



**The Reverend Kathleen T. Cunliffe**  
Senior Minister  
The First Congregational Church of Wallingford  
23 South Main Street  
Wallingford, CT 06092  
(203) 265-1691  
revkathycunliffe@gmail.com

March 21, 2020

Greetings all,

*“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”*  
– *Galatians 6:2*

First of all, I want to personally thank you for your understanding this past week as we had to make decisions in the best interest of all concerned. As a result, this challenge has completely altered the way that we currently interact and live with one another. This is sure to be a period of time when things are ever evolving and unfolding. I thank you for your patience as we explore alternatives for worship and seek new ways to keep informed in the midst of this health crisis.

I want to share with you some of the news from the church and some of the things we've been up to this week:

**I will be offering a LIVE stream worship option via the church's main Facebook page at 10:00am on Sundays.** If you have a facebook account, you can enter **@firstchurchwallingford** in the search field. If you do not have a facebook account, you can enter **www.facebook.com/firstchurchwallingford/** to get to the church's main Facebook page where you will be able to access the live feed.

**At 12:00 noon, Jessie DePonte will offer a live "Sunday School Story Time"** for the younger members of the congregation. This will also be live on our main Facebook page.

Plan that **there will be a live worship option taking place at 10:00am each Sunday** and a **"Sunday School Story Time" at 12:00 noon** while in-person worship is suspended. In the weeks ahead we will likely be experimenting with different online options. We will keep you informed and aware of what you

will need to know. I hope to also be able to offer some additional online fellowship and learning opportunities as I learn new technologies to be able to share with you.

In anticipation that there might come a time when we should not be working from the office, Lisa and I have spent time focusing upon gathering the information that would be most important for us to have while away from the church at home. Lisa is planning to continue to work from the office unless there comes a time when that is no longer advisable. She has been an essential fixture maintaining the ability for us to communicate and keeping aware of what is happening in the building. When we have been in the office together, we have been maintaining more than safe distance and have been staggering our time so that we are mostly there alone.

We will now have available to us off site, hard copy and digital forms of our entire database membership list, the list of our homebound and those who are in nursing facilities, a list of our outside contractors and vendors who care for our building, contact info for those who worship with us at Ashlar Village, and a list of our Board and Committee chairs and members.

We are now able to not only retrieve messages on our office voice mail remotely. but messages will also ring to my cell phone after hours. I remind you of our new emergency phone line to reach me after hours in the event of a Pastoral Emergency. The number is: **203-626-2354**.

Lisa has been removing cancelled and postponed events from the church calendar. We will continue to do so as events warrant. We anticipate the time to come when we will be able to resume activities and plans as normal. For now it is best to prepare for that eventuality, however, keep in mind that there are likely cancellations and postponements yet to come. This will likely include the usual events of Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter. We will keep in touch with specific decisions and advisories. We recommend holding off on large purchases relative to these potential events.

If you are aware of someone who does not use email or any other form of electronic communication, please let us know so that we can add them to our list. We are trying to be in communication with everyone as much as possible.

I want to recommend that if you participated in one of our small groups in the fall, please be in touch with one another and check in to see how folks are doing. Also, if you are on a board or committee, or if you participate in events like the Rummage Sale or the Church Fair, please be in touch with those you know to let them know you are thinking of them. If you learn of someone who is in need, please let us know. If you know of someone who is living alone during this isolation, please keep in touch with them and let us know if they need a pastoral call.

The isolation that is occurring with this health crisis means that we should be intentional about finding alternative ways to keep in touch and support one another.

At one time, we thought we might be able to open the sanctuary and offer it in limited ways as a place of refuge and quiet meditation. However, because of recent developments, we will not be doing so at this time.

I have been in contact with our Director of Health for the Town of Wallingford, Stephen Civitelli. We have spoken about ways that the church might be of help. He is aware of my contact info and if needed will certainly call upon us as things unfold.

We have placed signs on the doors of the church buildings discouraging folks from entering and giving instructions of how to disinfect before departing if they must enter.

All in person worship, church groups, events, and activities remain suspended until further notice. Thank you for your understanding.

Please follow all the recommendations being issued by authorities so that you will remain safe and well.

Know that you continue to be in my thoughts and prayers in these days to come.

Grace and Peace to you,

***Pastor Kathy***