

April 24, 2020

Grace and peace to you,

In the church, April 26 would be the 3rd Sunday of Easter, but this year we mark the time as the “6th Sunday of Social Distancing.” Never before have we had to reimagine church as we are being called to do today. Faithfully we move forward as best we can!

We pray that you are well in every aspect, because every part of our lives is being affected. The effects of social distancing are immense. Tragedies like that in Nova Scotia leave us reeling. While it is important to stay current, turn off the news for large parts of your day. Be assured, you are in the hands of a mighty God. When fear, sickness, and violence threaten to undermine life, God is there.

It may seem easier to pull away or hunker down until this is over, however, be encouraged to extend yourself toward new social connections. You are the church in the world. Remember how you have been sustained and nurtured by Word and Sacrament, and in community. Let faith guide you to live with integrity, even in challenging times. Remember the needs of the vulnerable. The church is still very much alive, the stone was rolled away! We are resurrection people.

The past few weeks we have been offering recorded worship services on YouTube. Without proper lights, sound and technology, we feel this is about the best we can accomplish without further investment. Thank you for your kind support and encouragement. It lifts our hearts to know you are watching with us on Sunday mornings; thank you for your continued generosity.

During the week there are various opportunities for conversation and learning through Zoom. Recently we have had some kind volunteers step forward who will try to walk you through getting connected if you need help. It isn't the same as talking in person, but it is the best way these days to stay connected and stay healthy. The HS Support Team is continuing to make check-in calls; of course you are welcome to connect with us by email/phone.

Church building hours are 10:00 AM – 12:00 noon. Outside of these hours, please use our mobile numbers. Even during these hours we ask that *only essential persons* access the building (staff, treasurer, custodians, daycare staff, building maintenance as requested, food depot volunteers, counters, persons directly involved with worship recording.) Even if you currently hold a key or access code, please refrain from entering the building. We also ask that you would not drop things off in or outside the church without first connecting with Lori, our Administrator. Every additional person in the building increases the risk of community transmission – we want to do our part to keep everyone healthy. This is also in consideration of the daycare, which is one of the designated childcare sites and governed by strict guidelines. In addition, even these essential persons need to stay home if they are not feeling well.

It feels very odd to ask you to *not* come to church! We say this out of deep love and care for this community and your loved ones. Together we pray that *soon and very soon* this will all come to an end.

In the meantime, we invite you to reflect on the questions “where is God in all this?” It’s a faith question that stirs us to remember that God loves and cares for us deeply. This is the promise of Easter!

God bless,
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