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Apart But Together  
We Are Not Alone:  
We Live in God's World

## **UPDATE FROM THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE**

June 4, 2020

To our St. John's Church Family:

We would like to start this month's update once again, by acknowledging that these are not normal times. We have done so very well in our province, to keep the pressure off of our health care system and to protect our most vulnerable. By doing so, we have been able to move into the first phase of the "yellow level" of our province's re-opening plan. This has allowed us to finally see our close friends and family members and even get a haircut, should we choose to do so. Sadly, we have also seen how very fragile the situation is, with a new cluster of outbreaks in the northern part of the province. A surreal reminder that just one person's actions can affect so many.

We see that impact in the lives of our neighbours to the south as well, as we watch with disbelief the horrific actions taken this week against one person. What followed as a peaceful protest against unjustified police action in one city, has virtually overnight become a rally worldwide in support of justice, equality and peace. This should give us HOPE! Even in the midst of a pandemic, We are together... We are not alone...

### **Emergency Preparedness Committee**

Our committee continues to meet via teleconference on a bi-weekly basis, at which time we review the various daily updates from the Province of New Brunswick and the United Church of Canada. Updates are provided by the Minister, the Treasurer, the Chair of Finance and Property and the Chair of Ministry and Personnel. We would like to share some of those updates with you now.

## **Ministerial and Pastoral Care Update**

Reverend Aaron continues to bring the church to us each week using modern technology. This has not been without its challenges however. We are so very grateful to Reverend Aaron for his patience, creativity and ability to bring the warmth and reverence of our Sunday morning worship into our homes. We are also so very pleased that most of you are able to watch each week, at your convenience, over a cup of tea or coffee. Those who are not able to do so, are receiving a copy of the message through the mail on a bi-weekly basis. Remember, Reverend Aaron continues to be just a phone call away, should you need to speak with him. Please feel free to contact the church office and leave a message or send an email along to Reverend Aaron directly. His email address can be found at the bottom of this letter.

The Pastoral Care committee along with caring volunteers continue to touch base with our shut-ins and other members of our congregation, especially those who live alone or do not have access to the recorded services online. Special birthdays (85<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup> and above) and anniversaries (50<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup> and above) are once again being honoured with a beautiful handmade card via the mail. Children's birthdays are also being acknowledged in the Sunday School program with a special e-card being sent to all ages, 2 and above.

Should you appreciate a call from any one of the many volunteers, please feel free to contact the church office at 858-8289.

## **Treasurer's Update**

The Church Treasurer continues to participate in weekly conference calls with the United Church as well as the occasional conference call with the Canada Revenue Agency. To date, we have qualified for and received grants from the Federal Government under the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy program (CEWS) for the months of March and April. This subsidy provides monies to "qualified" businesses and charities, in the amount of 75% of salaried employee wages (to a specified maximum amount). To date, we have received \$13,005 as per the financial statements now posted on the church website. At this time, it is anticipated that we will not qualify for the May wage subsidy.

Monthly offering donations, received through pre-authorized remittance (PAR), on-line, via e-transfer and through the mail continue to be healthy. Mission and Service givings were forwarded to the United Church of Canada this week in the amount of \$3,812.50, bringing our total donations this year to \$7,319.42. Excluding the CEWS government funds, total offering donations during the month of May were almost identical to those of May 2019.

## **Finance and Property Update**

The Finance and Property Committee have resumed their monthly team meetings albeit over teleconferencing services. The first meeting was held on May 5<sup>th</sup> with the next to follow on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

The committee would like to sincerely thank all members of the congregation for their dedication and generosity in giving during this difficult time. Your gifts are truly appreciated!

While it is still not business as usual, a few small tasks are being addressed during the building closure. After reviewing quotes for restoration services; the church communion table, pulpit and baptismal font are being refinished. An application was completed for a Heritage Grant from the City of Moncton, so that we might begin to address the brickwork issues with the church building.

Weekly conference calls have begun with the United Church of Canada to discuss “Opening Our Buildings”. Discussions are at the brainstorming stage, as the task at hand is large and requires a great deal of preparation. With the primary authority resting in the hands of the Provincial Health Officer, overarching principles are being developed by the United Church of Canada to guide us in the process. Our first step will be to appoint a “Re-opening Committee”, so that the work required to allow us to re-open might be started.

Although the second phase of the “yellow level”, once announced, will permit religious services, weddings and funerals of 50 or fewer with social distancing, we do not anticipate opening our building for some time. The health and safety of our staff and congregation remains most important.

## **Ministry and Personnel Update**

The mental and physical health and safety of our 3 employees and 2 contract staff remains of utmost importance. We continue to ensure that when employees are present in the building, their presence is staggered. Karen continues to work from home managing correspondence and providing research material for Reverend Aaron, with a quick visit to the office to exchange material one morning a week. Patti continues to work in solitude at the church, with further reduced hours, and is tackling projects that have been on the back burner for some time, such as painting and staining.

## In Closing ...

In two weeks time, just prior to our July summer holiday break, Church Council will receive an update from the Emergency Preparedness Committee via teleconference. It will be our first full meeting of Council since February of this year. We anticipate regular Church Council meetings to resume in September, likely still using teleconferencing services.

The building may be closed, and normal activities are not taking place, but the church continues to be at work. Our job now is to support one other, keep in touch, grieve together, and celebrate the Good News of Jesus Christ in the places it can be found.

That's your update for now!

As always, if you have questions, feel free to contact any member of our committee. Our email addresses are included below. If you prefer, please leave us a message on the church office phone line. During this very difficult time, we too... really do appreciate your supportive messages... they are very uplifting!

Thank you, thank you, thank you for YOUR continued support. As a congregation we will get through this difficult time together. Until next time...

Peace and Prayers,

*The Emergency Preparedness Committee*

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