

Ebola Checklist for Pastors and Other Church Leaders

Ebola precautionary tips for the church

- During worship, instead of shaking hands, hugging or passing the peace, nod heads, bow toward one another or cross hands over your heart as a sign of peace.
- Make sure presiding clergy and Communion servers thoroughly wash hands. Only presiding clergy and communion servers should handle the bread and cup.
- During worship, ask servers to break off the bread, dip the pieces in the cup and carefully place them upon partakers' opened hands, not touching the hands.
- Thoroughly wash and sanitize all communionware (plates, cups, chalices) before using them at any subsequent service.
- For baptisms, use clean, fresh water and sprinkle the water over the head of the person being baptized. Dispose of the water immediately.
- During rituals that traditionally involve laying on of hands, offer a blessing and the sign of the cross without touching.
- After worship, clean hymnals, Bibles, pews and other surfaces with disinfectant to avoid spreading germs.
- Learn about Ebola containment measures, including burial of the dead. Promptly and safely, bury people who have died.
- Make parishioners aware of the risks of contagion from practices such as traditional washing of the dead.
- Hold burial or cremation soon after death at a site near the place of death with limits placed on the size of any gathering.
- After each use, disinfect any vehicles used to transport bodies to burial or cremation sites.

Ebola precautionary tips for the home and the community

- Amid Ebola crisis, go to a health facility if you have diarrhea, fever, headache, rash, red eyes, sore throat, vomiting or intense weakness.
- Avoid close physical contact with Ebola patients. Wear gloves and protective equipment when caring for sick family members.— Ad., WHO
- Avoid contact with bats and nonhuman primates or blood, fluids and raw meat prepared from these animals.
- Avoid public gatherings. Stay at home. Heed emergency health messages through texting and other media. — Ad., International Red Cross
- Discard any object contaminated with bodily fluids. Used latex gloves and hypodermic needles may spread the disease.
- Do not stigmatize, ostracize or insult health-care volunteers who risk their lives for the sake of others. Show respect and gratitude.
- During the Ebola crisis, avoid direct contact with wounds, bodily fluids and dead bodies. Avoid injections or body cuts inflicted traditionally.

- Ebola is deadly. It spreads quickly and kills! Learn how to protect yourself, your family and your community from the virus.
- Ebola is real. It kills with little warning. Please adhere to health messages to safeguard your family. Let us be in prayer. God is with us.
- Ebola is spread by contact with the bodily fluids of infected people or animals. Always remember: prevention is one of the best ways to contain the virus.
- If an Ebola patient dies, avoid direct contact with the body.
- If you are exposed to surfaces covered in infected bat droppings, do not touch your eyes or mouth. Wash your hands immediately.
- If you have Ebola symptoms, stay where you are, call your health worker and cooperate with him or her. They know best how to help you.
- Isolate Ebola patients from other sick people.
- Ignore rumors such as “Simply saying ‘Ebola’ aloud transmits the disease.” That is false!
- In Ebola crisis, handle animals with gloves and protective clothing. Thoroughly cook animal products (blood, meat) before eating. – Ad. WHO
- In the Ebola crisis, don't eat bush meat, especially monkeys or bats. Avoid fruit partly eaten by animals. Don't play with monkeys or baboons.
- Never eat food on which bats have drooled or defecated.
- Practice careful hygiene.
- Rather than disinfecting with lime, which has a limited effect on pathogens, use chlorine solution or other medical disinfectants.–Ad., WHO
- Recognize that the infection may be transmitted if an infected person’s blood or vomit gets into person’s eyes, nose or mouth.
- Reduce risk of human-to-human transmission of Ebola through direct contact with infected patients, especially by bodily fluids. – Ad., WHO
- Reduce wildlife-to-human transmission of Ebola via infected fruit bats/monkeys/apes and consumption of their raw meat. – Ad., WHO
- Remind health-care workers to wear protective clothing and use infection-control measures.
- The outbreak is not a hopeless situation. Ebola is treatable. More patients survive if they get proper care early. (WHO)
- To neutralize the virus, if soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Train health-care workers to use and decontaminate protective gear correctly.
- Wash hands thoroughly after visiting Ebola-infected patients in the hospital, as well as after caring for patients at home. – Ad., WHO
- Wash your hands with soap. Cook your food properly. Tell others about Ebola. For help or questions, call your health facility.
- Wear gloves and protective equipment when caring for sick family members. The infection may be transmitted by an infected person’s blood or vomit.
- Wear protective clothing when handling animals. Thoroughly cook animal products (blood and meat) before eating.

