

Pandemic Plan for CCRC (draft)

Introduction:

Council asked a small group (Wilma Staske, Greg van Leeuwen, Christy Ploegman, Ray Postuma) to put “together a pandemic plan for our Church.....what we are hoping you will be able to produce is a plan that we can have on hand in the event that there is a situation in which we will have to change how we run the church services and other programs” (Oct 21, 2009 e-mail from Evan Booy, Clerk of Council)

Aim of the Pandemic Plan

- Communicate / Educate the CCRC people
- Prevent the spread of H1N1 in the CCRC setting
- Provide Congregational Care for CCRC members affected by H1N1
- Provide for Alternative ways of Worship and Church Education

So as not to ‘reinvent the wheel’ it’s suggested we lean on excellent on-line documents prepared for/by other churches, notably:

- the Christian Reformed Church in North America (http://www.crwrc.org/pages/crwrc_pandemic.cfm) ,
- the Mennonite Church Canada (<http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/1>) , and other organizations, -Calvin Christian School (<http://calvinchristian.mb.ca/images/calvin%20christian%20pandemic%20plan.pdf>) -public agencies (www.fightflu.ca) .

Suggested headings of the Pandemic Plan would be:

1. Education
2. Prevention
3. Caring
4. Adjusting practice to continue Church services
5. Relating to external organizations and community

1. Education: this would contain the following information (from www.fightflu.ca):

- a. **Key Facts**: The H1N1 flu virus is a new strain of pandemic influenza which is different than the seasonal flu. People have no natural immunity to protect against this virus. The H1N1 flu virus emerged in April 2009 and surveillance of its spread shows that it is affecting more young and healthy people than the regular [seasonal flu](#), which normally affects seniors and young children. People with underlying medical conditions and [pregnant women](#) may be at a greater risk for severe illness.
- b. **Spread**: The H1N1 flu virus is contagious and is spread the same way as regular seasonal influenza. This happens when an infected person coughs or sneezes and their germs enter the nose, eyes, or throat of another person. The germs can

also rest on hard surfaces like counters and doorknobs, and can be picked up on hands and transmitted to the respiratory system when someone touches their mouth and/or nose. It is not possible to catch it by eating pork or pork products or through blood transfusions.

- c. Contagiousness: More investigation is needed on how long a person can be infectious (be able to spread the virus to others), but, it is believed that this period is for one day before the onset of symptoms and continues for approximately 7 days after symptoms have started.
- d. Different flu types: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/33>
- e. Symptoms: Almost always:
 - Cough and fever

Common:

- Fatigue
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Decreased appetite
- Runny nose

Sometimes:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

2. Prevention: The Public Health Agency (www.fightflu.ca) advises Canadians to:

1. [Wash hands](#) often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer.
2. Keep your hands away from your face.
3. Cough and sneeze into your arm, not your hand. If you use a tissue, dispose of it as soon as possible and wash your hands.
4. Get immunized. (Note: The decision whether or not to get vaccinated will always remain the responsibility of the individual. Clergy must always encourage parishioners to

consult with their own family doctor when making such an important decision.)

5. Keep common surface areas—for example, doorknobs, light switches, telephones and keyboards—clean and disinfected.
6. Eat healthy foods and stay physically active to keep your immune system strong. Keep doing what you normally do, but if you get sick, stay home.
7. Other practical measures:

Hygiene Practices

- Prevent the spread of germs and protect the vulnerable members of the congregation, especially pregnant women and those with underlying chronic medical conditions, by encouraging the sick to stay home until they have been without fever for twenty-four hours.
- Practice cough and sneeze etiquette. Cover nose and mouth with a facial tissue; cough and sneeze into sleeve; make available boxes of facial tissues on tables, in classrooms, and at Coffee Hour.
- Throw the facial tissue into a waste receptacle after you use it; ensure that waste receptacles are located throughout the building; empty waste receptacles frequently.
- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Use soap and water for 15 to 20 seconds to wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Worship Practices:

- Follow public health advice on cancelations of public gatherings and avoiding crowds to evaluate whether to cancel worship services.
- Pass the Peace with a simple nod of acknowledgement. Make and maintain eye contact while speaking the words, “the peace of Christ,” without the social ritual of a handshake.
- Suspend use of the common cup and the practice of “intinction”(dipping bread in wine/juice) when celebrating communion. Use plastic disposable communion cups or wash glass cups in very hot water over 110-115 degrees with detergent.
- Encourage celebrants to use hand sanitizers before serving communion.
- Wash hands before anointing with oil or the laying on of hands and repeat the practice after the rite is completed.

Visitation Practices

- Check on vulnerable individuals within the community, especially the elderly, infirmed, shut-in, physically and mentally disabled, and those who live alone.
- Follow all hospital infection control protocols. Do not visit hospitals or personal care homes if experiencing symptoms of influenza.

7. Follow other Mennonite Church Canada advisories on prevention for: congregations:

<http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/24>

Home: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/25>

Family Checklist: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/35>

3. Caring: The Mennonite Church Canada pages are helpful:

1. Pre-Pandemic: Care of Congregants and Neighbours – Pre Pandemic Preparedness (<http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/26>)
2. During Pandemic: Care of Congregants and Neighbours During Pandemic (<http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/27>)
3. Post Pandemic: Care of Congregants Post – Pandemic (<http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/42>)
4. Checklists: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/28>

4. Adjusting practice to continue Church services (Maintaining Church):

The nine sections of ‘Maintaining Church’ are very useful:

1. The Church’s Role: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/29>
2. Make Plans: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/44>
3. Plan for Change: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/45>
4. Worship Practices and Social Distancing: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/46>
5. Continuity Plan: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/30>
6. Human Resources: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/37>
7. Financial: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/38>
8. Physical: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/40>
9. Church Communications: <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/41>

5. Relating to External Organizations: see advise at <http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/20>

Appendix 1:

Summary and Analysis of the Mennonite Churches Canada “Church Pandemic Resources” website (<http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/1>)

This is an excellent, up-to-date website to assist in putting together a pandemic plan for CCRC. It achieves it’s goal of providing a congregation with a theological and pastoral framework for pandemic flu preparation and gives practical ideas in serving members of church and community.

The ‘Getting Started’ page (<http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/14>) outlines steps the Congregation can take to organize thoughts, plans and actions. The Leadership appoints a ‘Pandemic Preparednes Working Group’ from within the congregation and that develops a plan that flows out of a number of tasks (including holding a series of congregational conversations to achieve unity of purpose and cooperation) . This page also directs us to a number of preparedness checklists.

The ‘How to Prepare’ Page (<http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca/node/5>) outlines four major areas: Prevention Methods, Caring for each other; Adjusting Congregational Practices for Continuity of Service; Relating to External Organizations

Appendix 2: Useful Links:

Faith Based and Community Organizations Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Checklist:
<http://www.flu.gov/professional/community/faithcomchecklist.html>

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