

Dear friends,

March 17, 2020

Once again we at the First Congregational Church of Claridon send our sincerest hopes for your safety and wellbeing during this coronavirus pandemic affecting our country and the world. Given the current guidelines to limit groups to ten people or less, we feel it necessary to close our doors to worship as we have known it. Instead, on Sunday we will post the scripture and sermon for the week on our website and through email, with a link to a YouTube video recording, to watch on your computer or device. This will be for the next few Sundays, and will continue as necessary.

During this time when we cannot be with one another face to face, know that we want to care for one another as Christ would. If you need help getting food or groceries or medicines, or would like someone to talk to and pray with you call 440 543-4505 or email claridonchurchsecretary@gmail.com. Please be in touch with one another by phone or social media, and especially to our older members, to offer any assistance.

The Claridon Community Helps is continuing to utilize our church kitchen. They served take-out meals today for their monthly community meal, and began this week to provide lunches for children while they are not in school to receive needed food. You may go to their website, Claridon Community Helps, to donate if you are able, to support this very worthy organization.

Though our church is not able to gather together, know that we too continue to have expenses and bills to pay. Checks may be sent to the church as usual. In addition, if you are a senior and are obligated each year to take money out of your IRA account, consider a direct deposit contribution to the church. 100% of these funds are subtracted from your gross taxable income with no other requirements. As always, thank you for your prayerful financial support.

If there are creative online ways you have found to help support families with young children at home, consider sharing them through our church newsletter. Send your suggestions via email to claridonchurchsecretary@gmail.com, and we will make sure they get out to others. Thanks!

Many of our small businesses are beginning to suffer due to people having to remain home. Please continue to support our local businesses as you are able. Keep in touch with neighbors and seniors who may need help, perhaps with outside garden cleanup or delivery of needed food or supplies.

Hold in prayer all who are affected by this pandemic (and I don't know anyone who isn't!) God is stronger than the worst that life can throw at us, and loves us more than we can possibly know. Be safe and at peace. Hold on to this encouragement from 2 Timothy 1:7 - "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." We pray:

Gracious God, strengthen us in love and compassion to continue in your work of ministry in whatever way we may. Bring your comfort to those who are suffering right now, along with their families and loved ones. We pray for those in medical settings, that they may be kept safe and supplied with necessary equipment to do their work. Encircle us with your love despite our need to remain apart from one another. Let all we do be to your glory, in Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hope to see you soon!
Mary Ellen