



Middletown
United Methodist Church

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Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14.26)

Dear Friends,

It is my hope and prayer that each of you in a very real way experience the presence of the Living God this evening.

We have entered into uncertain times. Words such as outbreak and pandemic are being used. These are serious times. Times to put distance between ourselves and huddle close with our family. Times to pray a little more and spend some more time in the Bible. Times to pick up the phone and call your neighbor to check on them. Times to be real! Our God is a real God who walks on water during the storm (Matthew 14)! I know that God is with each and every one of us, in a very real way, right where you are as you read this letter.

I am writing this evening pertaining to the Coronavirus. Things are serious. More people are being diagnosed on a daily basis right here in Monmouth County. As a result, the following decisions have been made:

Sunday, March 15, 2020 there will be one combined worship celebration at 10 am.

When it comes to participation in worship and or other church activities please stay home if you are:

- Feeling sick
- pregnant
- have a preexisting medical condition
- 65 years of age or older

Our worship celebrations are always live streamed via Facebook, including this Sunday.

You DO NOT have to have a Facebook account to watch the livestream!

CLICK THIS BUTTON TO WATCH OUR LIVESTREAM VIDEOS!

- Please note, If you are prompted to make a Facebook account and do not want to, select "**NOT NOW**" at the bottom of the prompt. You will be able to see the page once you close that box.
- You can access the livestream on your phone, desktop computer, laptop, or tablet.
- If you do not see our videos immediately on the Facebook page, scroll further down the page.

There will be no Sunday School or children's nursery this Sunday. This Sunday when we gather for worship please note that there will be no hymnals, Bibles, prayer cards, or friendship pads in the pews. All the words for our songs will be on the video monitors. All the information that we need will be in the bulletin. Also there will be no hand shaking or hugging.



When you enter the sanctuary, you will be asked to stop at the hand sanitizer station. Please use this station before and after being in worship. You will be encouraged to spread out throughout the sanctuary. Right now, physical distance, even between our sisters and brothers in Christ, is encouraged for everyone's health. The offering on Sunday will not be passed through the pews. Instead the offering plates will be at the rear of the sanctuary. Please note that some of our Middletown UMC family are already using electronic giving for their regular tithes and offerings. This might be a good time for your family to also take advantage of this secure giving opportunity.

Click this button to give securely online!

On Sunday afternoon the Worship Design Team will be meeting electronically at 1 pm to discuss future worship opportunities. If you have any suggestions or new creative items 'for such a time as this' please share with Brad or myself. Also on Sunday at 2pm, the Leadership Team will be meeting electronically to discuss the whole ministry of the Middletown United

Methodist Church and how we the Body of Jesus can be Jesus for our neighbors during this time of need. Anyone with suggestions is encouraged to reach out to Nanci or myself. Please be in prayer for our church leaders as we are discerning God's direction. Please also be in prayer for our medical community, first responders, military personnel, and community, state, and government leaders.

The beginning of next week, I will be sending another letter that will give more details pertaining to our plans going forward. Please continue to focus on the words of the authorities and not social media. Here are some valuable websites. The church office is open. I am always available to talk. Please do not hesitate to reach out via phone, email, or text. We might just need to talk now over the phone instead of over coffee.



This Sunday we are shifting our worship theme. We will stay with the theme "Listen to Him" that we have been on since Lent. The focus will shift to phrase that Jesus said pertaining to peace, comfort and assurance. This Sunday we will be looking at John 14.26 "Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." Jesus said these powerful, comforting, real words just before His arrest!

I look forward to worshipping with you this Sunday at 10 am either in person or via the livestream. Be safe my friends.

Peace and God's blessings.
In Christ,

*Rev. Derrick L. Doherty
Pastor Middletown United Methodist Church*