

Churches Fighting An Invisible Enemy:

By: Lisa Gonzalez, Director of Loss Control

Loss Control at Insurance Board has spent an exorbitant amount of time dedicated to offering resources to support our churches during COVID-19. It pains me to think that for all the hours I spent staring into a computer screen late at night researching, reading, writing, meeting via video calls, and producing resources that could help save lives, I could not save my own family. Two weeks ago, my beautiful cousins (the youngest of which is only 23) had to say goodbye to their only living parent, my uncle, via video call. It was every bit as tragic and sad as one would imagine it; experiencing it first-hand was nothing short of surreal. I watched countless people sharing stories on how COVID-19 wreaked havoc on their families and congregations, but for all the empathy, compassion, tears, and prayers said for those people, there are no words for facing it personally.

We write factual articles on how to stay safe, mitigate loss, employ proper planning, and remind churches to pay attention to deferred maintenance issues; I debated on whether to share this story as I wasn't sure it had a place in The Steward. As I sat down to write this article, the intention was to do it in the third person and altogether remove myself from any of it. Some may feel my job is supposed to be cut and dry; I work for an insurance firm. I'm here to report the facts and offer helpful recommendations and help churches mitigate loss. When I agreed to write this piece, my uncle was healthy and alive.

"I prayed on this and asked God for guidance. How does the Director of Loss Control keep passion and emotion out of an article about a virus responsible for the death of her healthy 66-year-old uncle..."

I prayed on this and asked God for guidance. How does the Director of Loss Control keep passion and emotion out of an article about a virus responsible for the death of her healthy 66-year-old uncle who died within four days after displaying symptoms of COVID-19? The answer is, she can't; she needs to share this tragic story in hopes that people understand the concern surrounding this virus is very real. It is not the flu, it is something

none of us has ever experienced in our lives, and we should proceed with great caution. I encourage churches to always consider their most vulnerable populations, and take great care to follow CDC, state, and local recommendations.

Most recently, the [National Academy of Sciences](#) published a study stating, "Silent transmission alone can sustain outbreaks even if all symptomatic cases are immediately isolated." The authors of the study wrote, "Our findings highlight the urgent need to scale up testing of suspected cases without symptoms, as noted in [revised guidelines](#) by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention." Asymptomatic means a person is infected but will not become ill, and pre-symptomatic means a person will go on to develop symptoms but has not shown them yet. It is still possible for someone to spread the virus to others without knowing it in both cases. Many of us have a natural tendency to think that because someone is not exhibiting symptoms and "looks" healthy, that everything is fine. This is simply not the case.



INSURANCE BOARD
Partners in Protection

Our Battle Against COVID-19

The good news is that our participants have persevered and served as the guiding light in a sea of darkness for so many across the country! They have demonstrated sheer resilience and contributed to their communities in such meaningful ways, without putting others at risk. We applaud their ingenuity and ability to pivot and push themselves beyond the boundaries of their comfort zones. They have explored new ways to minister, to worship, and to enjoy fellowship. We have faith they will continue to be even more creative and demonstrate their tenacity and grit to serve God, and we want to celebrate them in a special fall/winter issue to tell their stories (see pg 11).

Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, have encouraged us to remember that church is beyond the four walls where we worship; God lives within His people's hearts, and they carry the church with them wherever they go. During these most unprecedented times, it is challenging for our congregants not to worship and enjoy fellowship in the ways they have been accustomed.

During a video released on May 1, Rev. Teresa Hord Owens, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) reminds us through scripture, "Love is patient, and love does not insist on its own way" (1 Corinthians: 13) She inspires us to "have the strength to love from a distance." She asks us to consider what lessons we may have learned during this time and identify what gifts have emerged through our own families and communities. These are the messages of hope that will feed and sustain our denominations until we can safely gather again. We encourage you to reach out to us and share the creative ways you have continued to minister during these challenging times. At Insurance Board, we are committed to serving as a channel of hope and faith during COVID-19 and beyond.

As of July 26, there have been

4,163,892

COVID-19 cases in the US.

According to the CDC

HOME

SAFE



INSURANCE BOARD
Partners in Protection