commitment

Our Diocese is committed to:

- **Minimising** the impact of an infectious disease within our Diocese when an outbreak is occurring – thereby reducing the potential for illness, loss of life and disruption to operational life, work and ministry within our local faith communities
- **Encouraging** our people to respond as a transformational movement of local faith communities as we seek to be the Body of Christ in attitude and action – proclaiming and demonstrating the Kingdom of God, and performing the church’s role as a non-anxious, reassuring and compassionate presence during times of uncertainty.

Responsibility as a Movement of Local Faith Communities

Our Diocese is a movement of local faith communities, with a commitment to proclaim the Good News of God's reconciling love in Jesus Christ to a hurting world. In response to the outbreak of an infectious disease in our Diocese, we have an obligation to respond to the human needs (be they physical, spiritual or emotional) with caring and loving service, as Christ has taught us. The New Zealand Prayer Book | He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa is a rich resource for guiding our response to these needs.

We believe that every member of the Diocesan family has a responsibility to respond in a Christ-like way to such a crisis, while safeguarding their own health and safety. Specific responsibilities for those in key positions within mission units are detailed below:

Cluster leaders and Archdeacons

- Provide pastoral support to clergy for whom they have responsibility
- Reinforce and (where appropriate) disseminate decisions of Diocesan leadership to clergy

- Role-model best-practise behaviour for COVID-19 prevention
- Encourage and direct pastoral support to the community

Clergy

- Provide pastoral support for parishioners
- Provide pastoral support to the community
- Role-model best-practise behaviour for COVID-19 prevention
- Reinforce and (where appropriate) disseminate decisions of Diocesan leadership to parishioners

Vestry and Administrative Staff

- Implement the decisions of Diocesan leadership in conjunction with clergy
- Help with provision of pastoral care responsibilities within parishes
- Role-model best-practise behaviour for COVID-19 prevention