

THE EPISTLE

Volume 25 Issue 3

March 26, 2020

Dear Members & Friends of First Church:



Out of care for one another during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we are keeping "social distance." As a result of this, the Church Council has decided to suspend all Worship Services, book and Bible studies until further notice.

I will broadcast an abbreviated Service each Sunday that will be recorded and uploaded to our church's website (www.fairportucc.org) each Monday. All of our Church Boards and Church Council will conduct meetings via conference calls, Zoom, or email.

I encourage you to contact me at any time if you have concerns. I can be reached at: revgregucc@gmail.com; (585) 966-9416 (cell); 585-223-0224 (church).

Easter Sunday is only three weeks away. And it will seem so strange that we will not be gathered as a congregation; however, we will be gathered as the Body of Christ, the Church, the universal family of the Risen Christ.

This year's Easter Gospel is Matthew 28:1-10. Immediately, some phrases seem to leap off the page of this Gospel text, especially in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic. Early in the morning Mary Magdalene and the other Mary go to the tomb. Suddenly, there is a great earthquake as an angel rolls back the stone. The guards who are posted at the tomb become paralyzed with fear. The angel says to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said" (Matthew 28:5-6).

Certainly, the Coronavirus pandemic is an earthshaking event. Millions of people worldwide are paralyzed with social distancing and fear. And yet, the good news of Easter is, "Do not be afraid!" That good news is echoed throughout Bible. "Fear not!" or "Do not be afraid!" appears a total of 365 times in both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. In this time of great crisis and challenge, God's word to us is, "Do not be afraid!"

That does not mean that we should take the pandemic lightly. We should be very concerned, but not worried or frightened. We should be cautious and take the precautions that are advised on the news and social media. But we should not be afraid. Why not? We should not be afraid because the tomb is empty, and we are an Easter people. Jesus has been raised by the power of God.

Recently, a young couple emailed a question to Cardinal Timothy Dolan of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. They asked, "Where is God?" Cardinal Dolan responded that that question should be turned into an assertive statement: "God is here with us!"

Are you looking for Jesus' help to make it through this present time of trouble? Here's the good news: Jesus is no longer in the tomb. Christ Jesus has been raised. The Risen Christ is here with us. The Risen Christ is walking beside us. The Risen Christ says to us, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27).



Alleluia! Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!
Pastor Greg Rupright

April
Worship
Schedule



SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS & MESSAGES

(bold font indicates key scripture text(s) for the Message)

April 5th

Palm Sunday

Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16;

Philippians 2:5-11; **Matthew 21:1-11**

Website www.fairportucc.org Broadcast Message:

“Help Is On the Way”

April 12th

Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 ;

Colossians 3:1-4; **Matthew 28:1-10**

Website www.fairportucc.org Broadcast Message:

“Do Not Be Afraid . . . The Tomb Is Empty!”

April 19th

Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16;

1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

Website www.fairportucc.org Broadcast Message:

“Agents of Easter”

April 26th

Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19;

1 Peter 1:17-23; **Luke 24:13-35**

Website www.fairportucc.org Broadcast Message:

“Sunday Meeting”

CHURCH NEWS

CORONAVIRUS PROCEDURES

Out of care for one another during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we are keeping "social distance." As a result of this the Church Council has decided to suspend all Worship Services, Book & Bible Studies until further notice. The building will be closed to all meetings and activities.

If you need to contact Pastor Greg he can be reached by email at revgregrup.ucc@gmail.com or by phone at (585) 966-9416.

Pastor Greg will record an abbreviated Service each Sunday that will be uploaded to our church's [website \(FairportUCC.org\)](http://FairportUCC.org) each Monday.

All of our Church Boards and Church Council will conduct meetings via conference calls, Zoom, or email.

Vicki will be working from home as much as possible. The best way to reach her is by email at vsherry.ucc@gmail.com. She will be checking the voicemail at the church so, if you call, please leave a message and someone will get back to you. If you have a pastoral emergency call Pastor Greg directly at his phone number above.

We will have an interchurch discussion on John Dorhauer's *Beyond Resistance* that will be held via a Zoom meeting on March 24th & March 31st at 7:00 P.M. If you wish to participate in these Zoom interchurch discussions, please download the Zoom app onto your smartphones and email your email addresses to Pastor Greg. You will be emailed instructions how to participate in these Zoom discussions.



STEWARDSHIP

Dear church Friends and Families,

With Church Services on hold we still need your support. I know I will miss the chance to put in the weekly envelope. Well here's some good news! We have a variety of ways to continue our support.

1. Mail a check to the church covering your regular pledge amount (this is the one I will be using)
2. Use your own bank's online bill-pay feature.
3. Use our web site online giving option. (Note: PayPal charges a fee for this option)
4. Transfer Stock (you may want to let the market bounce back first).



Whatever way you choose to continue your support know that our church family appreciates the ongoing support!

Sincerely
Brad Bowersox
Stewardship Chair

THE ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL PROGRAM MEETING



The Annual Meeting is expected to be held following worship on May 17th. Annual reports will be distributed, and the election of officers and board members will be held.

