



The Methodist Church of New Zealand  
Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

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Caring for Our People Manaakitia ā Tātou Tāngata

# METHODIST CHURCH COVID-19 PANDEMIC PLAN

**Version 3**

**Tue 24 March 2020**

**Given the nature of changes for the nation to move into a four-week lockdown, please treat this entire document as new. No changes from the previous version have been highlighted beyond this page**

Updates will be issued on Tuesdays and Thursdays  
at approximately 3pm

Any version older than one week will be out of date.

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## About this Document

### Objectives

To detail actions recommended by the Methodist Church to keep us safe at our Church activities and to support the public efforts during this time of COVID-19.

We are dealing with the unknown, things may change and change quickly. When this happens, as a Connexion Church we hope that everyone will get on board as a community to ensure the ongoing well being of everyone.

This document is written as a Methodist supplement to the Government Alert levels.

## Two parts

This document is made of two parts. Part 1 is generally for everyone, Part 2 is for our Presbyters and Church leaders.

## Who this applies to

This applies to everyone but is being sent to presbyters and parish councils so they are informed of Church expectations and government requirements.

## Versions

Changes between versions will be highlighted in yellow.

First Issue      Version 1, 18 March 2020

**Current Issue Version 3, 24 March 2020**

## Do you have further questions?

Contact Trudy      [trudyd@methodist.org.nz](mailto:trudyd@methodist.org.nz)      027 457 4196

Methodist Church: [http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring\\_for\\_our\\_people/coronavirus\\_2019\\_-\\_advice](http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring_for_our_people/coronavirus_2019_-_advice)

Sign up for automatic website updates: [healthandsafety@methodist.org.nz](mailto:healthandsafety@methodist.org.nz)

## The best information sources

Information	Web Address
The Government's COVID-19 website	<a href="https://covid19.govt.nz/">https://covid19.govt.nz/</a>
Information in other languages	<a href="https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-other-languages">https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-other-languages</a>
Resource Posters	<a href="https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-resources">https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-resources</a>

## In faith, not fear

We are about to enter a four-week nationwide lockdown in an effort to starve Covid-19 of further victims.

The better we all adhere to the lockdown, the better we shun Covid-19 and the better we protect the vulnerable and venerable people in our lives.


Let us unite separately to weave our society together with this effort.

*Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.      Isaiah 41:10*

## PART 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

## The Government's Alert Levels

# New Zealand COVID-19 Alert Levels



- These alert levels specify the public health and social measures to be taken.
- The measures may be updated on the basis of (i) new scientific knowledge about COVID-19 and (ii) information about the effectiveness of intervention measures in New Zealand and elsewhere.
- The alert levels may be applied at a town, city, territorial local authority, regional or national level.
- Different parts of the country may be at different alert levels. We can move up and down alert levels.
- In general, the alert levels are cumulative, e.g. Level 1 is a base-level response. Always prepare for the next level.
- At all levels, health services, emergency services, utilities and goods transport, and other essential services, operations and staff, are expected to remain up and running. Employers in those sectors must continue to meet their health and safety obligations.

