

WHITEWATER AREA REGIONAL MINISTRY of The United Methodist Church

145 S. Prairie Street
Whitewater WI 53190
262.473.2131

I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth ... The Lord will keep you from all evil; God will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore. – Ps 121:1-2, 7-8

March 18, 2020

Dearest WARM Ones:

What extraordinary times we are facing; a time of anxiety and worry, a time of fear and uncertainty, a time of isolation and seclusion. We pray for you and your well-being, and pray that God is speaking to you with voices of love and support during this challenging time.

We are always stronger together, but there are times – such as these – when we are most faithful when we care for one another from a distance. This is hard, we know, but we do not want anyone to be at risk or compromised in any way. At the direction of Governor Tony Evers, the WI Department of Health Services issued an emergency order banning gatherings of 10 persons or more in order to slow the spread of the coronavirus. And because Walworth County has just confirmed its first case of the virus, we take very seriously the strong encouragement to voluntarily separate and keep our distance from one another.

Please understand that ALL regular worship services for the WARM churches will be cancelled until further notice. It is our hope that we are back together again, face-to-face, on Palm Sunday, April 5. But please know that we might be distancing from one another longer than that. We must be prepared for an unprecedented and perhaps extended period of closure.

As your pastors, we are learning new and different ways of being in contact with you, offering worship and other ways of affirmation and encouragement during this time. Please be patient as we learn and adapt.

You are encouraged to worship with us online on Sundays. We will post worship videos at normal worship times for your church. (FUMC will post at 10am.)

- **FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** has both a website (www.fumcwhitewater.org) and a Facebook page. You can also watch FUMC worship on the local Whitewater Community TV Channel 990.
- **LAGRANGE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** has both a website (www.warmlagrangeumc.com) and a Facebook page.
- **BETHEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** has a Facebook page.
- **RICHMOND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** is restructuring both their website and Facebook. Keep an eye on these developments. Call Pastor Jeanne for more information.

Even though the WARM churches will not be meeting in person on Sundays, we still have financial expenses to address. Please keep current with your financial stewardship. The work of the Church becomes even more critical during this time.

- **First United Methodist Church** has electronic ways of giving on both the website and the Facebook page. You can also mail your offering to 145 S. Prairie Street, Whitewater WI, 53190. This might be a

good time to consider becoming an electronic giver if you are not already. Contact Jayne in the church office to set it up.

- Please use the same address above if you are mailing an offering for **LaGrange United Methodist Church**.
- **Bethel United Methodist Church** offerings can be mailed to W5110 Cty Rd A, Elkhorn WI, 53121.
- **Richmond United Methodist Church** offerings can be mailed to Elaine Kellerher, N5461 Hwy 89, Delavan WI, 53115.

The WARM church staff continues to work each day to keep current on this evolving and changing virus situation. Our staff is also reaching out in new ways to stay in touch with seniors, families, children and youth, and those who are ill or hospitalized. The WARM church office continues to be staffed but we have limited people traffic passing through. Contact information for the pastors is listed below. WARM Business Manager, Jayne Haskey, can be reached at businessoffice@fumcwhitewater.org. WARM church secretary, Gina McManaway, can be reached at churchoffice@fumcwhitewater.org.

If you or someone you know is struggling with a hardship during this time, please let the WARM pastors know. We are working to meet the needs of folks spiritually, physically, emotionally and financially.

Thank you for the ways you are modeling Christ and being the body of Christ to others during this uncertain time. Using the telephone or computer to stay in touch with family, neighbors and especially our senior population that might be more isolated can be a real gift. **Please check in on one another**. Also, in these days of fear and panic, hoarding supplies only causes more anxiety. If you have extra, please share and help others.

Cancellations and disruptions of schedules can be a gift. Please give yourself time to breath, to rest, to pray, to eat well, to get some exercise, to read a book, to connect to an online devotion, to start a gratitude journal, to write a letter to an old friend, to study the scripture, to learn a new craft, to wash your hands ... often!

Be gentle with yourself and others. Everyone is doing the best they can.

Although difficult, "Be anxious for nothing" for we go by the grace of our loving God.

Blessings,

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