

My dear UUFF family;

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads, there are growing concerns about larger gatherings, especially for our elders or those with health concerns. We have an obligation to be a community that takes care of each other, and keeps each other safe. For that reason, we are suspending in-person Sunday services beginning March 22nd. This Sunday, March 15th, will be our final in-person Sunday service for the time being. Your leadership and myself will revisit this decision regularly, and will bring back in-person Sunday services when the time is right.

But Sunday services are not “cancelled.” Beginning on March 22nd we will begin weekly on-line services, using Zoom. We will send out information on how to log in as soon as we have everything set up. I know that there is no substitute for being together in person, and that there can be something anxiety-producing about the thought of using new technology for something spiritual. I hear you. I miss your physical presence already. At the same time, many Unitarian Universalist communities have already been using this format for some time, and we’ll be adapting their best practices to find a way that’s right for us. These on-line spaces will be all about connection: reconnecting to each other, and to a sense of something greater and deeper than this difficult moment. Please bare with us as we experiment with this new format, leaning in with faithful risk and trust in each other.

Debi Keller-Wood, our Director of Family Ministries, is preparing resources for families to engage in, including spiritual practices that keep us connected. Please let her or me know if you would like these resources; they are for everyone. The sermons in these on-line services will be available afterwards, and can be emailed to you or even physically mailed if necessary.

I encourage all committees, task forces, and fellowship groups to consider moving to an online format for meetings, or to some other format that you choose. When our Zoom account is up and running, it will be available for your group to use. Kit, our Office Administrator, will be in charge of scheduling these meetings just as she does meetings in our building. Choose what is right for you. Please let me know what your team or group decides to do.

Our Caring Committee, Lay Ministry Team, and myself will make sure no one is forgotten or left behind. If you would like to volunteer to call persons who may need to hear a friendly voice, please email me.

If you are feeling lonely, scared, or isolated, please reach out. You are loved and we care about you.

This is a trying time. A lot is uncertain. Please follow the recommended practices of hand washing, not touching your face, social distancing, and staying home if you’re sick. I recommend identifying 2 or 3 news sources to focus on, rather than trying to follow everything. Personally, I recommend making one of those sources the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), and having one of the other 2 be a local news source.

Our weekly Sandwich Road Menu will include regular updates as well.

If you or a loved one are sick, especially with COVID-19, please let me know. This information will be kept confidential, but will help us in better taking care of each other.

I close with these words by Wayne Arnason, which are on my heart a lot these days:

“Take courage friends. The way is often hard, the path is never clear, and the stakes are very high. Take courage. For deep down, there is another truth: you are not alone.”

Yours in love always;

Rev. David

Pronouns: “He” / “His”

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