

# COVID-19 and Caring for Others – UPDATE

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March 17, 2020

Dear Chapel on the Green community,

I hope you and your communities are coping alright in this midst of the uncertainty, anxiety, and risk that COVID-19 poses to the people we love and serve.

We are in constant discernment about how to best care for those who are homeless at this time, and await further advice from public health officials and the City of New Haven. Please know that for the time being, we plan to take the following measures to ensure that people have access to a free meal, while encouraging social distancing and minimizing person-to-person contact to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (subject to change):

- We will *not* be gathering as a worshipping community in the coming weeks.
- We *will* continue to serve a pre-packed bag lunch “to-go” near the south (Chapel St.) door of the church starting at 2pm, pending a coordinated city-wide response to make sure those who are homeless have access to food elsewhere.
- Food will be distributed by a small group of staff only.
- Volunteers can still be involved by prepping and dropping off meals, if you are able to do so. If your volunteer group is not in a position to provide meals, contact Heidi [cotg@trinitynewhaven.org](mailto:cotg@trinitynewhaven.org) / 860-850-0323 and consider making a financial contribution to help us continue providing food to those in need. Meal guidelines:
  - Meals should be pre-bagged and clearly labelled in paper bags – research suggests that the virus is more likely to survive on plastic surfaces. Plastic bags also tend to be reused and passed between many hands, which should be avoided at this time.
  - Water bottles can be separate, as these do not easily fit in a paper bag with other food items.
  - Consider limiting the number of people who make sandwiches, adhering to best practices of social distancing in your community, -OR- purchase pre-made sandwiches, such as frozen peanut butter & jelly -OR- use a catering service to order pre-wrapped sandwiches, and support local business. All volunteers involved in meal prep should be healthy, with low concern for having come into contact with someone who has COVID-19. Practice the utmost hygiene – washing hands for at least 20 seconds and using gloves – when preparing meals.

## How you can help:

- In the event that volunteer groups are unable to provide the meal, we will be reaching out to other volunteers to provide food. If you would like to be available to help in this way, please email [cotg@trinitynewhaven.org](mailto:cotg@trinitynewhaven.org) and we will add you to a list of potential crisis volunteers.

- Hygiene donations, particularly hand sanitizer and antibacterial wipes, are welcome. Contact Heidi to coordinate drop-off.
- Please *do not* come to volunteer in person. This is a way of helping! Trust us. Limiting person-to-person contact can slow the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.
- Non-profits will struggle financially in the coming weeks to continue providing services. Consider making a donation to Chapel on the Green, and other food pantries and soup kitchens such as the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, Loaves and Fishes, the Community Soup Kitchen, and Columbus House. We're all in this together.

We have informed guests at Chapel on the Green that any updates or possible future cancellations to our programming will be posted in the window display on the south side of Trinity on the Green. We will keep you – our volunteer partners – updated to any changes in our programming via email.

Faithfully,

Heidi

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## **Resources:**

*Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness – Coronavirus Homelessness Resource Guide*  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html#act>

*CDC Interim Guidance for Homeless Shelters*  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html#act>