



## THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

POST OFFICE BOX 5606  
10330 STAPLES MILL ROAD

GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA 23058-5606

**Sharma D. Lewis**  
RESIDENT BISHOP

TELEPHONE: 804/521-1102  
FAX: 804/521-1178  
E-MAIL: [terribiggins@vaumc.org](mailto:terribiggins@vaumc.org)

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### **COVID-19 response - Precautions** related to preschools, food pantries, weddings, and funerals in the Virginia Conference

Bishop Lewis directs that all preschools be closed for the next two weeks. We will re-evaluate whether it is prudent to begin in-person worship for March 29, 2020 and whether it is prudent to reopen the preschools on March 30, 2020.

All clergy and local churches in the Virginia Conference should use discretion and best practices when holding weddings and funerals at this time. Handle each funeral and wedding case by case, ensuring that you are working with the families concerning their needs and how best to protect their health and well-being. Be mindful of church seating capacity and try to observe a three feet distance between members and guests while seated and/or standing. Social distancing is an important component to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. Be sure to also make use of the whole church. If churches have chapels, make use of these spaces as well. At funerals, be mindful of grieving families and practice sensitivity as these should be ceremonies of comfort especially through the expression of hugs.

For food pantries, churches should use best practices by continuing to monitor the advice and directives from our local, state, and national leaders and take necessary precautions to make sure that food and other products remain safe for members, guests, and volunteers. Ensure that you have materials such as soap, hand sanitizer, tissues, covered waste bins, latex gloves (if available) and face masks (if available) for volunteers and those being served by the pantry. You also should clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (counters, door knobs, light switches) daily. Dishes and/or silverware should be washed in hot water immediately after use or after an event either by machine or by wearing gloves. Trash should immediately be disposed (bagged, sealed, and taken to a dumpster) at various intervals during the day.

Learn more about cleaning and disinfection recommendations from the CDC [here](#).

#### Resources:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is updating information daily at <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- CDC Cleaning Recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- National Institutes of Health: <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>