



March 26, 2020

## STAYING CONNECTED TO YOUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

Dear Hills Church,

The strength of God's Spirit comes to us in many ways, meeting us wherever we are. Specifically, I know that God's gifts are reliably found in prayer and worship, in meditation, and in the community of the church family. These gifts continue to be the mission of our church in these days when we are not meeting in person.

In the midst of new challenges, we remember that the practices of Christian faith provide spiritual grounding and nourishment to our souls. The practices of our faith alleviate our fears, provide comfort, and work to support those who suffer most from disease and economic instability. These practices of faith have been tested over the centuries, and we continue them today.

Please join us in these new ways of being the church. Receive the peace and strength of God. Connect to others, and show love for your neighbors. We are in this together.

Peace

Matt Wooster

### ATTEND WORSHIP BY VIDEO

For the past two Sundays, we have been experimenting with online Sunday morning worship services. You can watch our first two “experiments” on the church Facebook page by clicking on the link below. We are getting better at this – and are still working to improve our technique and to broaden access for a virtual worshipping community.

In the meantime, the church’s Facebook page is “public” and easy to access, so we hope you will hop onto the church’s Facebook page this Sunday morning at 10:00 to join us for Sunday worship. You do not need to be a Facebook user or have a Facebook account. All you need to do is paste the following URL into the “Search” bar of your computer or internet browser – and Click!

<https://www.facebook.com/wellesleyhillchurch/>

### NOON PRAYERS FROM THE HILLS

You can use this same URL to tune into the church Facebook page at noon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for a brief time (5-15 minutes) of reflection and prayer with one of the ministers. These prayers will be accessible for viewing later as well.

Tuesdays: Anne Marie Holloway

Wednesdays: Matt Wooster

Thursdays: Judy Swahnberg

## CONTACT YOUR MINISTERS

Although we are not regularly in our offices at the church these days, you can still reach your ministers by phone and email. Please use the contact information below to be in touch with any of your ministers and know that they will be there for you if you want to:

- Share a prayer request,
- Have a conversation for pastoral care, or
- Simply share updates and receive a prayerful blessing by phone.

Rev. Anne Marie Holloway: [annemarie@hillschurch.org](mailto:annemarie@hillschurch.org)

Judy Swahnberg: [judy@hillschurch.org](mailto:judy@hillschurch.org)

Rev. Matt Wooster: [mattw@hillschurch.org](mailto:mattw@hillschurch.org)

## VIRTUAL MEETINGS FOR SMALL GROUPS

Confirmation Class, church support boards, WHCC ministry teams, and other small group meetings will be held “virtually” – using Zoom, teleconferences, and other online platforms - until further notice.

Information for joining these virtual meeting will be shared directly with meeting participants.

## CANCELLATIONS AND POSTPONEMENTS

- The annual Easter Egg Hunt and the annual rummage sale have been cancelled.
- The following programs have been postponed until a future date:
  - Special Music Sunday: Sunrise Mass
  - Clergy-led Book Group discussion of *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions*.
  - Afternoon Tea at the Hills Church

## AND HERE IS A VERY HELPFUL GUIDE TO MEDITATING – IN YOUR LIVING ROOM FROM MARY HILL CANAVAN AND JUDY SWAHNBERG

### 1. Set aside thirty minutes or so – and settle into your time of Meditation:

Settle into a comfortable chair, close your eyes, and take three long, slow breaths focusing on “breath in....breath out.”

Allow yourself to grow still.

Let go of any distracting thoughts.

Become aware of God’s unconditional love for you.

### 2. Open in prayer:

Gracious God, we are grateful for this time “together” even as we are apart this morning. In the midst of the uncertainty of these days, help us to pause and let go for these next few moments; to lay our burdens down and give our souls rest, so that we may then live out this day renewed with hope and faith, reminded that you are ever with us on this journey. Amen.

### 3. Choose either a sacred reading or a simple centering prayer to meditate on:

A Sacred Reading: Read aloud – and slowly - Psalm 121 three times. Do not stop to analyze the meaning. Do not rush through it. Pause between each reading.

-or-

A Centering Prayer: Read the following verse one time slowly:

“Be still and know that I am God.”

“Be still and know that I am.”

“Be still and know.”

“Be still.”

“Be.”

**4. Meditate for 15 minutes, resting in stillness:**

If thoughts begin to enter in, gently return to a sacred word or phrase to center yourself again.

