



Advice on Going to Church in a Time of Possible Epidemic

In the current time, with concern about the possible spread of the coronavirus, it is wise for us not to yield to panic. It is also wise for us to practice basic preventative measures. Here are some suggestions for you as you come to a liturgy at your congregation*:

1. Stay home if you are sick. Read the readings of the day, which you can find at www.lectionarypage.net. Pray for the congregation.
2. Wash your hands before you come to church. If you choose, make use of the hand sanitizer available when you arrive.
3. If you do cough or sneeze while in church, cover your mouth with a tissue or cough into your shoulder or upper sleeve.
4. During the Peace, you might choose to do one of the following as a temporary replacement for shaking hands: grasp the lower arms of the person you are greeting as you speak the words and let that person grasp your lower arms, or simply bow to that person as you speak, without touching.
5. Trust that the communion ministers are indeed cleansing their hands before communion.
6. If your custom has been to receive communion by dipping the Bread into the Cup, consider adopting the more sanitary method of drinking from the common Cup. That this is a more sanitary method is not widely known, but is generally true when the common Cup is not ceramic and is carefully turned and wiped after each person drinks. The dipping Cup has many hands touching it and dipping into the wine. Our hands carry the most pathogens.
7. If you do continue to use the dipping Cup, try to let only the bread touch the wine, not your fingers.
8. Alternatively, for a brief season, receive only the Bread. The whole Christ is present for you in the Bread. You may choose to stand in front of one of the ministers of the Cup, hear the words "The blood of Christ, shed for you," and say "Amen," even though you do not drink. The blood of Christ is indeed shed for you!
9. Wash your hands when you get home.

**Based on a bulletin insert developed by Pr. Gordon Lathrop in the Southeastern Synod.*