

Minister's Message, September 17, 2020

Happy New Year

While our calendars say that a new year begins in January, September is the real start of the new year of activities in our community. September is when school resumes, and most groups and programs get started. This makes September one of the busiest months as we make the transition from the lazy days of summer to the busy days of our social season. This September is quite different from any September we have ever known. Many familiar activities, like the Renfrew Fair were cancelled. Programs are not being run as they were in the past. It is going to be a very different year ahead of us.

On Labour Day we restarted live in person worship in our Sanctuary on Sunday mornings. We've averaged about 50 people each week. We are following all the Public Health guidelines to ensure the safety of all who attend. Each week worshippers will be screened when they enter the church. You can download the questions in advance from our website to speed up your entry to the church. Our services will continue to be streamed live on Facebook as well. We have installed a new camera to make this possible.

One of the challenges of this September is the need for us to catch up on all the things that got postponed or cancelled during the State of Emergency.

The Congregational Annual Meeting in March was one of those important jobs that we are now trying to do. We did try an online AGM, but that was disrupted and had to be abandoned. So this Sunday, September 20th, we will hold our 2019 AGM in the sanctuary immediately following the worship service. We will be live streaming the service and the AGM on our Facebook page. Due to technological limitations, people watching the AGM on the Live Stream will not be able to vote or ask questions. Copies of the 2019 Annual Report are available at the Church office and on our website.

The Anniversary Service this year will be on Sunday, September 27th at the usual time of 10am. Due to Public Health restrictions we are not able to host our usual Roast Beef Dinner that usually goes along with this celebration. This year the theme of the service is "Finding Hope". When you enter the service that day, you will be invited to write down on a card what gives you hope, and what you are thankful for. These cards will form the basis of our Pastoral Prayer time together. For those that are not able to attend in person, I hope you will email me your message in advance so it can be included in the service.

The last important job we need to take care of is to hold the Covenanting Service that will formally recognize me as your minister. I've been on the job since January, but this ceremony installs me in the position. The service will be held on Sunday, October 4 at 2pm at TSA. We will live stream this service for those who are not able to attend in person.

I'm very thankful to all the volunteers who worked over the summer to get the Thrift Shop re-opened in a way that is safe for both the customers and volunteers. The expanded space makes for a much more pleasant shopping experience, as well as giving the volunteers a better working environment. I'm also quite excited by the news that the UCW is planning a modified Tea & Talent Sale. Stay tuned for more details as this progresses.

So Happy New Year. It is going to be different, and it is going to be great.

With thanks,

Rev. James Murray