



THE **wesleyan** CHURCH

**Education & Clergy  
Development**

## **Leading as a Non-Anxious Presence**

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- Give yourself permission to be a person, and have your own fears and anxieties.
- Keep perspective.
  - God is with us, no matter what happens.
  - View difficulties as challenges, rather than threats.
  - Focus on what is in your control.
  - Remind yourself that this is time limited...the worst of the Coronavirus is likely to pass in several weeks.
  - While this situation is quite serious, there are worse ongoing epidemics in the U.S. that we can also do something about – obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.
  - We are privileged to live in the U.S. with enormous resources – other parts of the world are not as fortunate.
  - When there are unknowns, our brains tend to fill in the unknown with the worst case scenario. Resist the tendency to catastrophize, and focus on the known facts.
  - Reflect on a healthy theology of suffering.
- We cannot grieve what we have not named. Acknowledge loss and grief for yourself and others, including anticipatory grief, and help create meaning and rituals to process through the grief – practice lament.
- Make sure to take regular breaks away from crisis response and completely focus on something else.
- Exercise every day for at least 20 minutes, at least at a moderate level of intensity.
- Spend some time outside everyday.
- Practice a relaxation exercise regularly, such as deep breathing. For example, the 4-7-8 exercise. Breathe in through your nose to slow count of four...hold the breath for a slow count of 7...exhale through your mouth for a slow count of 8...repeat 4 times.
- Avoid excessive caffeine and alcohol use.
- Limit the amount of news and social media you consume. Too much exposure can exacerbate anxiety and create vicarious trauma.
- Make sure to get as much sleep as possible, and return to an average of 7-9 hours per night as soon as possible.
- Recognize the anxiety triggers in your own life that may be activated by this crisis, and invite God into your fears.
- Reach out for support frequently from family, close personal friends, and clergy peers.
- Ask for help and delegate some pastoral care. Use this as a community building opportunity.