



**HOPE
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

Rev. Santana Poor, Pastor

March 16, 2020

To Our Beloved Hope UCC Community,

I have been following both state and county directives and information as well as consulting with clergy colleagues on both sides of the river. Our church leadership has been having conversations I never imagined we would need. As pastor of Hope UCC, my first priority is the safety and health – spiritual, physical, and emotional – of our beloved community.

The most vulnerable to the Covid19 virus are those over 60 years of age and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes. Like so many congregations, we have many in our congregation who are older and therefore more vulnerable. The recommended steps to decrease the spread are to avoid close contact with others: this social distance step is critical. Avoiding large gatherings and keeping 6 feet between each other will help decrease the spread to our elders. This means in church we will have to change our ways of doing things.

Therefore, in consultation with Hope UCC's lay leadership, we have made decisions to help keep people healthy and 'flatten the curve' of the spread of this virus.

1. In-person worship will be suspended through Sunday, March 29 and we will make decisions regarding the following Sundays based on guidance from state and federal resources. Church spaces will continue to be disinfected throughout this suspension of in-person worship

2. We are working on alternatives to in-person worship and ways to stay connected as a faith community during this time. Starting this week we will send home a weekly worship packet with materials for you to use at home. We are also working on ways to make worship available electronically through Facebook Live and/or Zoom Meeting technology. We will keep you updated on these methods. PLEASE CHECK YOUR EMAIL AND VOICEMAIL FOR MORE INFORMATION FROM CHURCH. Also, please continue to check Hope UCC's website, our social media, call the office, or call another member or friend for updates.

3. Hope UCC will have a team that will be continuing to call and check in on you each week. If you need ANYTHING: groceries, pharmacy pick up, assistance, or just someone to talk to – let us know. We will check in every week, but please don't wait for the call if you have a need – call us!!

4. All in-person meetings, programs, events, and classes will be cancelled until further notice. As with worship, we will work on ways to offer these programs and hold meetings via technology.

5. **MOST IMPORTANTLY:** Please remember that 'social distancing' is not social isolation. I will continue to be available for pastoral care in whatever form that requires. Please do not hesitate to contact me via phone, email, or at the church office. I am here for you. We are here for each other. Call each other. Check in with each other. This is how we take care of the Body of Christ.

Please remember and hold on tightly to the faith you have and the promise of love and hope God has made known to us in Jesus Christ.

With love and hope,

Pastor Santana