

UUCB Pastoral Newsletter in Response to Covid-19



Thought to Ponder: “Every hand that we don’t shake must become a phone call that we place. Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern. Every inch and every foot that we physically place between ourselves and another must become a thought as to how we might help that other, should the need arise.” – Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky

Greetings from Sylvia

I love you. I feel it so important to say that as we all try to come to grips with our new reality. I so wish we could



be together. Social distancing is of paramount importance right now, but human beings are not built for isolation. So we are charting new territory as we learn new ways to be loving and connected while not sharing physical space.

To that end, UUCB seeks new ways to stay in touch. For now, we will be creating pastoral newsletters like this one as the need arises (and at least monthly). For the time being, these pastoral newsletters will replace our normal monthly *Parish Messenger*.

We are aware social distancing can lead to feelings of loneliness and worry. Please know you may call me at home or email me if you need a listening ear. Or, if you are feeling adventuresome, I'm happy to arrange a Zoom teleconferencing call with you. That way we can see each other's faces! *Love, Sylvia*

(Note: I will be on sabbatical from March 23 through March 30.)

Greetings from Toben: The New Normal

I consider myself a highly introverted person. I need a lot of me time to recharge after being with others.

Still, human connection is a quintessential part of my faith development. My introverted nature is okay with a certain amount of social distancing but the rest of me that relies on all of you to connect to that which is most sacred and holy feels a bit discombobulated. This coronavirus has forced me to be more inventive and to work harder at my connections. I've been making more phone calls, writing more letters, singing more songs, even the internet is starting to show me its sacred side.



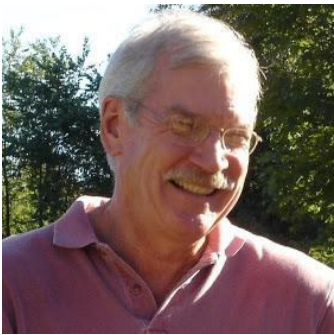
Connecting with UUCB Families

Being asked to stay home and limit how much contact you have with your friends can be super difficult. In fact, I have already had kids asking for ways to connect with their church friends, so I hosted a Zoom meeting on Sunday March 22nd from 11:15am- 12pm so we could have a chance to connect. I will set up similar meetings, as requested or necessary. It is good just to check in with children and families and to brainstorm about ways to connect during this unusual and

uncertain time.

The usual opportunities for connecting may not come so easily but that offers up a chance to find ways that will make this new normal work for us. Know that I am holding you in my heart as we work out ways through this uncertain time together. *In Faith, Toben*

Greetings from Board Chair Glenn Williams



The Virus: At 5:30 pm on Thursday, March 12, the Executive Committee met to discuss options for responding to the Covid-19 threat. With reluctance and great sadness, we

determined that an attempt to continue business as usual would be irresponsible, and that we needed to cancel church services until further notice. We notified Sue Michaud that we needed to cancel the Heather Masse concert, and we contacted Heidi just in time to cancel choir rehearsal. This was especially difficult for Heidi and the choir because it was the second time a very special musical offering they had worked hard to prepare had to be canceled.

We decided that the full Board meeting scheduled for the following Tuesday would go ahead as usual, with the option for members to attend via Zoom video conference if they preferred to avoid physical contact. The next few days brought news of increased threat from the virus, and we changed to video conference only for the meeting. There were some technological challenges at the beginning, but it turned out quite well.

We will be relying on technology to bring us together as much as possible during the coming weeks. We saw a good first example of what can be done on Sunday morning, March 15th, when a video message from Sylvia was available for viewing on YouTube. We have plans to expand

on that model in a variety of ways. At a minimum, we will have a video presentation every Sunday. We are also planning small group discussions—“coffee hours”—via Zoom, and gearing up for committees to meet that way as well. A longer-term goal is to install the necessary equipment to do live streaming from the church. We have been considering that for a while, and this situation provides added motivation to get it done.

In general, this crisis has generated a lot of creativity, and we have many talented people stepping up to help. This comes at a time when we were already working on Modernizing Internal and External Communications, and we’re making great progress. A new UUCB website will be up and running in April, and we will continue to expand the opportunities for connection it will make available. Check it out!

The Interim Search: We are in the final editing stages of preparing the Interim Minister application. It has been a rewarding group effort, and reading it all put together makes us newly aware of what a wonderful church community we share. Thursday, April 9th is the earliest date we can send in the application, and I expect to do so then.

