

Central States Synod Health Plan

As the news and concern over the COVID-19 situation continues, we at the Central States Synod are taking prudent steps in order to keep our community healthy. We are monitoring state and county health departments, School Districts, and other alerts in our synod. We are continuing with planned meetings and programs BUT doing them “virtually” to model ways that we can still meet, learn and make decisions even if we cannot physically be in one place together. At this point we are not recommending widespread cancellation of worship services, but this may change in response to directives by health organizations. Below is our plan as we move forward.

Personal Preparedness:

For 80% of cases, COVID-19 is a mild illness that does not require hospitalization. We cannot eliminate COVID-19 but we can limit its spread by:

- Washing hands with soap and water frequently
- Avoiding touching our face (mouth, nose, eyes)
- Staying home when sick until the illness is resolved (vomiting, fever, nose drainage, lethargic, sore throat, cough, rash, diarrhea, etc.)
- Covering coughs and sneezes with tissue and washing hands afterwards
- Staying away from others who are ill

Our Plan as a community of faith:

Stage	Indicator	Action Item
Stage 0	Low Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal hygiene and sanitation practices (Handwashing, food handling, facility cleaning)
Stage 1	Potential Risk, no confirmed cases in immediate region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heightened awareness of sanitation practices, review policies and practices. • Encourage those who don't feel well to stay home
Stage 2 (Warning)	Confirmed Case(s) in the State or region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All worship, ministry, and small groups are active • Extra sanitation and cleaning around the building • Adapt communion practices to avoid contact with different hands • Communicating with words rather than handshakes including as we “share the peace.” • Encourage those who don't feel well to stay home • Encourage handwashing, use hand sanitizer • Using people who are gloved to serve all food
Stage 3 (Alert)	Confirmed case within immediate community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide online worship for those who choose to stay home • No Sunday morning Fellowship Hour or food • No Lenten Soup Supper Gatherings • Extra cleaning and sanitation before and after worship • Follow Local School districts • All Children and Youth Programs will also be suspended.
Stage 4 (Critical)	Confirmed Case in church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Worship/School/Meetings suspended • No meetings held in church facilities • All congregation to participate in online worship • Department of Health will be in contact with church staff on steps moving forward.

We will keep you updated on what stages are recommended for each conference or community through Synod email, Facebook, and website.