- Where possible, in the case of a medical epidemic, leave body handling to specialist medical staff. – Ad., WHO
- You can only get Ebola from touching bodily fluids of a person with Ebola or from exposure to contaminated objects. – Ad., USAID

Sources: Centers for Disease Control, General Board of Discipleship/The Upper Room, International Red Cross, Mayo Clinic, UNICEF, USAid, World Health Organization

Even when Ebola threatens us every day, Jesus is present to us in all ways. Our sufferings in this world are great, but these cannot compare with the glory that is waiting for us in heaven.

Words of comfort from the Bible

- “Be happy in your hope, stand your ground when you’re in trouble, and devote yourselves to prayer.” – Romans 12:12, CEB
- “Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest.” – Matthew 11:27, CEB
- “Don’t be alarmed or terrified, because the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” – Joshua 1:9b, CEB
- “Don’t be anxious about anything; rather bring up all of your requests to God ..., along with giving thanks.” – Philippians 4:6, CEB
- “Don’t fear, because I am with you; don’t be afraid, for I am your God.” – Isaiah 41:10a, CEB
- “Don’t fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.” Isaiah 43:1b, CEB
- “Don’t hesitate to be enthusiastic – be on fire in the Spirit as you serve the Lord!” – Romans 12:11, CEB
- “Even if our bodies are breaking down on the outside, the person we are on the inside is being renewed every day.” – 2 Corinthians 4:16b, CEB
- “Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no danger because you are with me.” – Psalm 23:4a, CEB
- “Faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don’t see.” – Hebrews 11:1, CEB
- “Finally, let’s draw near to the throne of favor with confidence so that we can receive mercy and find grace when we need help.” – Hebrews 4:16, CEB
- “Happy are the people who grieve, because they will be made glad.” – Matthew 5:4, CEB
- “He will shelter me in his own dwelling during troubling times; ... he will set me up high, safe on a rock.” – Psalm 27:5, CEB
- “Hope in God! Because I will again give him thanks, my saving presence and my God.” – Psalm 42:11b, CEB
- “I am with you now, I will protect you everywhere you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you.” – Genesis 28:15a, CEB
- “I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord ... plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.” –Jeremiah 29:11, CEB

- “I will strengthen you, I will surely help you; I will hold you with my righteous strong hand.” – Isaiah 41:10b, CEB
- “In God, whose word I praise. I trust in God; I won’t be afraid. What can mere flesh do to me?” – Psalm 56:4, CEB
- “Keep on praying and guard your prayers with thanksgiving.” – Colossians 4:2, CEB
- “Like a shepherd, God will tend the flock; he will gather lambs in his arms and lift them onto his lap.” – Isaiah 40:11a, CEB
- “Lord, hear my prayer! Let my cry reach you! Don’t hide your face from me in my time of trouble! Listen to me! Answer me quickly!” – Psalm 102:1-2a, CEB
- “Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things.” – 1 Corinthians 13:7, CEB
- “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” – Romans 15:13, CEB
- “My grace is enough for you, because power is made perfect in weakness.” – 2 Corinthians 12:9b, CEB
- “No one will be able to stand up against you during your lifetime. I will be with you. ... I won’t desert you or leave you.” Joshua 1:5, CEB
- “Rejoice Always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, CEB
- “Stay awake, stand firm in your faith, be brave, be strong. Everything should be done in love.” – 1 Corinthians 16:13-14, CEB
- “The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord ... grant you peace.” – Numbers 6:24-26, CEB
- “The Lord is my light and my salvation. Should I fear anyone? The Lord is a fortress protecting my life. Should I be frightened of anything?” – Psalm 27:1, CEB
- “The Lord replied, ‘I’ll go myself, and I’ll help you.’” – Exodus 33:14b, CEB
- “Then the peace of God that exceeds all understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus.” – Philippians 4:7, CEB
- “There’s a season for everything and a time for every matter under the heavens ... a time for mourning and a time for dancing.” – Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4b, CEB
- “This hope doesn’t put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” – Romans 5:5a, CEB
- “We are experiencing all kinds of trouble, but we aren’t crushed. We are confused, but aren’t depressed.” – 2 Corinthians 4:8, CEB
- “We are harassed, but we aren’t abandoned. We are knocked down, but we aren’t knocked out.” – 2 Corinthians 4:9, CEB
- “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; when through the rivers, they won’t sweep over you.” – Isaiah 43:2a, CEB
- “When you walk through the fire, you won’t be scorched and flame won’t burn you. I am the Lord your God ... your savior.” – Isaiah 43:2b-3a, CEB



