

## WEEKDAY WORDS

Reaching out to you from Homer Congregational United Church of Christ

### **Special Statement to our Family of Faith Monday, March 16, 2020**

#### **DECISIONS MADE REGARDING COVID-19 VIRUS**

Dear family and friends of Homer Congregational United Church of Christ,

On Sunday morning at 9:30, the Deacons and Trustees met to consider all that is happening with regard to the Corona virus. The following recommendation was adopted by consensus:

**Beginning Monday, March 16, all church activities at Homer Congregational United Church of Christ are *suspended* until Easter Sunday (April 12). This decision can be re-evaluated to shorten or to extend the suspension, pending news regarding the virus in this community.**

We are currently developing alternative ways for us to stay connected to one another – from a distance.

- What will we do about worship?  
As some of you have experienced, we have live-streamed our service on Face Book (FB). This holds potential; however, we also know that not everyone is on FB. Let me say this – we *will* supply a means of worship for these next weeks. We will not lose our connection to God OR to one another. It is just going to be *different* for a time. Stay tuned and keep praying!
- What about meetings?  
Even as I write, Pastor Gary is arranging our ZOOM account. He and I have both experienced meetings via ZOOM. This will allow each of us, using computers or tablets or phones, to connect from our homes. During a Zoom meeting, you can see and hear the people even though you are in different physical locations. Stay tuned and keep praying!
- What about our kids?  
As you know, schools are closing down from Wednesday on. We anticipate reaching out to our children and youth in various ways. I can imagine that those of you with children will receive devotions and Faith Formation based activity sheets. For your further information, the Homer Nursery School follows the schedule of the elementary school. Before the children leave tomorrow, Lisa Clark will send them with a packet of activities so they can continue their learning. Stay tuned and keep praying!
- What about the bills?  
Yes...what about the bills?! They will continue to come in and we need to continue paying them. We hope you will either drop off or mail your offering. We are also working to establish a “donate” button on our FB page, which will enable you to send your gifts online. Stay tuned and keep praying!

- What will happen to the Homer Food Pantry?  
We have been in touch with Tiny and our Outreach Team will deliver the food we have already collected sometime this week. We believe that the Food Pantry will be important during this time of economic difficulty. Keep an eye on Weekday Words as we continue to collect food. Stay tuned and keep praying!
- Will the office be open? What if there is an emergency?  
We have been intentional about the word “suspended” vs. closed.
  - **Our office is still open** Monday – Thursday from 9 – noon. You may certainly drop by, as needed. So that you can communicate with one another, this morning Anne updated and printed additional church directories. She’ll have them in the office and/or there will be some copies right by the back door. Help yourself.
  - **Your pastors are here!** We will be in our offices, responding to the needs of our congregation in the best ways possible. If you are feeling anxious or in need of some help, feel free to make an appointment. We will be glad to visit with you here at church; we will simply refrain from handshakes or hugs. For the time being, and for everyone’s safety, we will not be visiting in your homes – except by phone (or maybe even Zoom!)
  - We are in good hands. Buzz Harrington is doing all that he can do to keep the building clean and sanitized. Door knobs are being sprayed with disinfectant. Tables will be wiped down before and after use. Most activities are suspended, but whenever anything does occur in the building, rest assured that Buzz is doing extra cleaning to keep all of us safe and healthy.

You are not alone! If you are part of the vulnerable population for this virus, there are folks who have offered to deliver groceries, pick up & deliver medications or help in any way possible – that is also “safe”. Call the office if you have such a need.

In closing, let me offer these scriptures texts, which were used yesterday in worship.

Isaiah 43:1-3a      God’s assurance that WHEN things happen, we are not alone.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8      There is even “at time to refrain from embracing”!

Matthew 22:34-40      Read that 2<sup>nd</sup>-greatest commandment. Distance is an expression of love these days.

Psalms 23      God knows our needs.

Dear ones – when you read the passage from Isaiah, you will read the important words, “Do not be afraid, I am with you.” They are God’s words. They are also the words coming to you from the Deacons and Trustees and from the staff of HCC. Whenever you feel isolated, pick up the phone and call someone who might also be feeling isolated. During these times we need to be intentional about checking on one another and offering hope and care.

We will get through this chapter together. And God will see us through.

Stay tuned and keep praying!

*Pastor Vicki*