

The United Church of Canada
Conseil régional Nakonha:ka Regional Council
Lennoxville United Church

Reflections of a United Minister
July 2020

It has been a strange and challenging few months. So much has changed in very little time, and each of us is finding ourselves in new realities. Governments have adapted, hospitals have adapted, schools have adapted, long term care facilities have adapted, even grocery stores have had to adapt in order to operate safely during this pandemic. We have washed our hands more in the last few months than in the last year (well at least I have), and all things at Lennoxville United Church have had to move online, or had to be cancelled. Some of us know people who have been sick, some of us know healthcare workers on the frontline, some of us have needed to navigate a transformed medical system, some of us have spent weeks without the touch of another human, and some of us have grieved the loss of loved one in difficult circumstances. The last few weeks have been a difficult time for everyone and the world seems to be changing even faster than before, while some of us feel like we are standing still. Connecting with you in prayer has taught me about how we can be alone together in these challenging times.

Through Facebook Live, I have learnt a new way to provide time to pray and reflect, for the people of Lennoxville United Church while also reaching others within the Lennoxville Community and the United Church community. We have also prayed with former residents of Lennoxville and people who have never even heard of Lennoxville. We are a part of a movement of love in the face of crisis through prayer and hope. I have prayed with you through personal reflections, especially with you who are living at the St Francis Manoir, the Stanstead Manoir and the Grace Village. We have connected through the simplicity and beauty of a phone tree. Council continues to meet through the online service Zoom; our Council is dedicated and has met every month since March. All of these ministries will continue throughout the summer and into the fall. We are learning new ways to be church trusting and sharing the truth that *we are not alone*.

I keep hearing that there is no going back. Growing up, I thought that Apocalypse and the book of Revelation was about some grand ending; the end of the world and the beginning of eternity. Later in school, I learnt about how Apocalypse actually means 'to reveal' or revelation. This is a pulling back of the veil and seeing the world for what it really is; it's a revealing of truth and of God in our society. I think we are living through a kind of apocalypse; Covid-19 has revealed struggle and ugliness in our society, forcing us to do better at caring for the vulnerable in our world. A new world is emerging, and I am grateful to be with you in prayer at this beginning.

We continue to need to keep our distance, but know that I am close to you in prayer.

Our Church Council met on June 17 to begin planning the re-opening of our Church building. As of June 22nd the Quebec Government is allowing church buildings to start opening. After looking over the resources provided by the General Council and the Regional Council, our Church Council has decided to proceed with caution. We will take the summer to plan and prepare, with the hope to launch what the General Council calls Phase 1 near the beginning of September. We will live into Phase 1 before moving into Phase 2. This means that although we are hoping for a return to the sanctuary for worship this fall, it will not begin in early September. The Council is creating a Covid19 Response Team to help create the plan and lead in its implementation. We will have more information for you later in the summer. The Ministry of Lennoxville United continues even though our building has been closed, may the Holy Spirit continue to amplify our efforts as we move into a different way of being church, once again.

Our Community of Faith has also been living into a new way of being, and I continue to be with you in Spirit, through the mysterious wonder of prayer. You are loved, beloved child of God; may your Holy Parent give you peace.

Blessings,

Rev. Linda Buchanan