



Department of Public Health

Monroe County, New York

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Being your brother's keeper and caring for one another is at the heart of most religions. So how can you safely worship with others as concern over COVID-19 continues to grow? There are many steps you can take to protect yourself and others, especially those who are most vulnerable including our elderly, young, and those with chronic disease or a weakened immune system.

**If you are sick, especially with fever, cough or shortness of breath, STAY HOME;
Do not go to services.**

Houses of worship should consider having hand sanitizer available for congregant use at entrances, kitchens and children's classrooms.

Seniors especially should minimize the number of people you embrace or greet with a "holy kiss."

PERSONAL HYGIENE:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds:
 - Upon arrival to a destination
 - Before eating or handling food
 - After sneezing, coughing or nose blowing
 - After using the restroom
 - After touching or cleaning frequently touched surfaces
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve
- Use an alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are unavailable
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING PUBLIC AREAS

It is important to be extra vigilant about cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, especially frequently touched surfaces. Cleaning and disinfecting should be done by staff trained to do it in a safe and effective manner. **Follow product label instructions to ensure target viruses are effectively killed.**

Step One – Cleaning

Always clean surfaces prior to disinfecting. For combination products that clean and disinfect, follow the product instructions to ensure effective use.

Clean high contact surfaces

- Covers of shared books (hymnals and sacred texts)
- Tables, desks and chairs
- Door handles and push plates
- Handrails
- Faucets
- Appliance surfaces
- Light switches
- Remote controls
- Shared phones, keyboards, mice

Note that computer keyboards are difficult to clean. Locations with community use computers should post signs regarding proper hand hygiene before and after using the computers to minimize disease transmission. Also consider using keyboard covers.

Step Two – Disinfecting

Complete after cleaning. NYSDDEC has created a list of products effective against COVID-19.

http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/covid19.pdf

Label directions must be followed when using disinfectants to ensure the target viruses are effectively killed.

It is also acceptable to use a fresh 2% chlorine bleach solution (approximately 1 Tablespoon of bleach in 1 Quart of water).

THE SIGN OF PEACE

- If you have a cough or sneeze, refrain from shaking hands during the giving of The Peace.

HOLY COMMUNION OR THE EUCHARIST

- Priests presiding at the Eucharist, pastors, communion administrators and servers should wash their hands prior to participating in the sacrament or at least use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60% alcohol minimum).
- Limit the spread of disease by not sharing common vessels for food and drink.
- Use of the Common Chalice/Cup should be avoided by parishioners who feel unwell.
- Communion in one kind, meaning taking communion through only receiving the bread and not the wine, can be received instead.
- Intinction, the act of dipping the bread in the wine at a Eucharist so that a communicant receives both together, represents a potential infection transmission route and is therefore not recommended.
- The use of individual-sized, single-serve, pre-filled/sealed disposable or machine washable cups for the wine is one potential alternative.
- The placing of the wafer/bread/host on the tongue by anyone administering Eucharist is NOT recommended as this poses a potential source of infection transmission. The wafer/bread/host can be placed on the hand.
- When visiting parishioners at home, wash hands before and after giving the sacraments.

MUSLIM PRACTICES

- The practice of *wudu* (ablution) is very hygienic and beneficial for reducing illness and infection transmission. It is important that *wudu* areas have sufficient soap and paper towels or hand sanitizer to ensure visitors are able to comply with hygiene advice.
- In Madrassahs:
 - Those who feel unwell should stay home and not attend work or any educational/childcare settings.
 - Students, staff and visitors should wash their hands as listed in the common recommendations section.
- On February 27, 2020, Saudi authorities announced measures aimed at limiting the spread of COVID-19, including:
 - Temporary suspension of entry to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the purpose of Umrah and /or visiting the Prophet's Mosque in Medina.
 - Temporary suspension of entry to the Kingdom of individuals with a tourist visa from countries with confirmed Coronavirus outbreaks. The current suspension does not include the United States.

JEWISH PRACTICES

Shabbat and other services should be continued with similar precautions as any other congregate setting.

