

St. John's UCC Allentown's Virtual Worship Service Guide | March 29, 2020 | 11:00 a.m.

We are not meeting in person for corporate worship at St. John's on Sunday, March 29, 2020. But blessed be the tie that binds: we will gather in spirit — and virtually — from our homes at 11:00 a.m.

You will be able to access our worship — and see St. John's folks at noon — from your computer or your smart phone. This post will be your guide.

WE ARE GOING TO STAY CLOSE TOGETHER AND CLOSE TO GOD DURING ALL THIS.

Below is some of what you need know about the worship service tomorrow at 11. You might also give yourself some time and space to center and prepare.

Preparing your holy space — make a special place for your worship. It can be a table, a desk or a comfortable chair. Plan to be in a space where you can connect with the Spirit of God.

Next to your computer, or on the dining room table, or the coffee table... almost any place if you are worshipping with your smart phone, create a space the reminds you of the sacredness of coming before God and the sacredness of gathering together.

For this worship, you are recommended to gather signs and symbols of what you find holy and special:

- you might put down a pretty piece of cloth, light a candle, add a cross if you have one, place your Bible there, place a picture or painting that is meaningful to you
- if you are particularly happy with the special space you created, take a picture and send it via email to the church office. We will share them on our FB page as a sign of our coming together with God.

Preparing to participate — In the service that was planned for your homes, you can go at your own pace. Even go back and reread or listen /watch again. You can pause the video just like you would a DVD. But remember, in spirit, we are trying to all be worshipping simultaneously and beginning together at 11 am. We trust of course that each will find your own way.

AND at 12 noon, we will connect via GoToMeeting “face to face” for fellowship.

If you have not experienced GoToMeeting, it is an ‘app’ that allows video conferencing. We will be able to see, hear and speak with one another. You are also able to participate by dialing in from a phone line. Please join us even if you don't have anything to say; you have things to hear, and people to see! And others need the support of seeing you and hearing your voice. We need to stick together now to support one another.

GoToMeeting Details – There is an invite below for our 12:00 p.m. virtual "Fellowship Hour" on Sunday, March 29. You may use the first link to access the meeting from your computer or mobile device IF you already use GoToMeeting. You may also dial in from a phone with the number provided.

For those using a mobile device or a computer with a camera, this Video Conference gives us the opportunity to see and hear each other. Those calling in by phone will be able to connect as well and speak with the group.

At the minimum, please give yourself 5 to 10 minutes BEFORE the start of our 11 am virtual worship service on Sunday to download the app and to get connected.

The link under "New to GoToMeeting?" will download the necessary files on your computer to get connected if you are using this service for the first time. If you are using a smartphone or mobile device, you can go to your respective "App" store and download the GoToMeeting app.

Please share the invite below with anyone you know who would like to join us for Fellowship Hour. And don't worry, if you have any trouble getting online, there is a telephone number you can use and you can simply call in and participate by phone like a conference call.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Fellowship Hour Invite
Sun, Mar 29, 2020 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (EDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/810881173>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: [+1 \(312\) 757-3121](tel:+13127573121)

Access Code: 810-881-173

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/810881173>

Preparing by yourself or with others – Our service was prepared for people at home alone, so it offers words that can be read silently or aloud. Take your time as we progress through each part of the worship experience. There is no need to rush through this.

If a family is worshiping together, simply adapt the service as you see best. Take turns reading. Or sit so everyone can see the computer screen. Or worship each with their own smartphone. But try to stay together, wait on one another, and go through the parts of the service as one.

Preparation for worship this week – Tim Hughes Williams, the pastor of Light Street Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, said something smart recently, “In times of crisis, people need space to connect more than anything.”

We need space more than perfection. And we need to feel connected more than we need to watch a worship service from afar.

So many pastors are running around making livestreams happen for tomorrow... it's really hard; we don't usually worship like this, and we're also stressed and trying to make all the right choices.

This doesn't have to be perfect. It won't be perfect. We are a church together, and feeling that togetherness is the most important thing, even if it's glitchy. Sometimes letting the seams show is the best way to remember we're just a community of people, doing the best we can.

So tomorrow when the cameras are on, turn to the camera and talk to each other for a minute. Extend grace and laugh with one another. We can be honest that we're learning as we go. Let people know you are here for them... that we are here for each other. God is too.

(adapted from the Rev. Emily M.D. Scott, organizing pastor of the Lutheran new church start, Dreams and Visions, also in Baltimore. Proof we're all in this together and we just need to show up: an historic UCC congregation in Allentown taking inspiration from an almost brand new ELCA congregation in Baltimore, a historic UCC congregation in Philly -- Old First -- and the wisdom of their PCUSA neighbors).