

March 20, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of First Parish,

What a surreal time for us humans...we are entering unknown territory as a species, as a world community, as a people of faith. None of us know what the future may bring. I am using the earth, spiritual practices, my ancestors, and people in my life to stay grounded and calm as I witness our world transforming. It is a scary but necessary time. Our beloved earth is waking us up. We must really listen to her right now. Every morning the birds remind me that I am alive and life is precious and beautiful. Our forced isolation is calling us into being with our own hearts in a deep way. We may have all kinds of feelings and we need to find ways to process them so we can keep our hearts open. Those of us who live with others may experience difficult challenges in our relations. Remember kindness and boundaries will save us. Those of us who live alone have different challenges and may need to reach out and ask for connection. For many of us, our computers and phones will be our primary way to work, to socialize, to pray, to meditate, to tell stories, and to worship.

The leaders and staff at First Parish have been working hard to adjust to this new world. We are creating online opportunities for worship, meetings, chalice groups, music, prayer, religious exploration, and pastoral care. I know online communication is challenging for some folks. Please let us know if you need help using zoom or you just need a phone call.

My hope for First Parish is that we stay connected during this difficult time and even grow stronger as a community. We need each other more than ever right now.

Blessings of spring and hope to all of you,

Christina

PS- Please enjoy this poem by Capuchin Franciscan Brother Richard Hendrick:

Lockdown

Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.
But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul

Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

Richard Hendrick
March 13th 2020