



Milford United Methodist Church

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

These are unusual times that we are living in. As I'm sure you know all too well by now, the circumstances surrounding the spread of the Corona Virus have been developing very quickly. In just this last week or so, we have moved from the point where we were all asked to pay close attention to hygiene, maintain a sanitary environment, and for vulnerable populations to remain close to home to the point where institutions and gathering places of all kinds have been called upon to play a role in helping to stem the spread. Yesterday the Center for Disease Control and the President made a strong recommendation that the public limit gatherings to less than 10 and Governor Sununu has issued an order prohibiting public gatherings of over 50 people. Unavoidably, these preventative measures are going to affect the ways that we gather and worship for a little while. We are going to have to walk through this together and take it step by step as we wait and see how the situation develops, but for the time being I am putting the following on hold for two weeks at which point we'll revisit the situation: Sunday worship and Sunday School, Wednesday Potlucks, Wednesday morning coffee with the pastor, Lamplighters, and White Tops. I am also asking committees to meet remotely.

Friends, a two-week pause in gathering puts us right up against Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter—perhaps the most difficult time of the year to find ourselves in this situation as a church. We love to gather, we need to gather, church *is* gathering, and Easter is our most joyous celebration. Let me assure you, the tulips will still rise from the ground and so will the daffodils and the lilies. Easter will come and it will still give us pause over the triumph of life in the resurrection of Jesus no matter how it comes. Our current circumstances provide us a window through which to recall that on that first Easter morning the dawn rose on a very difficult season of life for the disciples and I will continue to preach through my current sermon series exploring what it is to weather seasons of life like this. The ministry of our church will continue, our work continues, and our worship continues even as we look for new ways to carry it out. We are going to be using our church Facebook page as a platform to gather virtually and we will keep you up to date on new developments through email from the church office and the announcement page on the website, which you can also access through our Milford UMC app. We ask you to remain connected with us and continue your giving to the life and mission of our church either electronically through Pushpay (on the church website as well as the app) or through mailing in giving envelopes. We intend to keep on moving forward, to stay connected, and to look for the mission opportunities that our new circumstances might present. This is an opportunity for us all to bring our church into our homes and gather and pray together as families even as we unite in spirit as a church and we will look forward all the more to the time when we can physically gather together again. May the Holy Spirit of God hold you up in this time, give you strength for this day's new challenges, and grant you the peace that passes all understanding.

In Christ's holy love,

Pastor John