

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

Reflections of a United Minister
August 2020

To say that the last few months have been stressful, is probably an understatement. Covid19 has changed the world, and we have all been doing our best to stay informed and keep ourselves and others safe. Some have had to transition to working from home full time; some have had children home full time; some have had teenagers home full time; some have had to undergo surgery during this time; some have been working in hospitals and essential services, putting their life on the line everyday; some have been extremely isolated during this time; some have had to grieve during this time; some have welcomed new life during this time; many have family members and friends on their mind. The uncertainties are building up, the plan seems to be changing constantly, and covid fatigue is setting in. Most of us are experiencing stress in some form.

When I get really stressed, I become unrooted. It can feel like I am just flying through, spending very little time with my feet firmly on the ground. I admit that over the past few months, there have been times that stress has stolen the best of me. So, with the encouragement of the Ministry and Personnel I took a week of vacation at the end of June. So we escaped to the forest for a camping adventure. I grew up camping multiple times every summer, and I am so grateful that this activity is something I can share with my wife Jillian. We were excited to introduce Willow to our family tradition of escaping to the woods to relax. Willow loved hunting for bugs and exploring the grass that was taller than her. Jillian and I reminisced as we celebrated 9 years of being partners in life and love. It was a wonderful weekend, and then came the rain.

It started raining on Sunday and continued on and off until Wednesday. This wasn't a light rain, there were times it came down really hard. We are pretty well equipped and we have a decent amount of experience, so we were relatively dry. Our sleeping tent stayed dry the whole time and our 12x12 kitchen shelter kept us dry during the day. By this point Jillian, Willow and I had spent 3 months confined to our 5 ½ apartment; and here we were in the middle of the forest confined to 12x12 feet. And it was WONDERFUL; I couldn't have planned such wonder. We spent our time reflecting, writing, reading, playing tabletop games, meditating, and simply resting in the rain. I felt the water wash through my spirit, and I experienced the healing presence of God. The Universe cared for me, giving me something my soul desperately needed but that I could not have named: the opportunity to rest in the rain.

You are loved, beloved people of God. I know these times are challenging, know that I am with you in prayer. I pray that you will be opened to God's wonder this summer: may beauty overwhelm you, may love empower you, may you find rest in the rain.

Blessings,
Rev. Linda D. Buchanan