



Vestal United Methodist Church

March 25, 2020 Brief

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A Note from Pastor Mike

I send you greetings in the Spirit and love of Jesus Christ. It is most certainly one of the most challenging times of our lives. Just when we think we have a new routine figured out, something else changes and we go back to square one. Even so, I encourage you to keep the faith. The one unchanging thing in our lives is the grace and presence of God and God's steadfast love.

It is uplifting to hear all the stories of the ways people are coming together to help one another through this crisis. So many of you have volunteered to make phone calls, to write notes, to pray for another, and people are using their creative talents in new ways to share the love of God. I want to commend our wonderful staff team for the many, many hours they have put in to provide our video worship, and to help people stay connected through video meetings, classes, and more.

As I said in my message last Sunday, God is working for good in all circumstances. God is with us through all of this. If you need to talk, if you want someone to pray with you, if you see a need in your household, family, or neighborhood - please call us at the church, or call me or one of our other pastors or staff. We are here for you. We are here for each other.

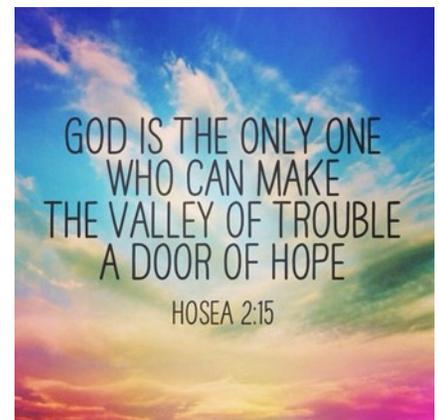
One of the things we are beginning and expanding this week will be Caring Phone Circles. Beginning with people who are in the most need, and gradually expanding our circles to the whole church and even beyond, we are creating small groups of five or six households with one "Care Partner" who will call the people on their list a couple of times each week to ... say hello – see how folks are doing – offer encouragement and word of hope. It is so very important during this time to stay connected, and to know that others care. We all need spiritual support and prayers. If you feel called to be a *Care Partner*, and to serve in this way, please call our church office or send us an email.

God is good – all the time. As we look forward to the warmth and new life of Spring, and as we look forward to celebrating the resurrection of Jesus at Easter, see the ways God is renewing & lifting you up you each day. Our theme for this week's video worship service comes from Jeremiah 29:11 –

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

May your hope and future be grounded in God.
May the peace of God be in your hearts.

Pastor Mike



We ARE the Church

While we can't meet as a church we can still BE the church. Your church staff has several ideas of how we can continue to be the Christ-centered, loving and supportive church family we are all used to. We have implemented some, and have thoughts and ideas of additional ways that you will see in the next couple of weeks.

Here are some things that we have in place to keep connected with you:

Caring for Each Other



As Pastor Mike referred to in his note on the front page, we have established Caring Phone Circles to check on our shut-ins and other people who are home or in care facilities without family or friends to care for them. If you know someone who has spiritual, physical, emotional, social or safety needs please let us know and we'd be happy to contact them.

If you are a prayer warrior and would like to spend time in concentrated prayer for our members and community in need, please contact the church office and we will give you specific people or families in need of prayer.

Praying for Each Other

We want to be sure that we are still receiving your prayer needs. If you, or a loved one, need prayers please contact the church office in one of the following ways:

- ⇒ Call or email us
- ⇒ Go to our website and click on the "Connect" link
- ⇒ Send us a private message on Facebook.



If you are feeling isolated or alone, overwhelmed, scared, concerned or need prayers for your health or other reasons, our Pastors would be happy to speak with you and pray with you. Simply contact Linda via email, or call the church office, and let her know that you'd like to speak with a pastor. She will have one of them call you as soon as possible.

A Prayer for Hope

Lord, help me to hear you saying, "I am your hope" over all the other voices. I'm running to you with both hands stretched out and grabbing on to you. Fill me up with hope and give me a tangible reminder today that hope is an unbreakable spiritual lifeline. In Jesus Name. Amen.



Worshipping with Each Other

If you have online access:

Please note the time change:

Each Sunday beginning at 10:00 a.m. our worship will be streamed on our Facebook page. If you are on social media this is a great way to worship and chat with others.

A video copy of the service will also be available to view on our website, Facebook page and YouTube channel beginning at 11:00 a.m. and will be available throughout the week.

If you do not have online access:

A audio copy of the worship service will be available each Monday at 9:30 a.m. by calling 1-888-475-4499. When prompted for a meeting ID please enter 254-279-662 on your phone's keypad.

Connected with Each Other

During this time a mandatory closures, social distancing and other safety measures we will do our best to continue to keep our Pastors and staff available to you and continue to operate as normally as we possibly can.

How we will communicate with you:

Email updates will be sent out as necessary and phone calls or letters will be sent to those who we do not have email addresses for. This information will also be available on our website.

We will be using our Facebook and Twitter pages (vestalumc) to provide daily communications, words of encouragement, fun activities and more. If you do not have online access we will mail you information as often as we feel necessary to keep you informed.

It is essential that we have the correct contact information for everyone. Please visit our website at www.vestalumc.org and click on "Connect" to update your contact information. This is especially true if you have moved in the past year or have changed your phone number or email address in the past 18 months. If you do not have online access, please call the church office to let us know of any changes in your contact information.

How can you communicate with us:

The church office email is check consistently Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and occasionally nights and weekends. Email is the best form of communication at this time.

Voicemail messages at the church is checked 3 times a day Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. **Anyone with a pastoral emergency should call Pastor Mike directly at (607) 240-7637.**

Note: The April Evangel is on hold for the time being. If at some point we feel we can safely print it and distribute it we will. In the meantime, we will continue communicating with you as outlined within.

Supporting Each Other and Others

We understand that many of you have financial concerns at this time. There is a lot of change coming very fast and we know it is difficult to process. If you have any need – food, medical, financial, or simply a need to talk, please call one of our pastors or the church office, and we will do all we can to find help for you. We are in this together, and God will see us through.

As a church, we too, have a risk of taking a significant financial hit that could curtail vital ministries. We want to continue to pay our salaried staff, as they and their families depend on us for income. And, of course, many of our regular building expenses continue – although we are doing our best to turn down the heat and conserve energy wherever possible. We also are called to help in the community as much as possible where people are in need, and we anticipate that these needs will greatly increase during this crisis.

If you are able, we ask that you stay current with your financial giving. We have three ways in which you can give:

- **Mail your check** (enclosing an offering envelope, if you have one) to Vestal UMC, 328 Main Street, Vestal, NY 13850. We will be checking the mail regularly and Tom Crouse, our Finance Secretary will handle all donations the same as always.



- Sign up for **Electronic Giving** by visiting our website and clicking on “Give” at the top of the screen. If you do not already have an online giving account, click on “Create Profile” and follow the instructions. It’s simple and user friendly.

We may not physically
be together, but no
matter what happens....