LEVEL	RISK ASSESSMENT	RANGE OF MEASURES (can be applied locally or nationally)
<div style="background-color: #333; color: white; padding: 5px;"><b>Level 4 - Eliminate</b></div> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Likely that disease is not contained</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustained and intensive transmission</li> <li>• Widespread outbreaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People instructed to stay at home</li> <li>• Educational facilities closed</li> <li>• Businesses closed except for essential services (e.g. supermarkets, pharmacies, clinics) and lifeline utilities</li> <li>• Rationing of supplies and requisitioning of facilities</li> <li>• Travel severely limited</li> <li>• Major reprioritisation of healthcare services</li> </ul>
<div style="background-color: #333; color: white; padding: 5px;"><b>Level 3 - Restrict</b></div> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Heightened risk that disease is not contained</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community transmission occurring OR</li> <li>• Multiple clusters break out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel in areas with clusters or community transmission limited</li> <li>• Affected educational facilities closed</li> <li>• Mass gatherings cancelled</li> <li>• Public venues closed (e.g. libraries, museums, cinemas, food courts, gyms, pools, amusement parks)</li> <li>• Alternative ways of working required and some non-essential businesses should close</li> <li>• Non face-to-face primary care consultations</li> <li>• Non acute (elective) services and procedures in hospitals deferred and healthcare staff reprioritised</li> </ul>
<div style="background-color: #333; color: white; padding: 5px;"><b>Level 2 - Reduce</b></div> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Disease is contained, but risks of community transmission growing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High risk of importing COVID-19 OR</li> <li>• Uptick in imported cases OR</li> <li>• Uptick in household transmission OR</li> <li>• Single or isolated cluster outbreak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry border measures maximised</li> <li>• Further restrictions on mass gatherings</li> <li>• Physical distancing on public transport (e.g. leave the seat next to you empty if you can)</li> <li>• Limit non-essential travel around New Zealand</li> <li>• Employers start alternative ways of working if possible (e.g. remote working, shift-based working, physical distancing within the workplace, staggering meal breaks, flexible leave arrangements)</li> <li>• Business continuity plans activated</li> <li>• High-risk people advised to remain at home (e.g. those over 70 or those with other existing medical conditions)</li> </ul>
<div style="background-color: #333; color: white; padding: 5px;"><b>Level 1 - Prepare</b></div> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Disease is contained</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heightened risk of importing COVID-19 OR</li> <li>• Sporadic imported cases OR</li> <li>• Isolated household transmission associated with imported cases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Border entry measures to minimise risk of importing COVID-19 cases applied</li> <li>• Contact tracing</li> <li>• Stringent self-isolation and quarantine</li> <li>• Intensive testing for COVID-19</li> <li>• Physical distancing encouraged</li> <li>• Mass gatherings over 500 cancelled</li> <li>• Stay home if you're sick, report flu-like symptoms</li> <li>• Wash and dry hands, cough into elbow, don't touch your face</li> </ul>


Based on the alert levels the Government has made various mandates and recommendations:

The phased approach that the Church was proposing to take is now being directed by the Governments actions according to their Alert Levels.

Government says:	Where this may affect the Methodist Church
<b>Government alert level 4 starting midnight Wednesday 25 March 2020</b>	<b>Non-essential workers stay at home for the four-week lockdown starting on Wednesday 25 March at 11.59pm</b>
Indoor gatherings are cancelled  Exclusions: essential workplaces such as supermarkets, public transport for essential workers	Cancelled, everybody is on lockdown
Outdoor gatherings are cancelled	Cancelled, everybody is on lockdown
Only New Zealand citizens, residents and Australians who normally live here, and all their partners and children will be allowed into the country.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other people will be considered on a case by case basis</li> <li>• All travellers will self isolate for 14 days upon arrival into NZ</li> </ul>	Many of our members have close connections with overseas friends and family.
Advises people to return home as soon as possible	Self isolate upon return, then participate in the nationwide lockdown
Advises New Zealanders not to travel overseas	Cancelled, everybody is on lockdown
Advises to limit non-essential domestic travel	Cancelled, everybody is on lockdown
Continue social distancing and hygiene practices	In everything that we do Physical distancing on public transport
<b>Work differently.</b> Remote working for non-essential services and maintaining distancing and other measures for essential services	Parish, Connexional and other offices, opshops all closed
Older people, people with compromised immunity or other medical issues should be additionally vigilant	Anyone in this category involved in (work or volunteering) essential services
Essential services, supermarkets and pharmacies will stay open no matter how severe the crisis	Aged care, foodbanks,
Non essential services must close	Church buildings, pre schools, op shops, administration offices etc

## Communications Plan

The Connexional Office will provide information as follows

Method	Description
eMessenger emails	As new information is made available that needs to be shared as soon as possible.  Formal updates to this policy will be made on Tuesdays and Thursdays at approximately 3pm.
Website	All the latest information shared by the Methodist Church will be saved here  <a href="http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring_for_our_people/coronavirus_2019_-_advice">http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring_for_our_people/coronavirus_2019_-_advice</a>
Receive website updates	Register your email address to receive automatic notifications of information updates from the Methodist Church <a href="mailto:healthandsafety@methodist.org.nz">healthandsafety@methodist.org.nz</a>
Facebook	 <p>Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful hints, tips and cheerfulness.</li> <li>• Links to Methodist Church plan updates and advisories</li> <li>• Let us meet without touching!</li> </ul>
Touchstone	It will not be possible to print the April issue of Touchstone. A PDF version will be available prior to Sunday 4 April  It is our intention to produce a simplified weekly version during the lockdown. This will allow the sharing of important information, but more particularly the stories of how we are caring for one another.

