**The Methodist Church Coronavirus Guidance and Resources**

**Friday 13th March at 10:00:** updated advice on elderly and vulnerable people attending church

The Methodist Church is monitoring the situation around COVID-19 which at the moment is considered a moderate risk by the UK’s Chief Medical Officer. The Methodist Church has issued the following updated guidance to ensure the risks are reduced, recommending practical precautions to prevent the spread of infection. Should advice from the UK government change these guidelines will be updated, but please look regularly look at the websites listed below for the latest information.

Good hand hygiene is vital in reducing the spread of the virus. Wash hands with soap and water often or use hand sanitiser gel. This is particularly important for servers at Holy Communion.

**Should I go to Church?**

Older members and those with medical conditions causing weaker health and greater vulnerability should consider not attending church for the time being if they're worried about infection. This is an act of mutual care and concern, and is not a desire that people ‘give up’ Church.

If you are not an older member and don't have underlying health conditions, but are feeling ill and/or displaying the symptoms of a cold, please consider staying away from the service.

If you are unable to attend church, please see attached service sheet to use at home.

If you are leading the service and are unwell, please don’t struggle through but stay at home and get well. Remember Church doesn’t stop because we don’t meet and there are other ways of joining in with worship. Even if you would normally go to church with a cold, the words of 1 Corinthians 8:11 may be useful here: “Think of your weaker (brother/sister)”

**Welcoming people into Church**

We recommend that welcomers don't shake hands with people arriving for the service.  If welcomers do shake hands hand gel should be available to both parties.

**Pastoral concerns**

Churches may want to consider carrying out pastoral ‘visits’ by phone. In any case it may be worth calling the person you are due to visit to check they are comfortable with you being there. Now is a good time to be thinking proactively about who in the Church might need extra help should they decide or be required to self-isolate. Is there the need to create a plan for shopping for more vulnerable members of the community for example?

 Remember that many people are anxious and a reassuring phone call and an offer to pray might be very much appreciated.

The latest Government advice is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#diagnosis-and-analysis>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-home-isolation>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19>