

# *The First Parish Church United*

48 Main Street  
Westford, Massachusetts 01886-2506

Rev. Kathleen Hepler  
*Interim Minister*



3/12/2020

To the Members and Friends of First Parish United,

As a result of the spread of the Corona Virus, it is normal to feel somewhat frightened. There is good news!

The steps we can take to protect ourselves and to help with the containment of the virus are relatively simple. Someone said that it is a matter of staying away, staying connected, and staying calm! This letter is to inform you of the decisions of The Prudential Committee in response to the virus.

As your elected officials we met and discussed all of the available information. Our goal became the protection of our own members, and participation in containing the virus in the wider community. Pru Com voted unanimously on the following:

- There will be ***no in-person Sunday Worship Services for the rest of March starting 3/15.***
- There will be a “virtual worship” time in an electronic streamed format each Sunday at 10:30. Directions on how to access this will be emailed soon. For those without computers, please call Kathleen Wooten, the Office Administrator, if you would like readings mailed to you.
- Any non-essential smaller church meetings are cancelled for the rest of this month. If you feel your group must meet, please book only the Gathering Room as we are prepared to keep it sanitized regularly. In that event we will have supplies in the room for you to do a surface clean when your meeting ends, as well as hand sanitizer. Another option is to have a Zoom or Skype meeting, of course.
- Starting Monday 3/16 there won't be rentals or other outside groups in the building.
- For the time being Rev. Hepler and Kathleen Wooten, Office Manager, will keep their regular office hours.
- Other staff will mostly work remotely, although we are still working this out.
- Rev. Hepler is always available for urgent matters as usual. Her phone # is 732-245-3749.

Affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ

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- If you are in one of the groups more vulnerable to the virus and you need help, please call the church office or Rev. Hepler to let them know. The Caring Committee and others are ready to help.

**Here are some ways for all of us to stay calm and weather the virus:**

- Stay away from information overwhelm. Pick a few news sources that are reliable like the World Health Organization or the Center for Disease Control.
- Find creative ways to stay connected with others. Physical distancing helps protect everyone, but we also need one another! Make phone calls, play games on-line, connect on Face Book in positive ways, nurture your sense of humor, make a regular time to go out and howl at the moon with good friends...you get the idea.
- Take care of yourself. Get plenty of rest, drink lots of water, eat nutritious food (even as comfort food has its place too!), exercise, sing, dance....whatever keeps you well. Wash your hands while singing or praying!
- Be on-line for the Sunday Virtual Service, 10:30 AM (Instructions to be sent)
- In these situations, there are many conversations about what is too reactive, and what is not reactive enough! There is no way to read the future. We made our decisions based on available official recommendations and facts, a desire to protect the congregation, and the moral obligation we feel to participate in containing the virus in the wider community.

If you want to ask any questions please call any of us below or Kathleen Wooten in the Church Office.

***Stay away, stay connected, and stay calm.***

***Reach out if you need help.***

***Take care of yourself.***

Blessings to All,

Angela Harkness, Co-Chair of The Prudential Committee

Amy Burk, Co-Chair of The Prudential Committee

Rev. Hepler, Interim Minister

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