

A Note from the Chair

March 24, 2020

Where we are with COVID-19.

Thanks to our wonderful Minister Don, we have begun the conversations about how we “do” church during this stressful time. We are looking at multiple ways of allowing us to remain in contact with each other.

This is an unprecedented time for not just each of us but our country and the world. We need to work together to look after each other. Many of our congregation are in the vulnerable group of over 60. We need to offer them the assurance of being there for them and protecting them, which may seem very difficult, but we want to do whatever we can to keep them from harm’s way.

Every day the news changes and every day we have to adjust again. Remember the creed that we say together:

We are not alone,  
we live in God’s world.

We believe in God:  
who has created and is creating,  
who has come in Jesus,  
the Word made flesh,  
to reconcile and make new,  
who works in us and others  
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:  
to celebrate God’s presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
God is with us.  
We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

There are key phrases that we hold in hope from this, phrases that can help us through this stressful time.

**“We are not alone”** – Remember, you are a member of the family of Orchard Valley. If you need help, someone to pick up your meds, groceries or do an errand for you, then let us know. We will find a way to help you. Your Pastoral Care Committee will be reaching out to you to find out the best ways to communicate with you as we move forward. They will be asking if you have access to a computer, tablet, email or if you’d prefer we communicate by phone, mail or hand-delivery. We want to be able to keep you informed of any changes at Orchard Valley as we move forward in this new reality.

**“We believe in God who works in us and others...”** – We are a hopeful family, we continue to be there for members of our family, as well as those in our communities. We offer support through many of the programs that we are involved in. Our outreach programs offer services to those in ways that we as individuals may not be able to do by ourselves. During this time, while the majority of the programs are on hold, we can offer prayers to those who have to be away from their families. Healthcare workers are, and no doubt will be, putting in long hours and are taking the risks that they themselves may become infected. We can offer prayers for our leaders having to make decisions that affect so many people’s lives. We can offer prayers to those who are sick and the faith that they will recover. We can offer prayers to those who have lost loved ones. I know we have huge hearts and we can be there for others, whether it is in our prayers or in our deeds.

**“We trust in God”** – We will get through this. We don’t know how long this will go on, but we will survive. We have great leadership in our church. Rev Don not only helps us with nurturing our souls, he deepens our spiritual knowledge, all with a side of humour. We have been very fortunate that Don and Cheryl have chosen to join us as part of our Orchard Valley family. Don will be there for the pastoral needs of our congregation and those who do work for us through our committees. Our “Hope Committee” is in the process of setting up how we “do” church. Rev Don will lead our spiritual support and be there for our Pastoral Care team if someone needs support.

**“We are called to be the Church: To Celebrate God’s presence....To love and serve others”** – Our Hope Committee consists of our Council Executive as well as key members of our Council who represent Pastoral Care, Worship, Finance, Music, M&P, and Communications, as well as our staff. This wonderful group of people will be working together to help us continue to be the church. We will be doing somethings differently. Sometimes change is good. Through this time, we will be experimenting with “YouTube”, possibly live streaming of services, possibly holding an online Congregational meeting through a new technology called Zoom, etc. In the coming days, as our Hope Committee gets their feet under them, more details will come. We are also investigating and organizing how, as members of the congregation, you can continue to support Orchard Valley in our efforts to care for those in our communities and Orchard Valley family. This may include volunteering to buy groceries for an elderly individual, doing an errand, or supporting OVUC’s work financially. We will continue to pay our staff through this time and support them in whatever ways we can. You can continue to financially support Orchard Valley through PAR if you are using that service, you can mail donations to the church, or you can donate through [Canadahelps.org](http://Canadahelps.org). We have a link on our webpage so you can access it directly from there as well.

As we do our best to communicate with our church family through letters, emails and phone calls, we also have our website and our Facebook page. We will be using these tools as well to keep our family abreast of any changes or updates.

In reading our Moderator Richard Bott’s Facebook page late last week, he left a wonderful message.

***It's important to remember:  
church doesn't close. Ever.***

***We may need to temporarily stop our face-to-face,  
full-on-peace-passing, communion-by-intinction,  
and offering-of-the-plates,  
but the church –  
the body of Christ –  
is a 24/7/365 reality.***

***It's lived, around the world,  
and in our homes;  
it acts, when our hearts reach out;  
it keeps going,  
wherever there is one disciple of Jesus,  
or two, or three –  
living the Way we've been taught.***

***And, with Paul, I'd like to remind you  
there is nothing –  
there is NOTHING –  
not a single thing –  
not in the sky above, or the earth below,  
not powers, nor principalities,  
not things seen, or unseen –  
nothing in all creation  
that can separate that creation  
from God's love in Christ.***

***We are the church.  
Always.  
And all ways.***

Stay tuned for more to come. Remember;

We are not alone.  
Thanks be to God.

You are my friends, my neighbours, my family.

Yours in Faith,

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