



## Central Texas Conference Cabinet Guidelines for Response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

*Be guided by faith and not driven by fear.*

Information about and reactions to the novel coronavirus COVID-19 continue to rapidly evolve with city county, state and federal officials updating their regulations and orders seemingly every day. The CTC Cabinet has compiled the following list of guidelines for how to best respond to COVID-19.

1. **The Bishop and Cabinet will speak with one unified policy voice when communicating with the Conference.**
  - Bishop and Cabinet communications will be coordinated through the Conference Communications Office.
  - There will be regular updates on the Conference website ([ctcumc.org/](http://ctcumc.org/) and distributed to/through the District offices.
  - Information requiring immediate attention will also be emailed to clergy, lay leadership and church offices.
2. **In-person worship is to be suspended at this time.**
  - **We STRONGLY encourage the implementation and use of online worship.** Please inform your District Superintendent of changes in worship times/procedures.
3. **Follow all orders and mandates of civil authorities.**
4. **Pre-school ministries shall follow the policy set by their local public schools as to whether or not to remain open.**
5. **Graveside funerals with a small number of family members may be held.** We encourage the scheduling of larger Memorial Services in honor and memory of a loved one to be scheduled after the resolution of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) crisis.
6. **We ask that only small family weddings be held at this time.** We encourage the scheduling of larger wedding celebrations after the resolution of the COVID-19 crisis.
7. **The Communion elements are to be consecrated by the pastor and may, if civil mandates allow during the COVID-19 crisis, be distributed remotely with appropriate liturgy.**

**The celebration of Holy Communion during online worship has been approved under the following conditions:**

- Every reasonable effort must be made to keep the sacrament holy and sacred;
- The elements may be consecrated online by an appropriate clergy person;
- The symbolic consecration of the elements online, if possible, should take place at the altar and with the use of bread and grape juice/wine.

This allowance for online communion is for the duration of the current coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis and is applicable only while regular, in-person worship is suspended.

8. **Additional information on online worship and giving may be found at [ctcumc.org/coronavirus-covid-19-updates](http://ctcumc.org/coronavirus-covid-19-updates).**

9. Food distribution is to be done on a drive-by basis or delivered to a person's home.
10. Reach out, with appropriate public distancing, to help our neighbors in need remembering Matthew 25:40. "I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me."
11. Pastors and churches are urged to be in regular conversation with their District Superintendent!

*"Don't fear, because I am with you; don't be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will surely help you; I will hold you with my righteous strong hand." (Isaiah 42:10)*

*<https://www.ctcumc.org/virtual-ministry-resources>*