

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
H1N1 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS
A PASTORAL RESPONSE

September 16, 2009

Every year, as winter approaches, we begin hearing about the flu. This year, in addition to the regular or seasonal flu, we are hearing that we may have to protect ourselves against something new: the H1N1 flu virus.

H1N1 was first detected in Mexico this spring. Within a few months, it spread around the world, prompting the World Health Organization to declare the first global flu pandemic in 41 years.

H1N1 has already affected many Canadians, and, this coming flu season, it is expected to affect many more. We do well to be prepared.

The following guidelines represent a pastoral response to concerns related to H1N1. We wish to provide reassurance to our community and clarity around how we would proceed.

The determination of a heightened state of concern due to H1N1 would be made by Region of Waterloo Public Health.

A. PREPARATION

1. People are encouraged to get flu shots and/or to take such measures as are directed by the Region of Waterloo Public Health.
2. Region of Waterloo Public Health advises as follows “to stay healthy this fall and winter”:
 - Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze by using a tissue or coughing into your sleeve or upper arm (or into the “crook of your elbow”). Throw the tissue in the garbage after you use it.
 - Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or sanitizers with 60 to 90 per cent alcohol are also effective if hand washing facilities are not available.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread easily that way.
 - If you get sick, Public Health recommends that you stay home from work or school—or church!— until you are feeling well again, and limit contact with others during this time to keep from infecting them.
 - If your symptoms worsen, contact your doctor.
3. Pastors get both seasonal and H1N1 flu shots as soon as they become available to model good practice and to provide reassurance to our community.
4. Hand sanitizers are secured for use during the flu season.

B. UPON DETERMINATION OF A HEIGHTENED STATE OF CONCERN

General precautions

1. People who are showing flue-like symptoms are invited to stay home. This would be true for leaders and worshipers, Faith Adventures leaders and participants, etc... Everyone! When in doubt, we love our neighbour by erring on the side of caution.
2. Hand sanitizers are placed at all entrances, in the narthex, in washrooms and in program areas. People are encouraged to use them. A hand sanitizer is already in regular use by worship leaders.
3. People are encouraged to minimize hand-to-hand contact, to refrain from coughing and sneezing into the open air, etc., as noted above.

Worship precautions

4. Pastors, greeters, hosts and others are invited to refrain from shaking hands.
5. Worshipers are invited to refrain from sharing the peace in the traditional manner. Instead, people are encouraged to bow or to express their sharing of the peace verbally and through conversation.
6. Communion is offered "in one kind". The Doctrine of Concomitance holds that Christ is truly and wholly present in either the bread or the wine. Roman Catholics and people who are allergic to bread or wine already know this to be true.

Pastors will offer only the bread to the community to lower the already very small risk of cross-infection via the cup. Pastors will minimize hand-to-hand contact by simply dropping a wafer into each communicant's open, cradled hands.

We hope that this pastoral response will provide reassurance around matters related to H1N1.

*— Pastors Anne Anderson
& André Lavergne*

*This response was endorsed by
Trinity's Council on September 16, 2009.*

*This response will be modified on the basis of any new
information circulated by Region of Waterloo Public Health.*