## Video Catch Up

The Synod Superintendents have spoken about how Zoom and other video sharing tools can be used to link families separated by the lockdown.

Devonport Parish is even having an online birthday party for one of their members.

We may be physically isolated but we can still celebrate important connections.

## Help us help you

Current communication efforts are based on current government media releases, personal knowledge and best efforts.

Tell us your concerns, give us your queries. Let us build a communication network that targets what matters to you.

email: [healthandsafety@methodist.org.nz](mailto:healthandsafety@methodist.org.nz)

facebook: Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

text: 027 457 4196

## Stay at home – for those of us who are not essential workers

The more we excel at this, the smaller the chance of a longer lockdown.

<b>Get home</b>	Airplanes, ferries and other public transport will be closed at Alert Level 4
<b>Reduce the transmission</b>	Only have contact with the people you live with
<b>Friends!</b>	Call them: telephone, video, messenger etc Talk to your neighbour... over the fence Drop off groceries to granma/granpa but keep a 2-metre distance for their safety
<b>Leaving the house</b>	Get fresh air, take a walk Take the kids outside IT MUST BE SOLITARY – keep 2m or more away from people outside your household
<b>One family two households</b>	Living arrangements of children between their parents homes is OK Be sensible
<b>Supermarkets are open</b>	Shop normally Maintain distance from people Use the hand sanitiser – particularly as you leave the supermarket, after you have finished touching supermarket trolleys
<b>Driving is OK</b>	Stay local Only do your supply runs
<b>Covid-19 related issues?</b>	Use private transport If that's not possible, call the Healthline (0800 358 5453) for advice.
<b>Visiting</b>	Stay at home means stay at home. No social visiting. No social gathering. Visit only to support people in supplying basic needs – food and medicines. Visiting for the social wellness of people will still require a 2m distance being maintained. Telephone, video call, message instead.

As the shut down effectively means the country is in a state of national emergency, Civil Defence will have powers to shut roads or public places, create roadblocks, and take control of buildings to store food or fuel supplies.

Let's do this right the first time!

## Deliveries by Hand

The virus is able to live on some hard surfaces for up to 3 days. Caution must be taken if newsletters or support parcels are delivered to parishioners. Hands must be washed at every stage and any person with any signs of illness must not participate.

Please wear gloves if you are able.

## Op Shops

Please close all op shops for at least the same duration as the lockdown.

## Food Banks

While Food Banks qualify as essential services, many of our volunteers are in designated 'at risk' categories.

We are recommending that if your food bank is small that it closes or works co-operatively with others in your locality. We are defining small as 5 or fewer parcels per week.

## Support others

**Use the telephone first.**

<b>Phone Trees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Groups of 6 perhaps</li><li>• keep an eye and an ear on each other</li><li>• arrange supplies and entertainments if possible</li><li>• arrange group prayer and share comfort and support</li></ul>
<b>Mix the group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• include vulnerable people in the community</li><li>• especially spread the care of people without internet connection</li><li>• balance the group for at risk and low risk people</li></ul>
<b>Allocate buddies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• allocate a specific elder or support person to each member of your faith community</li><li>• include names, phone numbers and emails</li><li>• ensure everyone is included</li></ul>
<b>Be understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People may be anxious. This is normal</li><li>• be understanding and offer assurances and support as you are able</li></ul>
<b>Read!</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not everyone has internet.</li><li>• Consider reading online snippets on a daily basis</li></ul>
<b>Use your imagination!</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep people connected with what is happening in the world</li></ul>

## Regular (Daily) Encouragement

It is our intention to have a daily online video devotional of approximately 10 minutes. The sort of thing you could watch while having breakfast or your morning cuppa.

Please email the General Secretary if you would like to contribute [davidb@methodist.org.nz](mailto:davidb@methodist.org.nz)



## PART 2: PRESBYTERS AND CHURCH LEADERS

### Services of Worship

It is our intention to offer online services of worship every Sunday. We hope these will be available in the languages that our people use at worship.

