

Minister's Message, May 7, 2020

The Moderator of the United Church of Canada is the Right Rev. Dr. Richard Bott. Richard has been very active encouraging and supporting UCC congregations during this pandemic. In a recent post he talked about our common desire to re-open our churches, and the challenges we will face as we try to do this over the coming months. Richard affirmed there are some core values we need to uphold as we move forward.

Firstly, he says "we want to do everything we can to keep people safe." This includes all congregational participants, people who we connect with through ministry outreach, staff and our Ministry Personnel. He encourages us "to be cautious, and listen to the guidance of our public health officials." He knows that for every congregation "there are some things we'll be able to do like we did before, there are some things we've learned that we'll want to keep, and there are some things that we have no idea about, but we'll have to keep an open mind to future shifts." So this is not just a simple return to things as they once were. We will have to let go of some activities, and learn to do others in a new way.

Rev. Bott affirms that "as a community of Jesus' people, we have a ministry to which we are committed." He says "As we go along our way, we are called to help people to enter into and deepen their relationship with God, in the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. We do that by truly loving God, our neighbours, and ourselves with all that we are. We do that tangibly, in action, in worship and in Sacrament." You, and your community of faith, will probably articulate it differently - but knowing what we're about, at the most basic level, is going to be important."

He encourages us, as we wait to hear from the health authorities about when we can meet - as families, as small groups, as medium-sized groups, and as large groups, to have conversations to plan how we will 'be church' in the coming months and possibly years to come.

The TSA Council has already started having such conversations about how we can best safely open our church when the time is right. We will do our best to include you in these conversations as we work together to develop our plan over the coming months.

In the mean time, we will continue to offer our Sunday morning Live Stream worship service on our Facebook Page. The printed text of the order of service and the sermon is posted on our website each week. If you want a printed copy of it mailed to you each week, please call the church office and leave Deb a message. Our weekly Bible Study meets using Zoom teleconferencing every Wednesday at 11am. If you'd like to join in the Bible Study, please send me a message at james@tsarenfrew.ca . And of course our music director Mike McCormick lifts all our spirits with his "Hump Day Hymns" concerts on our Facebook page live each Wednesday at 12:30pm. Our Pastoral Care team continues to Keep In Touch with our members. And if you'd like a call from me, just leave a message at the church.

Your continued donations to the church are more important than ever. Without our rental income and other fundraisers, your offerings are our only source of income. Donations can be dropped off at the church in the mailbox, or sent by mail, or by e-transfer. Your gifts are greatly appreciated.

So together we will keep planting those seeds of hope. This world needs more tomatoes!

With thanks,

Rev. James Murray