Each board must submit their Annual Report AND their roster of 2020-2021 board members to the church office by Friday, May 1st.

SUSPENSION OF VOLUNTEERING AT THE SALEM NUTRITION CENTER

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, members of our church are encouraged NOT to volunteer at the Salem Nutrition Center.



A BIG THANK YOU!



A BIG THANK YOU! goes to our Moderator, Doug Strong, for coordinating the Saturday, March 14th volunteer event at the Foodlink Distribution Center. Eighteen members of our congregation spent 3 hours volunteering at FoodLink. We worked on the "first sort" line where donated food and personal supplies are sorted, boxed and placed on pallets for the next step in the

distribution process. Everyone worked really hard, but the work was fun and the time flew by. As we finished our shift everyone agreed it would be fun to return another time. A BIG THANK YOU! also goes to all those who volunteered at this event.

GARDEN COMMITTEE REQUEST

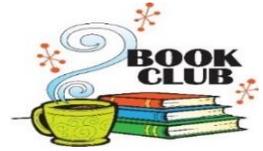
If anyone has a large box, for example, one from an appliance or TV, the Garden Committee could use that when spraying the bench in the Memorial Garden. If you have access to one, please call Carole Kent at 223-0081 or e-mail at Hkent2@rochester.rr.com. I will arrange to store it somewhere, until we get that job done.



If anyone has an interest in joining the Garden Committee, please let Carole know. It is a great committee in these times because we work on our own schedule and have lots of social distancing. It involves weeding, and general cleanup, and watering. If anyone is interested, please contact Carole.

FIRST CHURCH BOOK CLUB

First Church book club meets in Fellowship Hall from **1:00-2:30** on the last Monday of the month. All are welcome to attend. The book selections for this spring are:



April 27	<i>Behold the Dreamers</i> by Imbolo Mbue	Leader- Mary Duncan
May 18*	<i>Carnegie's Maid</i> by Marie Benedict (*Note: 3 rd Monday)	Leader- Paula Boisvert
June 29	Planning meeting for 2020-2021	

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MISSIONS

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



Perinton Congregations Habitat for Humanity sponsors a house every three years. They are sponsoring a new house this year. The house will be built by Flower City Habitat for Humanity. This house will cost \$65,000; \$3000 of which has come from First Congregational UCC. Groundbreaking will be May 16, 2020 at 79 Lime Street in Rochester, NY. The house will be two stories with three bedrooms and 1½ bathrooms. Anyone wishing to volunteer can visit <https://perintonhabitat.org/> after May 1, 2020.

AN INVITATION FROM THE ADVENT HOUSE

We cordially invite you to attend our Twenty-sixth Annual Advent House Dinner Dance and Auction at the Monroe Golf Club on Friday, May 22, 2020 from 6:00 p.m. until midnight. This festive, fun-filled evening is one of our major fundraisers and helps to meet the expenses of providing "no- cost" care to our Residents and their families. Your support would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in attending or making a donation of goods for the auction or placing an advertisement for the booklet, please call Advent House at 223-6112 for further information. Again, we thank you and look forward to seeing you on the 22nd of May.



OUR CHURCH FAMILY

SYMPATHY & CONDOLENCES

The members of First Congregational United Church of Christ, Fairport, NY, extend their heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of Marjorie Brooks, who entered eternal life on February 23, 2020.



Rest eternal grant Marjorie, O God; may light perpetual shine upon her. Amen.

Sympathy cards may be mailed to:

David Brooks
21 Claret Drive
Fairport, NY 14450

Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Hubbard
(Georgia Hubbard is Marjorie's daughter.)
1456 Schlegel Rd.
Webster, NY 14580

LIGHT THE NIGHT



Thank you to Eileen Slocum for keeping the steeple lights burning bright throughout the month of March in memory of Lester Slocum.

Thank you to Sue and Bill Harris for keeping the steeple lights burning bright during the month of April in memory of their parents.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Charlotte Jackson, Fairport Baptist Home
Gerry Hammond
Mary Lou Woodhouse



Next "Epistle" Deadline is
April 16, 2019
(The Third Thursday)



Frequently our church will take photos or videos of members, including children and youth, involved in church related activities. These photos and videos may be used in church-produced publications, on our website or on social media including but not limited to Facebook. If you do not wish to have photos or videos of yourself or your child used, please see Vicki Sherry in the church office to sign an exclusion form.

The Epistle is printed once a month by the First Congregational United Church of Christ, 26 East Church St. Fairport, New York, 14450

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Webpage: fairportucc.org

Church Service Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Church Office Hours: 9:00-3:30
Monday through Friday (Monday-Thursday in July and August)

Rev. Gregory J. Rupright, Pastor
Rev. Dr. John N. Cedarleaf, Pastor Emeritus
Administrative Assistant: Vicki Sherry
Church Moderator: Doug Strong
Organist: Beatrice Benedict
Director of Music Ministries: Heather Watras
Business Administrator: Sue Brooks
Wedding Coordinator: Betty Shamblen
Sunday School Teacher: Yaliza Frank



First Congregational United Church of Christ
26 East Church Street
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