



Clinton Alliance Church

1192 Centre Road, Rhinebeck NY 12572
845-266-5178; www.clintonalliancechurch.org

March 20, 2020

Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. Due to recent decisions by local, state and federal government we are unable to meet on Sundays as we normally do. Since the duration of these restrictions is uncertain, we will be providing periodic updates on the church website (look under “info”) and facebook page. Also, feel free to contact the church office if you have other questions or would like to speak with Pastor Hartley.

President Trump has recommended that meetings be no larger than ten people. This effectively eliminates all of our weekly kid’s programs but not necessarily our Small Groups. If your Small Group is approximately this size, I encourage you to continue meeting. If you are not attending a Small Group, check the enclosed listing of available groups to find one to visit. (*You can call church office to get the number to call a leader and see if they are still meeting.*) If you have decided to discontinue your Small Group, please notify the church office so we can share the information. If you would like to form a “temporary” Small Group, contact a few people, pick a day, time and location, and then contact the church office. A good choice might be on a Sunday morning as people are accustomed to meeting at that time. If you would like some help with this, we can provide someone to lead the group. If you would like to lead your own group, we will be happy to show you how to do that with some simple instructions. Lastly, if you have symptoms or have been in contact with someone with symptoms, please **DON’T** attend one of these groups.

Sadly, the numerous restrictions placed on us will be the most challenging for those who live from paycheck to paycheck. If you have a need or know of someone who is struggling to get food, medicine or fuel please contact the church office and we will do what we can. If you are one of the families who is facing the possibility of lost income, please do not concern yourself with giving to the church. If, however, your income is secure and consistent, please continue your regular support to the church by mail or just place your gift in the offering box located in the Education Building (near the nursery). Your continued giving will help the church meet its ongoing financial obligations and also allow us to help families in need.

In closing, look for ways to help your neighbors, ways to demonstrate the love of Christ. Care for your families and pray for each other and I am sure that as the weather gets warmer things will get better.

Along with the listing of Small Groups I am also including a copy of the letter we mailed out with the Daily Bread devotional booklet about a month ago. When I wrote the letter, the virus was not part of my thought process. My mind was on other things and other people struggling with personal difficulty. Now, upon reflection, the letter seems to speak to what is happening across our nation so I offer it to you a second time to consider and hope that it provides some perspective.

God Bless and Keep you
Until the lights come back on

Pastor T. L. Hartley

TLH:cnh
Enc.

***Looking to make lasting friendships?
Looking for a way to “grow” in your faith?
Why not try a “Small Group”?***

These are active small groups in our church:

Home Group in Rhinebeck

Mondays at 6:30 pm; Helen Heller

Small Group in the Education Bldg.

Tuesdays at 6:30 pm; Butch & Debbie Knapp

Home Group in Clinton

Tuesdays at 7:00 pm; Roy & Mary Clark

Ladies’ Prayer Group - Education Bldg. Library

Wednesdays at 8:30 am; Joan Tompkins

Ladies’ Thursday Night Bible Study - Youth Center

Thursdays at 6:30 pm; Holly Stippa

Redemption Small Group – Church

Thursdays at 5:15 pm; Alan Stippa

“Morning Glories” Ladies’ Fellowship - Youth Center

Fridays at 10:00 am; Meghan Angell

Men’s Home Group in Clinton

Fridays at 5:30 am; Nathaniel Angell

AMEN Alliance Men’s Group - Youth Center

First Saturday each month at 7am; Rich Buotte



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February 2020

Dear Friends,

Fear is a powerful thing. Debilitating, stifling and confusing at the same time, it can reduce an intelligent adult into a frightened child in mere moments. Panic is usually what follows. As panic takes hold our emotions run wild looking for some security, some answer, some way out. The mind ceases to be rational, and instead is filled with dread. Regardless of the origin and regardless of whether or not the fear has any basis in reality, the individual is rendered impotent until the fear is dispelled. In other words, if the fear is big enough, it can stop us in our tracks, steal our joy and our peace of mind, and disable our ability to function.

Often in his earthly ministry Jesus would tell his followers not to be afraid but to trust God. To the skeptic, such trust would seem naïve and illogical. “How could any thinking person believe and trust in an invisible God?” Or, “How could that trust change the harsh realities of life or alleviate the fear that goes hand in hand with such realities?” Trusting God doesn’t change life’s difficulties. It does, however, address the issue of fear. I know this to be true because I have experienced it.

Paul wrote to Timothy that, “*God did not give us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*” If God does not give us ‘a spirit of fear’ then it must come from Satan. This makes sense because the Devil seeks to render believers ineffective for God. On the other hand, God gives us ‘the spirit of power,’ the ability to function, to do. He gives us ‘the spirit of love,’ the ability to love and trust Him unconditionally. Lastly, He gives us ‘the spirit of a sound mind,’ the ability to think straight, to concentrate, to think clearly. This verse is telling us not to panic but to submit our fears to Him. And if we do, He will in turn dispel the fear and restore our ability to function. It is a matter of focus. Do we focus on the difficulty or do we focus on God?

An old hymn admonishes believers, “*Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face and things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.*” I have known fear and dread and their power to set my head whirling. I am familiar with panic and its power to render me ineffective for God. But when I have refocused on God’s truth, when I ‘*look full in his wonderful face,*’ the power of fear dissipates like an early morning fog before the rising sun.

I have come to believe that fear is a choice. God offers an alternative, we have only to reach out and take it. Hope belongs to God and so, if we are to have it, it is to Him we must look.

In His Service,

Pastor T.L. Hartley

TLH:cnh
Enc.