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**FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY of WESTCHESTER**

*A member of the Unitarian Universalist Association*

25 Old Jackson Avenue

Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706-3227

914-478-2710 • [fusw.org](http://fusw.org)

March 11, 2019

Dear Members and Friends of FUSW,

As you are all aware, the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) situation is requiring all of us to take precautions in order to reduce the possibility of exposure to and possible contamination by the virus. Because of this and after very careful consideration and considerable discussion, the Board of FUSW has decided that it is in the best interests of our congregation that we suspend large group activities for the rest of the month of March.

Accordingly, we are going to postpone our 2020: Perfect Vision for Our Future celebration dinner, which had originally been scheduled for this Saturday, March 14. (Rescheduled date to be announced.)

FUSW also will be suspending Sunday services for the rest of the month of March. We will revisit the issue at the end of the month to determine if it is safe for services to resume in April.

We realize that the fellowship we enjoy at FUSW during services and other large group gatherings is an important and cherished part of our lives. The Board is investigating alternative means of communicating with each other and participating in mutual spiritual involvement. We intend to post online videos of sermons from Viola and from our guests in the pulpit for the month of March. Elsewhere in the Scoop you will find information on accessing our Facebook page and we will be exploring ways in which we may better utilize Facebook or other social media to maintain our shared lives as a congregation during this period of limited in person contact. If you have ideas about how we might better maintain shared communications in a meaningful way, please let us know your thoughts.

In terms of meetings of small FUSW groups (such as small group ministry, men's group, women's group, etc.), we leave it to each group to decide for itself how it wishes to move forward with in person gatherings. For those that do continue to meet, we encourage members to engage in appropriate precautionary measures, including:

- Staying home if not feeling well or if possibly exposed to coronavirus or another sickness
- Washing or otherwise sanitizing hands frequently
- Avoiding unnecessary touching of hands to face
- Practicing "social distance" (such as spacing chairs further apart from each other, leaving empty chairs between people, avoiding handshakes, etc.)

- Refraining from group snacks, unless the food is individually wrapped
- Keeping doors open during meetings so that air can circulate more easily

We also encourage those who are most at risk from coronavirus, including those with weakened immune systems and the elderly, to exercise appropriate caution and care and to contact a doctor if you have any reason to suspect that you may have been exposed to the virus.

While we share your disappointment that we must suspend activities for a while, we are hopeful that the next few weeks will see advances in means of controlling, treating and preventing coronavirus and that we will be able to resume services in the near future. In the meantime, we will do everything we can to reach out to and stay in touch with members of our congregation and welcome your suggestions on how we may best succeed in this area.

The virus may put a damper on our activities, but it will in no means diminish our spirit, our commitment to each other, or our determination to meet this and other challenges with unity and strength.

Sincerely,

FUSW Board of Directors