Peace and love, Glenn Williams

Staying Connected

Some social networking tools seem made for our current challenges. Facebook, Facetime, Zoom, and Google Hangouts are tools for being in touch. In fact, some of our musicians – now without gigs in concert venues – have been streaming concerts on Facebook. (Jud and Sam Caswell come to mind.)

Worship Services: UUCB is committed to posting a worship service every week on YouTube. We will email links to each new video. Please bear with us: The learning curve is steep.

Virtual Coffee Hours: We miss each other! The Board and Worship Committee have been looking for ways to be together in a safe way. We'd like to experiment with a few "virtual

coffee hours" using the Zoom, a teleconferencing tool. (Some of us are already using Zoom for meetings.)



To start, we will limit groups to eight in number. If you'd like to check in and chat with fellow parishioners, use this link to sign up for a time slot:

www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A9AB28A5F85-virtual

One of us will call you before the virtual coffee hour and run through Zoom to be sure it works for you. You'll then get an email invitation and code to join the others at the appointed time.

We know this won't appeal to or even work for everyone, but we'd like to give it a try. Questions? Please email Cindy Parker at cindyparker48@gmail.com or Betsy Williams at bwilliams120@gmail.com.

Committee Meetings: We ask committees to meet via Zoom or conference call rather than in person. You can find more information here: <https://zoom.us/>. Or, contact Glenn Williams or Sylvia Stocker for details.

Church Office: Our church office is closed. Email is the best way to reach staff. (To obtain Sylvia's cell # call the church, choose minister's extension, and listen to her outgoing message.)

Ways to Help, by Sylvia

I am reminded of one of my favorite anthems, "Sow It on the Mountain," a piece I ask the choir to sing periodically. The first verse asks, "If you're feeling weary, won't you lend a hand to someone?" Fred Horch is gathering information about specific ways to help in the wider community. Take a look; are there ways you can plug in and lend assistance?

<https://fredhorch.wordpress.com/support-brunswick/>

The second verse asks, "If you're feeling hungry, won't you share your bread with someone?" We are not to share meals outside our homes these days, but how about helping area families who normally rely on the school lunch program to keep their children from being hungry? The

Emergency Action Network (TEAN) in Brunswick is soliciting financial donations, gas cards, and grocery gift cards for such families. Donations can be dropped at 46 Federal St. in Brunswick or via TEAN's PayPal (you'll find the link on the bottom of their home page: <https://emergencyactionnetwork.com/>).

The third verse asks, "If you're feeling lonely, won't you be a friend to someone?" You can do that, too! One parishioner has vowed to call five people a day just to check in. Some of our kids are creating drawings to send to parishioners who might need a little boost. What can you do? A phone call? A letter? An email? Don't wait for someone to reach out to you – take the initiative and check in with folks.

Nurturing Spirits: I suspect we are in for a long haul. Don't forget to care for yourself while you are helping others. Find something you love to do: reading, making art, playing or listening to music, gardening, being in nature, working in your shop. In addition, I suggest trying to find something joyful every day, if possible. For instance, I recently read that the amount of air pollution has decreased in China and Italy, where people have been isolating themselves for a while. Fewer cars on the road and more industries shuttered or slowed down adds up to bluer skies, more audible bird song, and cleaner air to breathe. Then, too, there are the reports of people sequestered in Italy opening their windows so that they can sing to each other. In my neighborhood, I see families out walking together – something a little out of the ordinary, considering how busy everyone normally is. What positive, joyful things have you experienced? You might even keep a little notebook of them. We can compare notes when we can be together again. *Love, Sylvia*

The Pledge Drive Thrives

Dear friends,

During the Covid-19 crisis and as the news seems to change daily, you may not be thinking about UUCB's annual pledge drive. We understand. At the same time, even though we

have temporarily suspended Sunday services and church events, our operations continue and we need to rely on the support of the entire congregation to move forward into our next fiscal year. This is especially important since over 82% of our budget comes from these pledges.

We are pleased to report that as of this week (3/20/2020) one-third of our church families have pledged a bit over \$100,000 to UUCB. This is good progress toward our goal of \$250,000., but we still need ALL families to participate at the level most meaningful to them.

Since we are not seeing each other on Sundays for the time being, the easiest way of making your pledge is on-line:

<https://www.uubrunswick.org/online-pledging/>

Otherwise please send your pledge through the mail to the church office:

UUCB
Box 129
Brunswick, Maine 04011

Thank you for being understanding of this vital drive, even as we all take steps to keep ourselves safe and healthy. Please contact any one of us (listed below) if you have any questions.