Rather than every congregation trying to set up their own online service, we encourage a roster for each Synod.

More details will be published on Thursday 26 March.

Links will be on the Facebook page, Methodist website and sent via eMessages.

[http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring\\_for\\_our\\_people/coronavirus\\_2019\\_-\\_advice](http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring_for_our_people/coronavirus_2019_-_advice)

### Funerals

During the time of shutdown it will not be possible to conduct funerals as we might in ordinary times. It is even more critical however that careful pastoral care is given.

While a large event is not possible, it may be possible to have a small service with immediate family only which is livestreamed, or maybe followed by a memorial service when we are able to gather again.

**Specific advice must be sought from the Funeral Director.**

A family may choose to delay any service. Private prayers should still be offered.

We are seeking advice from the Government as to the protocol if mass funerals become necessary.

This is a new shared reality for us all. Please share your ideas and resources to enrich us all.

### Easter Communion

We have asked Rev. David Poultney, Convenor of Faith and Order to consider preparing resources for Easter Sunday using the 'Love Feast' as a tangible way of drawing us together in online community.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agape\\_feast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agape_feast)

Online workshop services will also be offered for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

### Stationing Processes

For Presbyters and parishes anticipating stationing changes for 2021, it will not be possible to have face to face meetings during April.

Your synod superintendent will be in contact to advise if a video meeting might be possible. An assessment of time frames will be made in May to ascertain if any adjustments of due dates needs to be made.

### Stipends

Stipend payments will be made as usual on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April or as otherwise arranged.

Any changes needs to be notified by Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April to [monthlypayroll@methodist.org.nz](mailto:monthlypayroll@methodist.org.nz) .

The invoices will be issued and direct debits will be made on 8<sup>th</sup> April.

The Church has contingency plans in the event that there are insufficient funds available in a parish account to ensure all stipend payments will be made. Contact will be made by the Connexional Office to those parishes in this situation.

### Support Staff Salary and Wages

Payment of salaries and wages will continue as scheduled unless we are advised otherwise. All changes to be notified by 4<sup>th</sup> April to the usual email addresses.

We believe support staff who are unable to work will be eligible for the Government top-up. Local employers will need to make the application, but the Board of Administration is here to help.

We will send through details of how to apply when they are available, in a separate document.

## Offerings and Donation Receipts

Members may wish to consider making their offering by automatic payment to enable their support to their parish to continue even as they are prevented from attending worship.

We note that donation receipts need to be issued as soon as practicable after 31st March. If there may be a difficulty in your Parish issuing receipts please contact the General Secretary [davidb@methodist.org.nz](mailto:davidb@methodist.org.nz).

## Practice kindness

This is a time of stress for all of us and some of us cope better than others.

Be kind with your words and actions.

Consider what other people are going through too. This resource has some great ideas

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/covid-19/top-tips-to-get-through/>

**And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other,  
just as God also in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:32**

## Using Office 365

Microsoft provides the Church with free access to its cloud based Office solution, Office 365. It is available to all Parishes and Synods but accounts need to be set up by the IT personnel at the Connexional Office..

With Office 365, members of the Church or employees of the Church are able to use the web based applications of Outlook, Work, Excel, PowerPoint, etc. to continue with their work. Multiple users can log onto Office 365 and share the same documents stored on OneDrive.

**All you need is internet access, a computer and a login.**

Further technology options (Xero, internet banking) from the Connexional Office are available at [http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring\\_for\\_our\\_people/coronavirus\\_2019 - advice](http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring_for_our_people/coronavirus_2019_-_advice)

If this is of interest please contact either:

Peter van Hout <a href="mailto:peterhv@methodist.org.nz">peterhv@methodist.org.nz</a>	021 977 230
Bruce Johnston <a href="mailto:brucej@methodist.org.nz">brucej@methodist.org.nz</a>	027 445 6995
Sarah Andrews <a href="mailto:saraha@methodist.org.nz">saraha@methodist.org.nz</a>	021 182 3425

## Connexional Travel

All travel should be cancelled during lockdown. Check in with your booking agent for credits or refunds.

