



The Conference of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas
La Conferencia de la Iglesia Metodista en el Caribe y las Americas
La Conférence de l'Eglise Méthodiste dans la Caraïbe et les Amériques
De Conferentie van de Methodiste Kerk en het Caribisch Gebied, Midden en Zuid Amerika

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Dear Sisters and brothers in Christ:

A blessed Lenten Season to you!

The fast and world-wide spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a concern for us in the Caribbean and the Americas. With reports that it has reached the Caribbean and Latin America we need to become even more vigilant and engage in practices that will protect us and those with whom we interact from this respiratory virus.

The MCCA urges persons to cooperate with the authorities and heed the recommendations of your respective Ministries of Health (MoH), and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and World Health Organization (WHO).

These recommendations implore persons to:

- Maintain basic hand and respiratory hygiene, frequently clean hands using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub if your hands are not visibly dirty.
- Avoid close contact, when possible, with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue. Throw tissue away immediately and wash hands.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever.
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early, and share previous travel history with your health care provider.
- Stay home if you are feeling sick.
- As far as possible avoid crowded areas.

Until the authorities say otherwise, we should continue to meet for worship and other activities. However, be mindful of the need to limit practices that

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will give rise to physical interactions such as handshakes, touching and hugging. The Passing of the Peace can be done verbally.

In addition, efforts should be made to sensitize persons to practice simple everyday preventive actions such as ensuring that water and soap are provided for handwashing and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Encourage persons to be aware of their health status and if necessary self-quarantine.

We trust in God to see us through this difficult patch and during this Lenten Season seek to draw near to Jesus who **“went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people”** Matthew 4:23.

We pray for people across the world who have been affected by COVID-19: For those who are afflicted, those whose relatives and friends have been afflicted, those who have lost loved ones, for those who are healthy yet are being restricted out of “an abundance of caution”. For those who are struggling to make ends meet and experiencing financial hardships because of economic fallouts.

Many persons are fearful and anxious, but we remind ourselves that “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.” **Psalm 46: 1-3**

Sisters and brothers let us continue to look to God in this time of crisis and cling to the promise that God will not leave us or forsake us.

Yours sincerely,

Everald Galbraith

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Facing the task Unfinished: Imagine

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