

To the Children of God who gather at Lennoxville United Church,

I miss you.

It's been 3 weeks since we closed the building due to the dangers brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. These are unprecedented times; the world is different now than it was a month ago. These are destabilizing times; we have been thrown off our regular schedules, we have had to change the way we do so many things. I continue to feel challenged as I do my best to be a Minister through these troubling times; I have never done this before and we didn't cover 'what to do in a pandemic' at the seminary. I pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to amplify our attempts to be church in these troubling times.

We are blessed with so many people with hearts that reach out. Our community of faith has created a phone ministry as a way to connect during this time of physical distancing. Council has met on the internet in order to continue leading our congregation, and Ministry Teams have been encouraged to move their meetings online as well. Some of us have gathered through Facebook Live Prayer and Reflection services, where we have been joined by dozens, even hundreds of other people looking for some comfort and hope. This Sunday we will have our first joint Zoom Worship with Plymouth-Trinity United, which allows for people who don't have the internet to join in through the phone. The full-time Ministers of the United St Francis Cluster are working to create 'do at home' prayers and liturgies so we can worship together in Spirit on Good Friday and Easter. I continue to trust that the Spirit is with us, guiding us so that we can continue to be church even when we can't meet in our church.

Remote ministry is an old form of ministry; we have a library of the Apostle Paul's letters to prove it. I do not know when we will be able to celebrate in person, in our sanctuary, but my faith is in a God who has promised to be with us through all the storms of life. The Holy Spirit is continually calling the church into transformation and in this time when so much is unknown, so much is uncertain, we must let the Spirit guide us towards love and hope. May we show the world that we are beloved children of God through small actions of compassion; a phone call, a grocery delivery, a mailed card, a donation to a food bank, a donation to Mission & Service. May we as a community follow the leading of the Holy Spirit just as Paul did almost 2 millennia ago.

Precious children of God, you are on my heart and in my prayers. Although I am unable to be with you in body, I am with you in Spirit. May God's arms hold you tenderly, may you find safety under the wings of our Creator.

"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God." (Romans 8:18-19)

I love you!

Rev. Linda D. Buchanan