March 18, 2020

Dear Faith Based Community Leaders in Burt, Cuming, Stanton and Madison Counties:

In light of the expanding COVID-19 pandemic, and the recommendations released on March 16th, 2020 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Governor Ricketts, our department is urging the faith-based community in Burt, Cuming, Stanton and Madison Counties to come together and do their part in flattening the curve.

- We urge all services (including Lenten and Easter), confirmation classes, group meetings, fundraisers, gatherings, social activities, bible study, group meals, and any other activity that requires members to be physically present to be limited to no more than ten people.
- No more than 10 people in attendance at any funerals, weddings, baptisms, confirmations and other celebrations, and among those 10 people, social distancing (ten feet apart) of those attending must be maintained. Streaming and technology-based services are encouraged.
- Clergy in-person visits to shut-ins (the elderly and those with underlying health issues) should be discontinued.
- The religious facility should adopt a strict strategy for disinfecting common areas – such as the restrooms, church office, door knobs, foyers/narthex, sanctuary, etc. This should be done at least daily.
- Any staff member and/or volunteer (Clergy, church secretary, or others) reporting to work should have a symptom screen prior to being admitted. This includes temperature and assessment of cough and/or shortness of breath. Any staff or congregation member, 60 years or older, are encouraged not to participate. Please note, that with any respiratory virus, viral shedding can occur before a person becomes symptomatic or realizes that he/she is sick. Any staff member and/or volunteer that feels sick to any extent before arriving, or begins to feel sick after already arriving, must immediately leave the premises.
- The doors should be locked to visitors. However, if the church decides to designate a period of time for the public to come into the church to participate in private prayer, that is acceptable, as long as the ten person maximum is abided by at all times. All staff/volunteers/parishioners reporting to church, for any reason, should be ordered to wash their hands upon arrival at the religious center/church, and before leaving the religious center/church.
- Essential meetings should take place by way of technology (Zoom Meeting, Adobe Connect, or Go-To-Meeting as examples) to limit exposure to others.
- Finally, of utmost importance, we ask for your assistance in supporting and encouraging strict social distancing during this time. This would include encouraging members to stay home, especially the elderly and those with underlying health issues, and limit time with people from outside of their household. Keeping interactions to a bare minimum will help in disrupting the exposure period and periods of contagiousness.

Thank you for your cooperation and support in proactively assisting us in keeping our most vulnerable population safe. Should you have any questions, please call our office at 402-529-2233.

Sincerely,

Gina Uhing, Health Director
Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department