

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

Latest information

While the risk posed by COVID-19 to our Diocesan family remains low, it is important that we adopt best-hygiene behaviour now.

The New Zealand Government has made several recent announcements that will directly impact how we gather together as family. As a result, congregations should:

- receive communion in **one kind only**, i.e. only the bread or wafer. This advice means that the practice of intinction should cease
- consider how other practises, such as the collecting of the offering and the placing of the bread/wafer in each congregants' hand, could be done in ways that minimise hand to hand contact – to reduce the spread of pathogens.

Bishops Justin and Ellie say they realise these changes in practice will be challenging to some people's sacramental theology. However, "it has been a long-accepted practice within the Anglican Church that to receive communion in one kind fully conveys the efficacy of the sacrament. We urge people in our churches to do their best to adapt to these changing circumstances, and to continue to care well for one another."

Individuals should:

- stay at home if feeling unwell. Use Healthline's dedicated number for COVID-19 health advice and information (0800 358 5453)
- stay at home **and self-quarantine for 14 days** if they have returned from **any** overseas destination other than the Pacific Islands. Refer to the Ministry of Health's [Advice for Travellers](#) website for more information
- avoid handshakes and direct physical contact during the passing of the peace – 'no hugs, hongi or handshakes'
- continue to practise good hygiene – washing hands, containing coughs and sneezes.

General guidance for churches

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

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

- 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 (for 20 seconds) or using hand sanitiser gel to kill germs:
 - 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.

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.

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