



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

First Presidency Statement **Ongoing Response to COVID-19 Virus** 13 March 2020

After considering many factors, the First Presidency advises congregations and mission centers to suspend church gatherings such as worship services, meals, conferences, funerals, and other group activities in response to the projected spread of the COVID-19 virus. The anticipated duration of this recommended suspension of group activities is three weeks.

The Presidency bases its recommendation on the following principles:

1. The church's response should emphasize **preventative**, rather than reactive, strategies to keep the COVID-19 virus from spreading as quickly as many infection-rate models indicate.
2. A primary **prevention** strategy is "social distancing. According to the USA Centers for Disease Control, that involves "remaining out of congregant settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance" between people whenever possible. Social distancing is especially challenging for people in church settings.
3. The church's response should emphasize "protecting the most vulnerable" (Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a) in our congregations, cities, towns, and villages. This includes our senior members and those already affected by other health challenges.

All World Church sites now are closed to the public, and World Church-sponsored events are canceled through at least Monday, 13 April 2020. This includes the Temple Complex, Peace Pavilion, and all historic sites. International Headquarters staff will continue to support operations while the sites are closed to the public. Reopening the sites to the public will continue to be evaluated as the situation unfolds.

This situation is fluid. Church-related COVID-19 updates will be provided at www.CofChrist.org/covid-19.

In addition to church-initiated preventative measures and recommendations, we are upholding all nations and congregations impacted by this pandemic in prayerful concern, love, and hope. Our faith assures us that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1–2 NRSV).

The First Presidency