



UCC Westerly's Plan for WORSHIPPING AT HOME During the Covid-19 Outbreak 2020

As I am sure you are by now aware, the leadership of our church, in consultation with me, has agreed that we need to suspend worship through the end of March in order to keep all of you safe and to do our part to “flatten the curve” of infection. This was not an easy decision to make nor is it one made lightly. But, we truly believe this is the best way for us to model our belief that God calls us to be a beacon of hope and light for our community in all situations, especially this one. Strange as it may seem, in this instance, that means not coming together for worship.

So, here is our plan moving forward for the next three Sundays – March 15, 22, 29.

- Each week, hopefully on Friday, I will provide simple, easy to use resources for you to spend some time on Sunday morning in prayer and reflection, continuing our consideration of the Questions of Jesus – our theme for Lent this year. This will include prayers, a Scripture reading, a message created for your reflection and suggestions for accessing music on Youtube.com or your favorite online music source. The Sabbath Circles weekly lesson will also be available as usual.
- Using these worship resources as a guide, you are invited to find a quiet place to rest and renew in God's presence at 9:30am on Sunday – our usual meeting time. For those who would like to so engage, I will be streaming live on Facebook beginning at approximately 9:45am for about 15 minutes. Kindly note this in particular is all new to me so fingers crossed that it works!
- We all know that worship is just as much about the personal connections as it is about worship and that is what cannot be duplicated in any form. **HOWEVER**, we can try something to celebrate this part of Sunday morning. Let me explain.
 - In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Matthew 18:20
Note that “gathered” can mean anything that pulls people together, including phone calls.

- Here's what I am inviting each of you to do:
 - 1) Create a worship space in your home wherever you would like. Wherever you are sitting, set a place for Jesus. If you are having tea, set a mug at an empty spot. If you are just sitting in your bedroom or family room or wherever, designate some kind of space for Jesus. Remind yourself it's Jesus' spot by lighting a small candle.
 - 2) Using the attached phone list of active members of our church, just choose anyone from that list, pick up the phone and give them a call. Note: With you and the other person and Jesus, you have your "two or three!" As the call begins, introduce yourself and say, "Good morning! You are my "Jesus call" today! If necessary, explain what that means, and then just chat for a minute or two. Together say the Lord's Prayer or the prayer for the day which I include in the worship resources I send out. Talk about the Scripture or the message noting any questions you have. Then, ask each other whom you would like to pray for and then just do it: "Dear God, we pray this morning for _____ and _____, etc. Bless and be with them, and with all our friends and family this day. Amen." Then, before hanging up, check in with the other person to see how they are feeling, if they need anything and if they would like me (Pastor Ruth) to give them a call. Say goodbye and you're done!! On to the rest of Sunday...
 - 3) I'm sure you can see that you might be someone else's "Jesus call" one Sunday. Great! It would still be wonderful if, when you finish that call, you still make your own Jesus call. I wonder how many Jesus calls we can make on a Sunday morning?
 - 4) If you'd like to, when you have finished your Jesus' call, just let me know who you called and how it went. Obviously, it would be especially helpful to know if they asked for a call from me!
- **Please remember that the church's operating expenses will not be suspended so kindly remember to mail in your offering and pledge payments to the church office sometime during the time period worship is suspended!** Mail to: UCC Westerly, ATTN: Jenny Brummund, 9 Castle Hill Road, Pawcatuck, CT 06379. Note that Carol and I will still be in the office for our usual hours during the week.

Thank you and God Bless.

Remember I am always here to talk with by phone, text, email or even Facebook messaging and chat.

That will never be suspended!

In Christ, Rev. Ruth