



The Episcopal
Diocese of San Joaquin
The Central Third of California

March 6, 2020

Sisters and Brothers of The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin,

We wrote to you last week about the updates surrounding viruses, including COVID-19 or Coronavirus. In our office, we've had a number of inquiries around best practices for the faith communities in which we love and care for.

We commend the following information offered by Episcopal Relief and Development, which offers several recommendations for individual and faith community-level prevention.

ERD and the CDC recommend the following for individuals:

- Wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds! That is the same amount of time it takes to pray The Lord's Prayer.
- Feel that sneeze or cough coming on? Cover your mouth, and then go wash your hands.
- When you are sick, stay home even if you're feeling that annoying tickle in your throat, or are just about better. We love you, but sharing germs is not fun for anyone.

Liturgically, the recommendations are the following:

- Clergy will refrain from shaking hands or hugging as an act of greeting. We can have fun with this by offering instead a bow, or an elbow-bump, or a toe-tap, or an air-five, or simply a gracious wave (elbow, elbow, wrist wrist wrist). We advise you to do likewise during the passing of the peace.
- Clergy will wash hands with soap before the service begins and use hand sanitizer before distributing communion. We advise you to do likewise.
- Regarding the chalice – **Due to the continuing spread of COVID-19, we are highly recommending that each parish discontinue the sharing of a chalice. In our tradition, to receive bread is to have received full communion.**
- Regarding the peace – Please do not greet one other with hugging or shaking hands. Just as your clergy will be modeling we recommend waving or making the peace sign, or a new jig!

As this continues to develop, whatever that may look like, we will continue to update and communicate with all of you.

This resource is thorough.

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/.../faith-based-response-to-.../>

Please join our Church in praying for our community and for the world:

God of the present moment, God who in Jesus stills the storm and soothes the frantic heart; bring hope and courage to all who wait or work in uncertainty. Bring hope that you will make them the equal of whatever lies ahead. Bring them the courage to endure what cannot be avoided, for your will is health and wholeness; you are God, and we need you. (Prayer for People Critically Ill or Facing Great Uncertainty, Adapted from New Zealand Prayer Book)

Blessings

+David, Canon Anna, and Dcn. Angela