



WOODBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Rev. John A. Thomason, Pastor

The Life of the Church

by Pastor John

November 10, 2020

Dear Church Family,

I have three specific things on my mind on this brilliant autumn day – mostly because I have you on my mind!

In-person worship services and small group studies: I trust you're aware that Woodbury has now been classified in the "red zone" of COVID activity. I spoke yesterday with our town's First Selectman, *Barbara Perkinson*, who clarified for me exactly what this means. Municipalities are categorized in a red zone when COVID cases reach a certain level in proportion to their population. This is not a cause for undue alarm, but it is a recognition that the virus is now spreading at a faster rate in our area. It is also a call to be extra vigilant about the "3 W's" – watching our distance from others, wearing masks, and washing our hands.

Barbara assured me that the recently heightened restrictions by the state do not require us to shut down all in-person activities. We can still safely accommodate 50 people in our sanctuary for worship and host small group gatherings that do not exceed 12 persons. We will continue to provide the option of in-person meetings for those who feel comfortable attending them while maintaining all safety protocols. For those who do not feel comfortable coming into the building, other options remain in place to help you be connected with your church.

Worshipping online: For the past several months, our in-person services have been recorded and made available for viewing online at 4:00 PM on Sundays. Some of you have found this arrangement to be less than satisfying, because it precludes the possibility of our worshipping together even when we are apart. Our goal is to enhance the online experience by returning to livestreaming, enabling all of us to worship at the same 10:30 AM time. Unfortunately, perfecting our livestreaming capability is still a work in progress. We will continue to record and broadcast the service online at 4:00 PM until we are confident about smooth livestreaming. Because of this uncertainty, please watch the *Messenger* for week-to-week updates.

Clean-Up Day and Fall Harvest Celebration: When we surveyed the congregation in the early summer to measure your readiness to participate in gathered events, we learned that most of our folks who are willing to meet in-person prefer to do so outdoors. This is why we held our first gathered worship services on the North Green.

This Saturday, November 14, we will host another kind of outdoor event. A joint Clean-Up Day and Fall Harvest Celebration will begin at 9:00 AM with much-needed work on our church property. It's the usual drill for transitioning from autumn to winter – raking and blowing leaves and tidying plant beds. We need all the volunteers we can muster for a good cause. A neat, attractive lawn and is a witness to the community that we care about our facility and want to be good neighbors in a lovely New England town. Plus, this is a great opportunity to demonstrate our legendary WUMC teamwork!

Then at 12 noon, we'll gather (safely!) inside the white picket fence on the Main Street side of the sanctuary for a Fall Harvest Celebration – a brief time of worship, fellowship, and community service. The Woodbury Food Bank is currently soliciting food donations for their clients, not only for their weekly needs but also for the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. A list of needed items was included in a flier you should have received in the mail and will also appear in this week's *Messenger*. You are invited to bring your donations to the Fall Harvest Celebration, where they will be dedicated and presented to *Bob Taylor*, the president of the Community Services Council of Woodbury. We will also be presenting a monetary donation from our church to help meet special holiday needs. We ask all participants to wear masks and practice social distancing – and have a great time being reunited with your church friends!

Grace and peace,
John