**5. Close by praying the Lord’s Prayer and then give yourself a few minutes to reflect.**

**UPDATE: WALLACE CHAPEL SEATING OPTIONS**

At the request of Church Council, the Deacons (Spiritual Care Support Board) spent the past month meeting with members of the congregation individually and at two “listening sessions” to gather their opinions about seating options for Wallace Chapel. Just to remind you, since it will be necessary to remove the pews in Wallace Chapel in order to do the fire protection work there, we have the opportunity to make a choice between re-installing them – or replacing them with modular seating. The Deacons also talked with our ministers, Sally Tomasetti (church school) and John Finney (music) to get their thoughts.

Based on this input, it was clear that most of the members and all of the staff favored replacing the pews with a more flexible seating option, such as individual chairs, which could be configured in multiple ways. Deacons, the lay body in the church which is the most involved with worship, thoughtfully considered this input and after a process of discernment, made the recommendation to Church Council that we proceed with the flexible seating option. Deacons also heard, very clearly, that the congregation was anxious that Wallace Chapel retain its traditional appearance and continue to be a place which is conducive to worship and supportive of our spiritual journeys.

Church Council called a special meeting by teleconference last week to consider the information and recommendation that the Deacons had provided. After considerable discussion, Council approved the recommendation of the Deacons and voted unanimously to proceed with the renovation of the Wallace Chapel by replacing the existing pews with new modular seating. The motion also included the contingencies suggested by the Deacons that the modular furnishings be selected to preserve the look and feel of the traditional, spiritual nature of the space, and that a group should be appointed by Church Council to evaluate and select the seating. This group would be constituted to be representative of the congregation and include at least one Deacon. You will hear more about this group in a later communication.

Although we will not incur the cost of modifying the pews which would have been necessary to re-use them, there will be a net up-charge to purchase new seating which is not covered in the Phase 1B renovation budget. Church Council will work with the construction team and Stewards to identify a source of funding. The disposition of the old pews remains to be fully worked out, but members who wish to take one will be able to do so.

Wallace Chapel is a beautiful space, and one which all of us would enjoy using more often. The hope is that flexible seating will foster new uses, for example worship ‘in the round’, prayer meetings, meditation, Bible study and contemplation, organ concerts where we could face the organ, and musical performances by small groups. As is the case now, we do not foresee its use for more secular purposes, such as meeting space for church committees or outside groups. Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, we have the funding to replace the tile floor in the chapel with wood, which will enhance the appearance, as well as the acoustics. With these changes, we can look forward to Wallace Chapel playing an even more prominent role in our spiritual lives.

## THE WELLESLEY FOOD PANTRY COULD USE YOUR HELP



**Wellesley  
Food Pantry**

The Food Pantry is keeping its website updated with items in short supply, but they could definitely use your help now with diapers in sizes 5 and 6. They have no diapers in these sizes at the moment – and six to eight families needing them. The Pantry could also use shelf-stable almond and soy milks, and jars of jelly/jam.

For more information about how you could help the Food Pantry at this time, you can always go to their website, which they update weekly. Here is the URL - (<http://www.wellesleyfoodpantry.org>).

Please bring your Food Pantry donations to the church on Monday mornings, between 9:00 and 10:30, and leave them in the Food Pantry bin, just outside the west entrance door – or drop them in the collection bins at Roche Bros or Whole Foods.

Anything you can do to help will be greatly appreciated.

## IF YOU HAVE EXTRA KITCHEN UTENSILS, THE NEW LIFE FURNITURE BANK COULD USE THEM

While you are practicing social distancing, this might be a great time to clean out your kitchen drawers and take steps to ensure that any extra kitchen utensils you have make their way to a good home.

As soon as the church reopens, the Christian Service Support Board will be collecting kitchen utensils for the New Life Furniture Bank. [www.nelifeb.org](http://www.nelifeb.org) – and collection bins will appear at each church entrance.

The New Life Furniture Bank provides furniture and household goods to individuals and families who are transitioning from a homeless environment, victims of fire, military veterans and refugees – and here are some things these individuals and families could use:

Potholders	Serving Spoons
Kitchen Towels	Flatware
Can Openers	Measuring Cups & Spoons
Cutting Boards	Metal Flippers
Vegetable Peelers	Rubber Spatulas

Questions? Contact Donna McCabe [dmccabe4@comcast.net](mailto:dmccabe4@comcast.net)

**One Final Thought from Matt for This Week:** Paul was isolated, but his desire to remain in community was strong, and his thoughts of others turned him to prayers of joy. *“I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you.”*

This Sunday's Scripture Readings  
Psalm 130  
John 11:1-10

## 6, 7, 8 CHURCH SCHOOL

We will meet via ZOOM on Sunday morning at 11:15. An invitation outlining the details will be sent in a separate email.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP**

This past week our Middle School Youth Group participated in an Instagram Photo Challenge: Seven ways in seven days to pass the peace of Christ!

