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Guidance to Ministers on Holy Communion at Alert Level 2

New Zealand is now at Alert Level 2. This means that Gatherings of 100 people are now permitted. The focus for Communion guidance now moves to appropriate practices taking into account hygiene protocols.

Minister's Responsibility

The WMCNZ Constitution is clear that it is the Local Church Minister's responsibility to make arrangements for Communion to be celebrated regularly in the local church:

356. *The Minister shall be responsible for equipping and empowering congregation members for their role in the body of Christ by ensuring that:*

(2) The sacraments are administered;

361. *The Minister will:*

(1) Ensure that the sacrament of Holy Communion is administered at least monthly

NB the monthly requirement should be considered a minimum, rather than a target, with some of our churches celebrating Communion 1-2 times per week. Wesley himself, received the sacrament at least weekly most of his life and daily during the eight days after Easter and the twelve days of Christmas.

Recommended Practices

There will be a range of options for local churches to consider. The following recommended practices can be modified to fit your local context:

1. Communion should be prepared with good hygiene practices including washing of hands and/or wearing of gloves;
2. The celebrant must practice good hand hygiene and/or wear gloves;

3. Personal contact with the elements should be limited to the person preparing or serving the elements and the recipient i.e. bread should be pre-cut and distributed; A common cup should not be used. Intinction should be limited.

Local Church Examples

EXAMPLE 1 - Individualised servings of bread and juice are provided using separate plates and communion cups and distributed in a safe way (Commoners)

EXAMPLE 2 - Celebrant distributes communion (breaks and dips bread) individually with proper hygiene (Redoubt North)

EXAMPLE 3 - Household level communion distribution occurs in church service with pre-cut bread and intinction. (cession|community)

The pastors of these churches will be able to explain their practice in more detail if required.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Rev Brett Jones.

Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand

4 June 2020