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For more information, go to www.umc.org/ebola

Words of hope from The Upper Room

- As we face uncertainty, pain, illness and other trials, remember: Jesus Christ, bigger than any problem, is holding us tightly. – Adapted, The Upper Room)
- God of hope, when we face seemingly impossible situations, remind us that your love makes all things POSSIBLE. – Ad., The Upper Room
- Healing comes through faith in the power of Jesus Christ to overcome death. Because Christ lives, we live also. – Ad., The Upper Room
- Jesus Christ – immense, powerful and full of love – hold us strongly and surely as we go through the raging storms of life.
- Loving God, may each of us feel your love in the compassion of others. We are not alone. Help us be present in love. – Ad., The Upper Room

Brief prayers, adapted from The Upper Room

- God of compassion, with you and your children, we weep. Comfort all who have no one to weep for them. Amen.
- God, our healer, teach us to focus on hope. Prepare us for eternal glory, even when fear and disease overcome us. Amen.
- Loving God, bless those who give their lives caring for others. Grant them strength and comfort in their ministry. Amen.
- Loving God, give us a spirit of openness to embrace your children. Help us to care for them and show your love. Amen.
- Loving God, help us never to lose heart. We know that the same God who raised Jesus Christ will raise us up, no matter what afflictions we go through. Amen.
- Loving God, let us be your heart reaching out to those who grieve. Let us be your hands assisting those who still live. Amen.
- Loving God, thank you for Christ's healing love. Help us to respond with Christ's compassion that leads us to see, listen and touch. Amen.
- Loving God, you are our strength. Remind us that you are always present and never overlook our suffering. Respond when we cry. Amen.
- Loving God, you call us to act with loving kindness and without judgment. Help us to show the love of Christ in all we do. Amen.
- Loving God, you stand with the least and the lost. Enter all the places that need your comforting and healing presence. Amen.
- Loving God, your presence gives us light and hope in the darkest nights. You are with us always. Thank you! Amen.

Bishops' messages

- As we struggle with Ebola, I pray that faith – not fear – will be our response. This is not the time for blame or denial. It is a time to respond in love.
- Ebola doesn't discriminate. It strikes Christian and Muslim, sinner and saint, educated and illiterate, rich and poor. God, please help.
- God surrounds us with love and protection to free us. Disease will be no more. Happiness will be our portion.
- If government can uphold us and we all work together, we will, by God's grace, conquer Ebola. Let us respond as people of faith.
- In time of crisis – and always – find comfort in the last words of Methodism's founder, John Wesley. "The best of all is God is with us!"
- Let us use this difficult time of sorrow and grief to pray together. Be assured that God will give us hope and comfort.
- One person who dies of Ebola is one too many. Do not allow fear of Ebola to motivate bloodshed. God calls us to bring healing and hope.
- Our compassionate, merciful God remains our protector in troubling times. Be assured that God's loving arms enfold you.
- Our God of comfort, we weep with deep sorrow and despair. Free us with your strength and the assurance that you are with us, no matter what.
- This is about life! This is about Sierra Leoneans dying. It transcends politics. It is about our future. Let peace rule in our hearts.

Messages for the 3-day Lockdown in Sierra Leone

- Community health workers are trained to help us all and are essential to beating Ebola. Please cooperate with them during the lockdown.
- Ensure that you have adequate food and supplies for the 3-day lockdown. Cooperate with health workers who may come to your door.
- If a community health worker or government representative comes to your door during the lockdown, please cooperate. They are there to help.