



## Knox United Church – COVID-19 Response

March 12, 2020

Keeping Knox and our neighbours safe and connected during COVID-19 is a key priority for all of us. The Board met on March 12<sup>th</sup> to review our services, programs and events using the United Church Emergency Procedures Manual and Health Canada's Guidelines for Mass Gatherings. With a conservative approach and an eye to our leadership capacity, the following decisions have been made / actions taken:

### **GO-TEAM:**

A Go-Team has been assembled by the Board: Rev. Richard Chung, Susan McAlpine (Chair), Josie Barley and Debra Danny. They have been selected for their expertise on worship, pastoral, spiritual, human resources, Knox operations and communications matters. This team will report to the Board.

The Go-Team will handle decisions about gatherings and operations in the coming days. They will work with a variety of subject matter experts within the congregation, the United Church and broader community. They will update and evaluate situations and make decisions on an ongoing basis.

### **SOCIAL DISTANCING:**

Please endeavour to maintain one meter of space (almost 2 arms' lengths) between yourself and others at all times. This will also be practiced at Worship services. Pew ropes will be removed to create extra space, and the balcony may be utilized.

We don't recommend elbow bumps or touching feet to replace handshakes, as they still put people in too close a range. Please try the ancient and hygienic practice of bowing instead. For passing the peace, we will ask you to place your own palms together in a prayer-like position and say "peace be with you".

### **HYGIENE:**

Hygiene signs have been posted around our buildings, and hand sanitizers / wipes will be placed at key entrances. In addition to the bathroom sinks, please don't forget that you can use the spare sinks in Room 1 and the Lounge to wash your hands.

Effective immediately, tables must be wiped down with warm water and soap or a surface cleaner after use.

### **WORSHIP:**

Sunday Worship will continue with social distancing and vigilant hygiene.

Communion will continue in a modified format, with the Minister representing the congregation when taking bread and wine.

Children are always welcome at worship. Children's Time is postponed until further notice, and the children's area will be closed (we can't ensure its constant cleanliness).

### **EVENTS:**

The following services and events are not considered mass gatherings (250+ people), and at this time, they will proceed with social distancing and vigilant hygiene by food preparers / servers:

- Men's Breakfast, Saturday March 15
- Fellowship Time, Sunday March 15
- Sunday Social Concert, Sunday March 15

**ALL non-essential Knox-sponsored programs, meetings and events after March 15, apart from Sunday worship, will be postponed until further notice.** This will include Fellowship time after worship.

Please strive to meet by conference call for any essential / urgent matters.

**ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:**

Sunday Worship, Administration and Operations have been identified as essential functions, and will continue unless directed otherwise by the government.

Building cleaning has been stepped up.

**OUR RENTERS:**

Renters will make decisions about the continuation of their own programs. However, we will ask them to partner with Knox by stepping up their cleaning and hand washing.

**WHEN TO CONSIDER STAYING HOME:**

It's a good idea to stay home if:

- you have travelled in the last 14 days to or from countries at risk (China, Hong Kong, Italy, Iran, Singapore, South Korea).
- You have a fever or fever-like symptoms.
- you have a new or worsening cough or respiratory symptoms.
- You have been in contact with (or suspect you have been in contact with) someone with COVID-19.
- you have a compromised immune system.

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ILL (with *anything*):**

Please stay home. If you think you may have COVID-19, call 8-1-1 to speak with a healthcare representative.

**TEAMS:**

Rev. Richard will work with the Pastoral Care team to plan how we will address potential pastoral needs in the coming days. He will work with other teams to identify whether specific plans are needed, and to decide how teams will communicate and make decisions during this time.

**EMERGENCY CONTACT INFO:**

We will be asking you to provide updated emergency contact information. Please watch for a form to be circulated, and return the requested information in a timely manner.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

We will keep you updated on any changes via:

- The Knox Website ([knoxunitedvancouver.org](http://knoxunitedvancouver.org))
- News & Notes
- Special e-mail bulletins
- Printed hand-outs (available at the office and in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings)
- Phone (if needed)

**THINGS WE ALL CAN DO:*****Practice good hygiene -***

- wash your hands OFTEN with soap and WARM water for at least 20 seconds.
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- avoid visiting people in hospitals or long-term care centres if you are sick.
- when coughing or sneezing:
  - cover your mouth and nose with the crook of your arm (or tissues) to reduce the spread of germs
  - dispose of tissues into the garbage as soon as possible, and wash your hands right away

***Have a Plan:***

If COVID-19 spreads in our community, or if you need to self-isolate, there may be challenges -- especially if you live alone or need help getting around. Think about how to change your behaviours and routines to prepare, and to reduce the risk of infection. For example, you may:

- stock up on your prescription medications.
- add some extra supplies to your pantry – canned soup, dried pasta, bathroom tissue, etc.
- update your list of community services -- for example, grocery or prescription delivery services.
- do your grocery shopping at off-peak hours
- use public transit outside rush hour
- check in with your personal network (eg. neighbours, friends, family, Knox family) to chat about getting around, or how you might help one another in case anyone needs to self-isolate.

For more advice on how to prepare in the event of any type of emergency, please visit [getprepared.ca](https://getprepared.ca)

Friends, these are difficult decisions that were not made lightly. We want to err on the side of caution to ensure we are adequately ready, and that no congregants or neighbours contract COVID-19 from our gatherings. We understand that these precautions may result in a loss of connectedness for many of us. Please know that we will be working to develop a list of members committed to being available if you are feeling isolated or in need of pastoral support.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we maneuver our way through these uncertain times.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Rev Richard at 250 215 0703 or Susan McAlpine at 604-721-8571 / [starfishian@gmail.com](mailto:starfishian@gmail.com)