

## FAQ for churches regarding the COVID-19 situation

Updated 12 Feb 2020

### 1) What are the DORSCON level guidelines from MOH?

	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>YELLOW</b>	<b>ORANGE</b>	<b>RED</b>
<b>Nature of Disease</b>	Disease is mild <b>OR</b> Disease is severe but does not spread easily from person to person (e.g. MERS, H7N9)	Disease is severe and spreads easily from person to person but is occurring outside Singapore. <b>OR</b> Disease is spreading in Singapore but is (a) Typically mild i.e only slightly more severe than seasonal influenza. Could be severe in vulnerable groups. (e.g. H1N1 pandemic) <b>OR</b> (b) being contained	Disease is severe <b>AND</b> spreads easily from person to person, but disease has not spread widely in Singapore and is being contained (e.g. SARS experience in Singapore)	Disease is severe <b>AND</b> is spreading widely
<b>Impact on Daily Life</b>	Minimal disruption e.g. border screening, travel advice	Minimal disruption e.g. additional measures at border and/or healthcare settings expected, higher work and school absenteeism likely	Moderate disruption e.g. quarantine, temperature screening, visitor restrictions at hospitals	Major disruption e.g. school closures, work from home orders, significant number of deaths.
<b>Advice to Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at home</li><li>• Maintain good personal hygiene</li><li>• Look out for health advisories</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at home</li><li>• Maintain good personal hygiene</li><li>• Look out for health advisories</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at home</li><li>• Maintain good personal hygiene</li><li>• Look out for health advisories</li><li>• Comply with control measures</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be socially responsible: if you are sick, stay at home</li><li>• Maintain good personal hygiene</li><li>• Look out for health advisories</li><li>• Comply with control measures</li><li>• <b>Practise social distancing: avoid crowded areas</b></li></ul>

Source: Ministry of Health

### 2) What are our current church guidelines now?

During DORSCON ORANGE, churches will undertake:

- Temperature screenings and recording of contact details (name and valid contact number). Churches may choose to use electronic means to register attendance or choose to have a paper record of worshippers for each service. Those with a runny nose, cough or flu-like symptoms will be advised to go home or to a GP clinic, but not enter.
- Avoid handshakes or hugs and use other forms of greeting.
- Large gatherings and camps to be limited, postponed or cancelled.
- Members are encouraged to join a Small Group so that they may be ministered to, as well as to allow efficient bidirectional dissemination of information through the

small-group network. Churches should attempt to maintain connection with the community of believers through social media, snail mail, phone calls etc.

- Those above 65 years of age, and those with lower immunity such as infants and toddlers may choose to remain at home during this period. Churches may arrange for home visits to these members to minister to them
- Hospital visits will need to follow MOH's limitations, and visitation teams should be masked during the visit, whilst maintaining strict personal hygiene.
- Holy Communion may be celebrated with modifications to minimise contact and the spread of droplets whilst still maintaining the holy mystery of the sacrament. Sick persons with runny noses, coughs or flu-like symptoms should not be preparing nor serving the elements. Hands of Communion stewards should be disinfected before and after serving, and should not touch their faces at any time during the rite. Should the Celebrant be ill and is the only Elder available (no covering Elder is available), he or she may preside over the sacrament wearing a mask, and he or she should not come near or into contact with the elements. It is permissible to preside over the rite whilst standing away or to one side of the Lord's Table.
- The general advice is for those who feel unwell to stay home and to see a doctor. Everyone should maintain good personal hygiene and exercise social responsibility.

### **3) What happens if the DORSCON level goes to red?**

At DORSCON RED, the country will adopt a mitigation stance, and there may be a requirement to avoid gatherings. This may impact our worship services and other meetings and ministries. We should comply with instructions not to gather or undermine the efforts of the government to control the disease. Meetings may be held via teleconference, including Prayer Meetings. The Bishop and the Council of Presidents may give further advice depending on the circumstances whilst cooperating with the authorities in this. This may include but not be limited to a Virtual Church, segregation of pastoral care teams, and sermon podcasts with home-based liturgies.

## **Update on PLMC situation**

### **1) Is Case 41 a member of PLMC?**

We have been informed by the MOH that one of the patients in the latest crop of COVID-19 patients had visited Paya Lebar Methodist Church (PLMC) before being tested as positive for the virus and admitted to the National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID) on 7 Feb 2020. The authorities have not released any other information to us besides the patient's age and gender.

### **2) What updates are there about this case?**

PLMC has been working closely with MOH. We implemented all the necessary measures to ensure that it does not escalate. To date, contact tracing has been done and all who have been in close contact with Case 41 have been quarantined. The official MCS press release sent out on 10 February is attached for your reference.

### **3) Did Case 41 attend a service or meeting?**

This information is unknown to us as we only know the patient's age and gender. MOH does not issue details on the identity of the patient.

### **4) When will the Covenant Kindergarten be re-opened?**

It re-opened on 12 Feb 2020.

### **5) What measures has PLMC taken in response to Case 41?**

PLMC has worked closely with the NEA and MOH. Measures taken include:

- Sealing the premises of the affected church for thorough sanitisation of the premises following NEA and MOH guidelines.
- Temperature screening and getting contact details for everyone entering church premises. Any visitor, member of the church, pastor or staff with fever, cough or flu-like symptoms has not been allowed into the premises and has been advised to see a General Practitioner immediately.

- The church leadership has reminded members to observe good personal hygiene.
- The Covenant Kindergarten at PLMC was closed for thorough cleaning activities
- Essential meetings and small group meetings have been minimised.

## **6) Are there any further infection cases at PLMC?**

We do not have this information other than contact tracing has been established.

### **Other Questions**

#### **1) Will masks be provided for those who are screening visitors to church?**

In consultation with our medical advisors which include an Infectious Diseases Specialist, masks are not necessary for screeners. Hospitals and GP Clinics are wearing masks because most of the people visiting them are already sick. This is less so in workplaces, and even less so in churches as the big crowds are only encountered once a week. It is those who work on the battlefield who need it.

Churches who wish to insist on screeners being masked may consider working as a community of believers to pool their resources. Since the government has given each household four masks, a call may be made for members to donate the masks to the church. The example should be set by the LCEC and ministry leaders. Those who are living alone, for example, may not need as many masks, but we should not place undue social pressure on them; it has to come from the conviction of the Spirit in their hearts.

These masks may be issued to the screeners, or for worshippers who turn up with cough, runny nose or fever who should be given one mask and advised to go see a doctor or to rest at home after putting on the mask (they should not enter the venue at all).

Should the screener wear a mask, a surgical mask may be worn, but not discarded after each short use. A surgical mask may be worn for up to 8 hours (not counting the time it is not worn) and by the same person. It may be worn over several sessions until the 8-hours of usage is clocked up.

**2) Will we move towards live-streaming of services?**

We are exploring and working towards this option.

**3) Where can I get more information and updates?**

The MCS website has dedicated a page on updates to the 2019-nCoV situation. Information posted includes Bishop's letters and video to churches, press release information, as well as relevant media write-ups. Please refer to [www.methodist.org.sg/2019-nCoV](http://www.methodist.org.sg/2019-nCoV). If you have any direct queries, please write to [communications@methodist.org.sg](mailto:communications@methodist.org.sg)