

SASK SYNOD NEWS

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SWINE FLU INFORMATION

On Wednesday, the World Health Organization raised its global pandemic alert level to five — its second highest level — meaning a pandemic is imminent and countries must finalize preparations to deal with the outbreak of swine flu.

This is not a time to panic. However with the good sense and intelligence that God has given us, we are wise to prepare for the possibility of a significant disruption in the lives of our churches and communities. With the aid of resources available from a variety of websites, this is a good time to put plans in place that will help you address primary concerns surrounding worship practices and put together a back-up leadership team should primary leaders become incapacitated due to illness. Since the church is a gathering place and seeks to be a community of comfort and healing, it is important that congregations take deliberate steps toward preparing for the *possibility* of an influenza pandemic. Here are some sources to consider:

After the SARS outbreak, the Eastern Synod developed policies and guidelines for synod office, congregations and conferences and encouraged congregations to develop similar policies to guide community life during an outbreak or pandemic. Saskatchewan Synod rostered ministers and congregational leaders are encouraged to view the Eastern Synod policies and guidelines at www.easternsynod.org

ELCIC Group Services has posted information and links regarding swine influenza, the impact of this outbreak and measures that can be taken to prevent the spread of infection. To view the article and related links, please go to www.elcicgsi.ca

Review information on reliable websites such as www.shepell.fgi (ELCIC Employee Assistance Program), www.fightflu.ca (Government of Canada), www.cdc.gov/swineflu (Centres for Disease Control), and www.who.int/en (World Health Organization).

As we experience this pending health emergency, pray regularly for health care givers, medical researchers and officials so that calm and competency may prevail. I pray that God will keep you, your family and loved ones, and members of our congregations and communities in good health so that we can be a blessing to others.

Many blessings to you as we continue to celebrate the 50 days of this blessed Easter season!

Grace and peace,
Bishop Cindy

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The Saskatchewan Synod is one of 5 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. It has 35,514 baptized members in 133 congregations in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

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