



WOODBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Rev. John A. Thomason, Pastor

The Life of the Church

by Pastor John

April 1, 2020

Dear Church Family,

As the impact of the Coronavirus constantly expands, we've grown accustomed to lifestyle changes and updates from government and health officials by the day and even by the hour. Our church has also continued to adapt to shifting circumstances, often moving from Plan A to Plan B to Plan C in a short span of time. As I review these upcoming events, please note that our plans continue to evolve.

REMOTE FELLOWSHIP HOURS

Starting this Sunday, April 5, we will offer Fellowship Hours by conference call twice rather than three times a week – on Sundays at 11:45 AM and Wednesdays at 7:30 PM. The Monday night call-in session is being discontinued. The conference call number remains the same: 203-633-3808. Plans are in the works to enable us to connect by ZOOM or a similar platform to give us the option of seeing as well as hearing each other. Please stay tuned for details.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

REMOTE ACCESS will continue to be available for all worship services.

- Livestreaming on **Facebook**: go to www.woodburyumc.net, click on the Facebook icon. No personal Facebook account is required.
- On **Instagram** go to woodburyumcct.
- **Audio only**: dial 203-633-3808 (no PIN required); please remember to mute your phones during the service to eliminate background noise.

WORSHIP BULLETINS will be sent to you by email or ground mail prior to each service.

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY – We had planned to make palm fronds available for members and friends to pick up outside the church building prior to this Sunday. However, as a precautionary measure, our Bishop has directed that palms not be distributed to NYAC congregations in any way. A few palms will be prepared, sanitized, and placed on the altar for this Sunday's service.

Open Hearts . Open Minds . Open Doors

HOLY COMMUNION – Next week we will have two opportunities to receive Communion within a space of five days – the usual first Sunday of the month (April 5, Palm/Passion Sunday) and Maundy Thursday (April 9). Rather than cancelling Communion altogether, we are offering an alternate (albeit extraordinary!) way to share in the sacred meal – to partake of the Bread and the Cup in our own homes rather than gathered around a common table in the sanctuary. Lest you be concerned about doing something sacrilegious, I will consecrate the elements remotely so we can all feel that our Bread and Cup are properly blessed. Here are some suggestions on how you might prepare to participate in Communion at home:

- Purchase your own Communion elements – bread, matzah, or crackers; your choice of fruit of the vine. Elements should not be chosen arbitrarily (baloney and seltzer won't do!); elements should be consistent with the symbolic foods described in the New Testament. Remember that we will have Communion twice in five days, so you may want to purchase elements for both occasions at the same time.
- Consider a special table setting in your home, having a lighted candle as a centerpiece and using a favorite plate and set of cups.
- Pray that celebrating Communion in this unusual, relatively isolated fashion will nonetheless strengthen your spiritual connection to Christ and his body, the Church.

MAUNDY THURSDAY (April 9, 7:00 PM) – A full Service of Word and Table will originate from our sanctuary, accessible remotely by the same means as our regular Sunday services.

GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER SUNRISE SERVICES ARE CANCELED – By joint agreement of the three local churches who annually plan and lead these ecumenical Holy Week events, neither service will take place this year.

EASTER SUNDAY – Not being together physically will not keep us from celebrating our Lord's resurrection with gratitude and gusto! Our Easter service will be broadcast remotely at the usual time (10:20 AM for Prelude music, 10:30 AM for the start of the liturgy).

EASTER FLOWERS – All local florists are now closed, so no flowers will be available to us for Easter Sunday. If you have placed an order, please contact the church office if you wish to be reimbursed.

Thank you for your flexibility and patience as we try to keep moving forward on shifting sands! Please know that you are a cherished part of our church family, and we want you to be as informed and involved as possible in our family matters.

Grace and peace,

John