

*Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God.*

I John 4:7

Dear Beloved Community in the Vermont Conference,

These are stressful days we are living. There is so much fear around the novel coronavirus. Should we hoard antibacterial hand wash? What about toilet paper? Should we cancel travel plans or even church? What is the right thing to do? I hope we can think and feel our way to making decisions when we remember that we are called to love one another.

In this time of crisis and uncertainty what is the loving thing to do? First, we must take a deep breath and let God calm our fear. We need to take care of one another. For me, that means following the protocol to reduce my risk of both getting and transmitting this disease. It means being willing to be creative about how we do church because physically gathering may not be the best option. Can we stream a church service, use technology to pray together and check in with one another? We need to think about how we can be present with those who are the most vulnerable, those who live alone and those who may not have enough resources and food to get through these days and weeks. Does your church have a method for calling to check in on members and friends? Set up a way to ensure that every person is being checked in with daily if possible, but at least on a weekly basis. Use your electronic communication to share news and post prayer concerns. If you do gather for worship, be mindful of ways to lessen the risk of spreading the virus.

Instead of concentrating on making sure we have enough, we can ask how we can share so everyone has what they need to minimize their risk. And, let us support one another in making decisions. In the midst of uncertainty we are all trying to make the best decisions we can with the information we have.

Here is a collection of resources and suggestions from the UCC:

[https://www.ucc.org/disaster\\_coronavirus\\_resources\\_from\\_the\\_ucc](https://www.ucc.org/disaster_coronavirus_resources_from_the_ucc)

May the Holy One, close to us as the breath we draw, calm our anxious thoughts, remind us of the love we are called to share with one another and lead us through these difficult days.

In peace,

Lynn