

Disaster Preparedness and Response Task Force ***Preparedness for Pandemics***

Seldom do we find “severe infectious disease outbreaks” or “pandemic” on a list of potential *disasters* that might occur within our presbytery or any presbytery across our state or the U.S. Although, COVID-19 Coronavirus updates appear in our daily news feeds. Previously, media reported how other countries were impacted by this virus and precautions being taken, yet now we are hearing about cases identified in the U.S. even without foreign travel.

This is not a time to panic nor overreact, but as with all possible disasters, preparedness is prudent. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has created a “Preparedness for Pandemics” resource to assist congregations in preparing for and responding to widespread contagious diseases. The guide contains valuable, common-sense tips on what congregations and individuals can do to keep themselves safe in the midst of a “severe infectious disease outbreak”, including what can/should be done now, and what may be necessary later.

According to the director of PDA, the Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus, “It is important for faith leaders to proactively model protective health practices in congregational life, resist and renounce the racism and xenophobia at this virus’ geographic point of emergence, and make sensible plans to support vulnerable and isolated members of their community.”

This resource, “*Guidance for Congregations: In response to severe infectious disease outbreak*” can be found at https://pda.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/pda/pdfs/preparedness_for_pandemics.pdf or on the Presbytery’s website under the “Documents and Resources” tab.

The Presbytery’s Disaster Preparedness and Response Task Force (DP&RTF) is available to assist congregations and families in disaster preparedness for all disasters. Contact Marilyn Stone at 262-492-7921 or mmstone52@att.net if you have questions or desire assistance in creating a preparedness plan for your congregation or for families/individuals.

During what can be a frightening time for many, congregations are encouraged to remain calm and to follow common-sense measures to keep their communities safe.