

March 4, 2020

Dear Friends,

Chatham UMC is aware of how important community is to our spiritual, psychological and social well-being. God has created each person with an innate need for community, friendship and relationship. With all of the fears rearing their heads related to the Coronavirus, community itself is made to look more fragile.

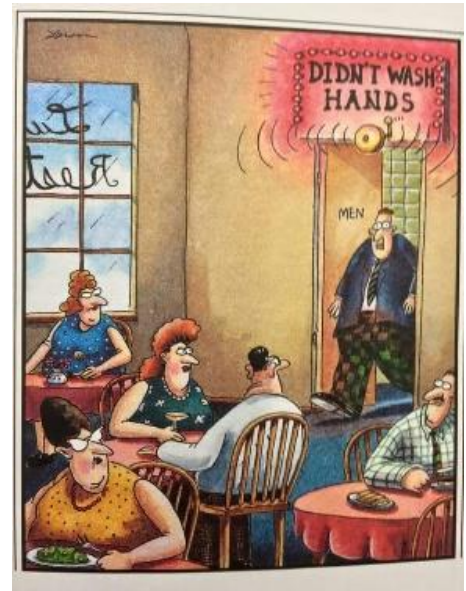
Chatham UMC is taking some measures to make our church as clean, safe and as welcoming as possible. Here are just a few things:

- Donald Underhill, our faithful Custodian and Maintenance Manager, has his team wipe down all doorknobs, railings, and handles with an industrial grade disinfectant on a daily basis here at Chatham UMC. Donald and his team clean every bathroom in our church on a daily basis.
- The Office Staff has purchased alcohol rub dispensers for every room in the building and a few extras for our sanctuary.
- In Worship, we are passing the peace of Christ with our smiles, intentional gestures of blessing, without physical touch or shaking hands. Last Sunday, it evoked broad smiles across the aisles, laughter in the sanctuary, and a whole lot of blessings given and received.
- The Staff Parish Relations Committee gave the green light to purchase a basic subscription to ZOOM Technology. This will allow Chatham UMC to host online video conferences and stay connected, have meetings, and even small group spiritual formation experiences from the comforts of our own homes, or from online locations wherever we are traveling. This will not be a substitute for coming together for worship, but it will keep ministry teams who wish to use this technology, connected and moving forward.
- We make sure there is plenty of soap in all of our bathrooms so that people can wash their hands as often as they wish while spending time here at the church. (Maybe whenever we wash our hands, we can say a prayer, connecting us to our ancient religious practices of preparing for worship.)
- We are praying for those impacted by the Coronavirus. We are praying for the medical professionals who are treating those in need. We are praying for scientists as they do the work that encourages good and wise global health. We are praying for leaders and policy makers that they have a deep desire to care for the Common Good.

I hope that in the midst of this chapter in our world, Christians will be known as the ones who didn't give into fear, and the ones who remained generous with their time, love and materials. God has called us for such a time as this to be followers of Jesus that are known for our compassionate and generous response to all people. Let us follow Jesus' loving way, with everyone we meet, even if we smile, and bump elbows instead of shaking hands.

With love, with trust, and with prayer,

Jeff



*Cartoon above by Gary Larson