

Emergency Planning Response Lethbridge Mennonite Church

In response to the plan submitted to Church Council and approved by the Congregation during its Annual Meeting in January 2010, the Pandemic Planning Committee met every month or two, opened our meetings with a devotion related to pandemic planning and with prayer, and addressed the recommendations as follows.

Recommendation	Action
Introduce the topic of pandemic preparation to church council and congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pastor preached one sermon on Pandemic Planning • We had one children’s story on Pandemic Planning during worship time • All Sunday School Classes (adult and youth) studied “Beyond our Fear – Following Jesus in Times of Crisis” in January-February 2010 • (Additional Feed-back on “Beyond our Fears” is presented in a separate document.)
Provide pandemic preparation information to congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We ordered emergency preparedness guides from “Public Safety Canada” and distributed them in church mailboxes. • We also ordered more specialized guides, such as an emergency preparedness guide for people with disabilities / special needs for deacons and others interested.
Inform local Emergency Preparedness Group about our plans and be in touch with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We indicated to local health authorities and city planners that our congregation and its members would be willing to participate in community initiatives in times of emergency.
Review policies and procedures on church cleanliness and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We ordered sanitizer pumps and gloves for the church; • We ordered posters on proper washing of hands that were posted in our bathrooms; • We researched janitorial duty checklists (websites, other local churches), and are in the process of revising our own janitorial duty check-list. We are aware that any additional duty for the janitor will result in increased costs (time and resources) • (Our church had worked with public health officers in the past to ensure that food handling and cleaning dishes were done according to public safety procedures.)
Have a master document of all emergency preparedness documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pastor has a binder with all the information in her office.
Update / upgrade contact lists, to include cell-phone numbers and e-mail addresses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our church updates the official directory once a year in the Spring. • The pastor keeps new updates on mailing addresses in her church directory. • For this year’s update, we gave people a choice to indicate whether they wanted the church to keep emergency information on file. We consulted with other local churches to find out what they were doing, and decided to offer the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People who were willing to give contact information would be contacted by deacons ○ They could indicate two emergency contacts (preferably

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ one family member and one friend, with phone numbers for each of them) ○ They could also indicate a particular need or concern they may have. ● The list will be kept in a locked cabinet, to protect people's privacy.
Review terms of reference for existing church groups (such as deacons, church council, serving groups...) and possibly add tasks that may occur in times of emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We did not make any changes to terms of reference.
Make and maintain a list of more vulnerable persons in the church (people without immediate families, with disabilities, without transportation...) who may require additional support from church in case of emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The committee felt that such a list would be very difficult to create and to maintain. We were also concerned about privacy issues. ● Rather, as a result of the "Beyond our Fears" material, we decided to focus on the need to care for our church neighbours on an on-going basis. ● During a church retreat, we mapped church households on a city and a regional map. ● We also organized a progressive supper "Who is your church neighbour?" where church members who lived in the same neighbourhoods were encouraged to visit each other's homes and learn to know each other better (See additional material). About 40 percent of the households in the church participated in the event, and more households anticipate meeting privately at a later date, using the same format.
Make and maintain a list of church members with special gifts / resources who could be accessed if a special need arises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The committee felt that such a list would be very difficult to create and to maintain. We were also concerned about privacy issues. ● Our congregation is small enough that members know each other and each other's special gifts.
Discuss how church would function in case of a local emergency: staffing issues, changes in worship...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In addition to having printed versions of the sermon available on Sunday mornings, the sermons are also recorded and made available through the church website.
Coordination of future pandemic preparedness activities: Council could appoint a specific group to continue the work, or ask the existing group to carry on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The pandemic planning committee is looking at dismantling, once all the initial tasks have been achieved, and after ensuring that on-going activities will be taken on by other church entities (such as the maintenance committee, the deacons and Church Council.)

Pandemic Planning Committee
Lethbridge Mennonite Church
May 2010