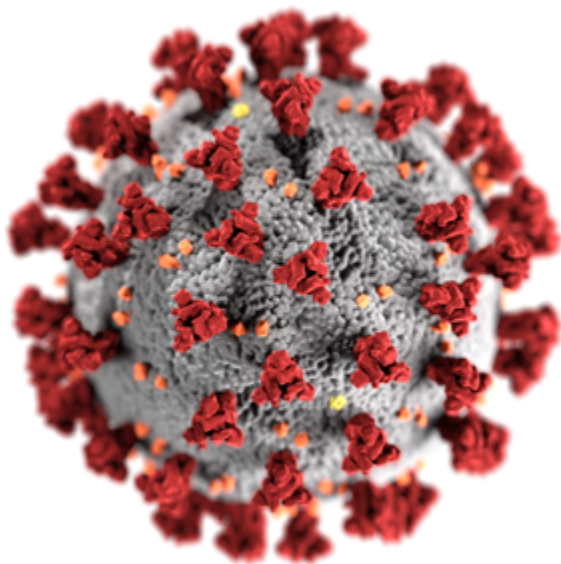


An Important Message about
Coronavirus Disease 2019
(COVID-19)

March 2020



Federal health officials have advised hospitals, schools, churches and other public facilities to prepare for the spread of coronavirus disease, COVID-19.

These are the measures we are taking at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Education

We are encouraging all members, staff and tenants to keep up with the latest developments and being extra careful about hygiene and cleanliness. This is good advice for everyone.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has an extensive site that explains what this virus is, how it spreads and how you can protect yourself. It also provides the latest updates and offers expert advice for travelers, public facilities and healthcare professionals.

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html

The New York City Health Department also offers useful information, including local resources and current statistics, such as how many cases of coronavirus infection have been reported in the city so far.

www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/coronavirus.page

The *New York Times* provides a repository of current reporting and practical advice. You can sign up to receive their content in an e-newsletter as well.

www.nytimes.com/news-event/coronavirus

Prevention

Like the flu, the coronavirus is thought to spread mainly from close, person-to-person contact. It can also spread from touching infected surfaces or objects. We are taking stock of all the ways these interactions happen at the church and implementing measures we hope will help to keep us all safe.

We have suspended the Sacrament of Communion until we train our officers on the most hygienically-sound way to administer the bread and wine.

We are encouraging all members, visitors and staff to avoid hugging, shaking hands and other close contact. During the Passing of the Peace in worship, for instance, we are teaching the congregation to communicate “Peace” using American Sign Language. Pressing your palms together, holding your hand over your heart, and giving a friendly nod are all perfectly acceptable (and healthier) ways of greeting one another.

We are making hand sanitizer available throughout the Sanctuary and Church House. Feel free to use it or to wash your hands in the restroom as often as you need to.

We are wrapping food or making servers available at Sunday morning coffee hour and other public events where we offer refreshments. This will protect us all from too many fingers on the cookies!

Our building staff is doubling-up on cleaning protocols, particularly in high-traffic areas such as the 55th Street lobby, the men's shelter and the Christian Education Center.

Please be assured that we are monitoring this public health emergency very closely. We are in consultation with doctors and other medical professionals in our congregation, and with sister congregations, about the most effective steps we should be taking as a church.

At some point, public health officials may recommend that we take even stricter measures. Should that day arrive, we will be prepared.

Meanwhile, we will continue to worship together on Sunday. We will continue to provide Meals on Heels to our neighbors, housing for our shelter guests, social services to our neighbors on the streets, and visits to our homebound members. In as safe and careful way as we can, we will continue to do Christ's ministry here at Fifth Avenue and 55th.

If you need assistance, particularly if you feel ill and will not be coming to worship, let us know. The pastors are always here to help.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Black Johnston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Scott Black Johnston
Senior Pastor



What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in China, and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. These include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

Stay Healthy!

The Centers for Disease Control recommends following flu-prevention protocols to protect yourself from infection. The basic precautions that health experts advise are:

- Wash your hands. Frequently.
- Keep your hands off your face, particularly your mouth, nose and eyes.
- Get a flu shot.
- Disinfect the surfaces in your home and workplace.
- Don't go to work (or school, or church) if you are feeling sick.



Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

7 West 55 Street • New York, NY 10019
fapc.org • 212.247.0490