Sincerely, The Pledge Drive Team

Jon Allen, Catherine (Cuffy) Chase, Carol Gillespie, Mary Larson, Cindy Parker, Paul Peranteau, Janice Thompson

Spiritual Practice for Troubled Times:

From Sylvia's March 15 Internet Service.



Imagine this: You are washing your hands. Feel the warm water on your skin, then the sensation of soapsuds foaming, as you rub your palms together, then wash between fingers, the

backs of your hands and even your fingertips. For a full 20 seconds, feel the sensation of your hands and the soap suds.

In 20 seconds, you can call to mind some of the

things that bring you joy. What brings you joy now?

In 20 seconds, you can offer up your gratitude for your blessings, whatever they are. What do you feel grateful for?

In 20 seconds, you can name those you know who are suffering and lift up a silent meditation or prayer for them. Who needs your love now?

In 20 seconds, you can imagine your beloved community, always in the making, gathered round you. We are here together, even in these strange ways, in these challenging times. We are a conduit for love and compassion in this world. We are imperfect, but good enough. We are here.

Now imagine you are rinsing your hands. Turn the tap off. Dry your hands, and make your way back into the world that needs your heart, that needs your blessing, that needs your love.

Treasurer's Note

The Congregation has received a \$5,000 gift from the estate of David Sterniolo through his executor Debra Kopansky. For many years, David and his wife Norma were active members of our congregation. They moved to Florida more than a dozen years ago. Even though distant, they always wanted to retain their membership and receive news from the church, however. UUCB meant a great deal to them. How special and touching it is for us that David included us in his estate planning. We are so very grateful.

In thanks, Paul Peranteau

Annual Report notice

SAVE THE DATE: 19-20 Annual Reports Are Due by Friday, May 22

With the Annual Congregational Meeting being held a week earlier than usual (June 7), we need to begin preparing the Annual Report earlier this year. If you are the chairperson of a committee, task force, or group, please start thinking about your annual report. You can submit it to Shirley in the office by email: uubruns@gwi.net.

April 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 Virtual Church Service Knights of Columbus Founders Day National Lemon Chiffon Cake Day	30 Office Closed Turkey Neck Soup Day	31 Office Closed National Crayon Day	April 1 Office Closed April Fool's Day National One Cent Day National Sourdough Bread Day	2 Office Closed International Children's Book Day National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day	3 Office Closed Tedford Shelter Meal National Find A Rainbow Day National Chocolate Mousse Day	4 National Love Our Children Day National Cordon Bleu Day
5 Virtual Church Service National Dandelion Day National Deep Dish Pizza Day	6 Office Closed Tartan Day Hostess Twinkie Day	7 Office Closed World Health Organization Day Coffee Cake Day	8 Office Closed Draw a Picture of a Bird Day National Empanada Day	9 Maundy Thursday Office Closed National Unicorn Day Chinese Almond Cookie Day	10 Office Closed Salvation Army Founder's Day National Hot Cross Bun Day	11 Barbershop Quartet Day National Cheese Fondue Day
12 EASTER Virtual Church Service D.E.A.R. Day (Drop Everything And Read) Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day	13 Office Closed International Creativity and Innovation Day Peeps Day	14 Office Closed International Moment of Laughter Day National Pecan Day	15 Office Closed Income Taxes Due Now in July National Bookmobile Day Banana Day	16 Office Closed National Orchid Day Day of the Mushroom	17 Office Closed Ford Mustang Day National Cheeseball Day	18 International Amateur Radio Day Animal Crackers Birthday
19 Virtual Church Service Pet Owners Day National Garlic Day	20 Office Closed Patriot's Day National Pineapple Upside-Down Cake Day	21 Office Closed National Library Day National Chocolate Covered Cashews Day	22 Office Closed Earth Day National Jelly Bean Day	23 Office Closed Talk Like Shakespeare Day English Muffin Day	24 Office Closed Parish Messenger Copy Deadline National Teach Children to Save Day National Pigs-in-a Blanket Day	25 Eeyore's Birthday Day National Zucchini Bread Day
26 Virtual Church Service Remember Your First Kiss Day National Pretzel Day	27 Office Closed Morse Code Day National Devil Dog Cakes Day	28 Office Closed Great Poetry Reading Day National Blueberry Pie Day	29 Office Closed Zipper Day National Shrimp Scampi Day	30 Office Closed National Honesty Day National Raisin Day	May 1 Office Closed Tedford Shelter Meal International Workers Day National Chocolate Parfait Day	May 2 Learn To Ride A Bike Day National Truffles Day

Parish Messenger copy deadline Friday, April 24

Rev Stocker on Sabbatical April 20-May 4