

# The Good News

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*like us on Facebook at First Congregational United Church of Christ-Great Falls, MT*

## 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT MARCH 22, 2020



### IMPORTANT NOTICE

On-site worship and all church activities are suspended through the end of April, including Sunday School. Please read the expanded notice in this newsletter for more information.

Office hours may be abbreviated in the coming weeks. Before heading over, please call ahead of time to see that we are open. Thank you.

In this season of Lent, teach us again the source of true power for life. Feed us with spiritual food that will fill us with energy, courage, freedom, and authority that we may be your agents of healing in the world. Amen.

(by Walter Brueggemann, “A Way Other Than Our Own: Devotions for Lent”)

### *Keeping in Touch in the Time of Separation*

Worship experiences will be provided through **Zoom**, **Facebook**, and **YouTube**.  
Instructions for connecting:

**Zoom** can be utilized with a computer that is equipped with a camera and a microphone or by telephone. Connecting to Zoom with a computer: Go to [zoom.us](https://zoom.us) and follow the instructions to download the free app. To log onto a meeting, open the app and enter the meeting number and click join. Helpful videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIkCmbvAHQQ&pbjreload=10>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s76QHshQnY&pbjreload=10>

To connect to Zoom with your phone, dial in on the telephone number that is provided for the meeting you want to join and follow the prompts. You'll need both the call in phone number and the meeting number. Rev. Lynne will be hosting a Zoom Log-in “Party” this coming Saturday, March 21 from 11 – noon. Use this as a time to practice logging in and becoming comfortable with Zoom. The meeting number for this party is: 680 459 1294. The phone number to connect via phone is: 301 715 8592.

### **Facebook**

If you are not on Facebook you can join by going to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and go through the prompts to sign up. There are several settings that are helpful to know about for privacy and notifications. You may want to watch this to help go through all this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjbRBd-HbYY>

We have a **YouTube channel**! Simply go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search for First Congregational UCC Great Falls. You will need to scroll down to find us because there's lots of First Congregational UCC's.



Dear First Congregational United Church of Christ Family and Friends,

Recently, the Church Council made the difficult decision to change the way we “do” church for the next 6 weeks (through the month of April). In order to protect the most vulnerable among us and do our part to help slow or stop the spread of COVID19 (corona virus), we will not be gathering at 2900 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. South for worship or most other events. Instead we will be offering worship through the internet. We will provide print resources for home worship for those who do not have access to the technology or choose not to use it. Watch for more details by the end of the week.

We know that communication is important so we’re going to be doing some new things:

- **Weekly newsletters** until we can meet back together in person.
- Offering “**How’s it going?**” zoom “gatherings.” The first one will be this coming Sunday, **March 22 at 2 pm** then weekly on **Wednesdays at 6 pm beginning March 25<sup>th</sup>**. Watch your email for an invitation to each of the weekly gatherings. You will be able to join through a web link or on your phone. We recommend that you download the free app ahead of time at <https://zoom.us/>. If you need help let Rev. Lynne know.
- Janet Koostra and Ariana Mays will be providing some **connections for the kids**. Online Sunday school resources available.
- A **Care Connection Network** will be established. We will be identifying a team of individuals who will contact groups of members on a weekly basis. If you would like to be a member of this Care Connection team, let Rev. Lynne or Holly know by next Monday.
- Boards chairs will determine their meeting needs.

We still have expenses that will need to be covered including paying all staff according to budget. Please keep your pledges and giving up to date. Over the next six weeks, two of our newsletters will include a return envelope for you to use to mail in your giving. Others ways that you can keep your giving up to date is to have your financial institution set up automatic Bill Pay or use the donate button on the church’s new website that will be rolled out later this week ([www.greatfallsucc.org](http://www.greatfallsucc.org)).

Some members (but will welcome more) have made themselves available to bring necessities to those who cannot (or should not) get out. Let Rev. Lynne know if you could use some help or would like to extend the help. We have also contacted West Elementary School to let them know we are here to help if they need it. We’ve been informed that they are okay at this time but will let us know if that changes.

You are encouraged to stay informed about COVID19 from reliable sources. Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/> and Montana Department of Health and Human Services <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusmt> websites provide accurate updates as well as very helpful information that will help keep you healthy and safe.

The Church Council will continue to be informed about the progress of COVID 19 in order to evaluate how and when we can forward. If things get better sooner than expected, we may be able to go back to normal sooner than May 5<sup>th</sup>. However, if the spread of COVID 19 continues to increase and pose health challenges, we will consider extending our alternative way of being church into May. This is something new to all of us. We’ve not been this way before. With the comfort of the love of God to help keep us calm, we’ll do our best to keep everything in perspective and make the best decisions for the well-being of our congregation, community and church.

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## CONGO CARE BOXES

Due to the situation of being advised to stay home to limit the spread of this virus, we will not be collecting goodies for the “young people” boxes. **Instead we are asking you to write a check to the church in the amount to want to give with a memo saying Congo Care Boxes.** Your Christian Service board will then purchase gift cards for about 15 young people. The cost will be much less than mailing the boxes. Thank you Suzan Seery for originally mentioning this and Janet Koostra for suggesting it again. We plan to mail the envelopes the 29<sup>th</sup> of March so please donate by the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you for your participation,  
Christian Service Ministries

**The Easter basket offering project is postponed.**