Finding Hope in Pandemic
By Rev. Elizabeth Armstrong

As many fell ill and struggled to breathe in homes, hospitals, and ICU’s early last spring, it became apparent to me that this virus was going to gravely impact, and, at the same time, put a huge responsibility on, communities of faith to step up in real ways to bring a message of hope and continued Divine presence. Fear, loneliness, grief, pain and death were ravaging families and communities near and far. This was a challenge to our Message in a most difficult time.

Created by quarantining and not being with family, not worshipping together in person, or participating in usual activities, was space. It was frightening, depressing and maddening! Through pastoral letters, getting up to speed to Live Stream Worship services, and one-on-one visitations with members while masked and outdoors, I realized that there was in this space a God given opportunity for service—the “works” part of faith—should we chose to respond.

This was a motivating discovery and several members of the congregation, who had just begun to form as our Social Justice Committee, took this idea and ran with it. Working safely and diligently, two by two, masked and distanced, we helped furnish and paint several rooms in a newly purchased Transition House for the homeless (the first one in our county). We collected and delivered 785 pounds of food to our local food bank, and we are about to embark on a project entitled “Lasagne Love,” where we will be linked with people who would like to have a warm meal delivered.

We have been graced during these months with beautiful instrumental and vocal music for our Live Stream services. Several folks who have been unable to play or sing in their choirs or bands have come individually to add their talents to our ministry. We usually reach between 200 and 400 people in our Live Stream services each week. Many were unaware and respond favorably to the unique and inclusive theology of the United Church of Christ.

On Sunday, December 6, we will receive seven new members into our congregation. May God continue to sustain us through this time of world-wide pandemic and may we continue to enthusiastically respond to the call to serve.