Air New Zealand is giving full credits for travel up to 31 May 2020. This needs to be requested immediately.

## Travel Insurance

There is only medical and emergency medical transportation cover during a pandemic.

Further information is available from

<http://www.allianzpartners.co.nz/press-and-media/travel-advisories/>

We suggest travellers talk to their travel agents about what cancellation fees will be incurred if travelling during this time where the government have issued a non-essential travel edict and then look to lodge a claim as insurers are treating these on a case by case basis.

Please address any further insurance queries to Wendy Anderson [wendya@methodist.org.nz](mailto:wendya@methodist.org.nz).

## Insurance – Business Interruption

There is no cover for Business Interruption for the Covid-19 as there is an infection disease exclusion under the policy. This exclusion is common and standard across property policies in New Zealand.

This extract from the policy is for your reference:

### INFECTIOUS DISEASE

This Policy does not insure loss, damage, interruption or inference in connection with any infectious animal or human disease and/or any pest management plan under the Biosecurity Act 1993 or any subsequent amending legislation or replacement Act.

Please address any further insurance queries to Wendy Anderson [wendya@methodist.org.nz](mailto:wendya@methodist.org.nz).

## Contact Details

### Connexional Office

The Board of Administration will continue to offer services during the lock down.

You may contact staff by email or telephone. Staff phones will have an automatic redirect to their working at home number. To contact staff phone 0800 266 639 and follow the auto prompts.

Contact details are available [here](#)

<http://www.methodist.org.nz/files/docs/mcnz%20admin%20office/adminstration/administration%20division%20as%20at%2003%20sept%202019.pdf>

### Other Church Roles

<b>President</b>	Setaita Taumoepeau Veikune	<a href="mailto:president@methodist.org.nz">president@methodist.org.nz</a>	021 570 384
<b>Vice President</b>	Nicola Teague Grundy	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@methodist.org.nz">vicepresident@methodist.org.nz</a>	021 274 1957
<b>Te Taha Māori</b>	Sharon Tito (office)	<a href="mailto:Share.tetahamaori@gmail.com">Share.tetahamaori@gmail.com</a>	021 828 860
<b>Mission Resourcing</b>	Siosifa Pole	<a href="mailto:siosifa@missionresourcing.org.nz">siosifa@missionresourcing.org.nz</a>	021 526 803
<b>Mission Resourcing</b>	John Murray	<a href="mailto:john@missionresourcing.org.nz">john@missionresourcing.org.nz</a>	027 577 821
<b>Mission and Ecumenical</b>	Prince Devanandan	<a href="mailto:princd@methodist.org.nz">princd@methodist.org.nz</a>	021 168 6279
<b>Trinity College</b>	Nasili Vakauta	<a href="mailto:nvakauta@trinitycollege.ac.nz">nvakauta@trinitycollege.ac.nz</a>	021 570 387

## For Synod and Te Taha Māori Leadership

To share with Presbyters and Senior Lay Leaders.

We are living in the midst of an unprecedented situation. This is a time which calls for great imagination and greater care.

### Pastoral Letters

We ask all Synod Superintendents to send a pastoral letter to the Presbyters and parishes in their Synod.

We also ask Parish Presbyters to send a pastoral letter to their people.

A pastoral letter from the President and Vice President is enclosed with this mail out. A pastoral letter from Te Taha Māori will be shared on Wednesday 25 March 2020.

### Sharing/Catch up

We encourage a weekly catch up with Presbyters and Senior Leaders in the Synod.

### Tips for Facebook and Recorded Worship

A helpful list are attached. The important take-away is: keeping it real is better than having it totally polished.

### Supervision

It is important that Supervision be maintained during this time. This period of lockdown is not a holiday.

It may be the most important opportunity we have to share caring pastoral ministry. We can only do this if we look after ourselves.

We are aware that some Presbyters have compromised immune systems. Please take special care of yourselves and as a team of leaders across the church, try and share the load.

### Sharing the load

It is possible that some of our parishes or families maybe significantly affected. Please advise your Synod Superintendent or the General Secretary if this is the case.

### Contact details

The Methodist website has the contact details for Presbyters and parishes.

[http://www.methodist.org.nz/find\\_us](http://www.methodist.org.nz/find_us)