We are so thankful for our Middle School Youth Group members and their families! We received some lovely pictures! Thank you for sharing the peaceful moments of your lives with us and for passing the peace along for others to see!

We will host a ZOOM 6, 7, 8 Youth Group gathering from 4:30-5:00 this Sunday. We will be sending along a special invite with instructions for this creative "virtual" gathering.

## **HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH CHECK-INS**

Our Confirmands, Confirmation Alumni and High School youth are invited to "check in" following next Wednesday evening's Confirmation Class from 7:30- 8:00 pm.

A devotion/story/prayer and open check in time will be offered to all our high school teens.

## **PRAYERFUL CHECK-INS -**

**THURSDAY EVENINGS AT 7:30**

## **FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Sally Tomasetti, Children's Ministry Coordinator, and Rev. Anne Marie Holloway, Associate Minister for Youth and Families, will be hosting weekly check in times for parents of children and youth via ZOOM on Thursday evenings from 7:30-7:45.

Their objective is to provide a sacred and quiet space for Hills Church parents to connect, to pray and to check-in with one another.

Each week a special devotional and prayer will be shared. It is our prayer that our parents will find these weekly check-ins supportive and life giving.

## **CONFIRMATION**

Rev. Anne Marie and Mimi D'Angelo will continue to hold class each Wednesday evening from 6:45-7:30.

The next few weeks will feature a movie clip that focuses on certain aspects of our Faith.

Following each class we will hold space for check-ins, devotions and prayer time from 7:30-8:00 with other high school friends.

Please look for the ZOOM invite via email.

## **WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE WHAT VIRTUAL CHURCH SCHOOL LOOKS LIKE?**

Thanks to Sally Tomasetti, WHCC Children's Ministry Coordinator, if your answer is "Yes!" - then you can!

Just click on the following link - and it will take you right back to your Sunday School days again!

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/pvOqKo\\_PqzNOX5Xi8hzaYvAhMK3dT6a81iEfqKINyRrRYO\\_5HVWCQ093p6\\_ZJ-Co](https://zoom.us/rec/share/pvOqKo_PqzNOX5Xi8hzaYvAhMK3dT6a81iEfqKINyRrRYO_5HVWCQ093p6_ZJ-Co)

Who knew Virtual Church School would be such fun????

And there's more!

Each week Sally will be sending a new link to families so they can attend live the following Sunday morning. And anyone who misses the opportunity to participate in Church School live on Sunday morning's at 11:00 will still be able to enjoy the fun - and watch those children having the time of their lives by viewing the recorded version - which Sally will be making available through her weekly newsletter.

In addition, while she is in quarantine, Sally and her dog Dakota will be sending activity ideas along to all Hills Church families every Wednesday. SPOILER ALERT: There may be silly videos and photos involved!

And finally, Sally (and your entire church staff, in fact) would love to see photos of your family activities or ideas that can be shared with the community. We are all in this together!

Contact [Sallyt@hillschurch.org](mailto:Sallyt@hillschurch.org)

## HILLS CHURCH CALENDAR

### **THURSDAY, March 26**

- 10:00 a.m. Clergy Worship Planning - Virtual
- 10:30 a.m. Church Staff Meeting - Virtual

### **FRIDAY, March 27**

- 7:30 p.m. AA Meeting

### **SATURDAY, March 28**

### **SUNDAY, March 29**

- 10:00 a.m. Worship Service\*\*\* - [On FB](#)
- 7:30 p.m. AA Meeting

### **MONDAY, March 30**

### **TUESDAY, March 31**

- 12:00 p.m. Noon Prayers - Rev. Holloway\*\*\* - [On FB](#)
- 1:00 p.m. Clergy Pastoral Care Meeting - Virtual

### **WEDNESDAY, April 1**

- 12:00 p.m. Noon Prayers - Rev. Wooster\*\*\* - [On FB](#)
- 6:45 p.m. Confirmation Class - Virtual

### **THURSDAY, April 2**

- 10:00 a.m. Clergy Worship Planning - Virtual
- 10:30 a.m. Church Staff Meeting - Virtual
- 12:00 p.m. Noon Prayers - Rev. Swahnberg\*\*\* - [On FB](#)