

16 March 2020

Dear Friends,

Session met after worship yesterday and made the decision to suspend all Knox activities – worship, book club, Bible study, meetings until the end of March. They have also asked our Session Clerk (Fiona Gow), Treasurer (April Watt), and moderator/minister (Laura Kavanagh) to assess the situation as it unfolds and make decisions about when normal routines will resume.

In the meantime, I am sure you are aware of provincial and federal restrictions regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and how each one of us can do our part to reduce the risk to ourselves, those we love and the population in general. If you have questions, please contact me directly at **250-415-8173**.

**Knox Elders will be keeping in touch with you by phone.** If you don't hear from your elder this week, please call me so that I can provide an update from Knox.

I hope to post a message (and with Steve's support perhaps even a song or two!) on the website. I will also continue to be connected to you via email. I am also exploring the possibility of hosting Book Club on ZOOM. Please connect with one another as you are able – no one should feel alone on the journey at this time. **Remember that some people are unable to get out for basic supplies or medication – if you can help them, please do so. I have also had offers from a few people to do this so if you need help – call me!**

Most user groups have also suspended activities at the church, so we are taking the opportunity for our custodians to use their time in cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and anything that people usually touch when they are in the building.

We have been asked about how people can continue to support the church financially while we are not meeting regularly. Please remember that if you are on PAR your donations will continue as usual. Those who contribute with cheques can mail them to the church or keep them until we are together again. The mail will be checked regularly. Many of you make your donations in cash – PLEASE DO NOT MAIL CASH! Set your offering aside as you would normally do and we will all catch up in due time. The treasurer assures me that our cash flow is not compromised but our expenses will continue so we do hope to get back on budget by the end of April.

Link to PCC information – <https://presbyterian.ca/2020/03/12/coronavirus/>

Please continue to connect with and pray for each other. Call or text me anytime at **250-415-8173** or email [ltknox@telus.net](mailto:ltknox@telus.net). We all need support and encouragement as we deal with uncertainty.

Stay calm and do not be afraid. Peace,

Laura

**Below is a prayer from the Lenten Study that focusses this week on “Creating Safe Space”. I have also included some scripture and other excerpts from the study that help us remember that Jesus offers a peace of mind, body and spirit that is peculiar and powerful – a peace that the world in all its anxiety cannot control – a peace that releases us from our troubles and our fears. May it be so...**

*God of the morning stars, we come wondering who we are. In call and response, you invite us to sing ourselves into faith. Teaching empathy and compassion, you gather us together to go out to love the other. Accepting us as we are, you are our safe space, your love nurtures us. Transcending time, your love ties generations together, giving each a story to tell. And in Jesus Christ we learn that out of death, your love brings life and hope. Mold and make us; shape and form us; teach and transform us. Help us become your people. Amen*

#### **Philippians 4: 4-9**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

#### **John 14: 25-27**

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

**Peace:** *I believe that the peace Jesus offers us is not to be equated with happiness or with passive resignation to what is. But instead it is a peace with both the quality of reconciliation with present reality and the quality of hope for the future. It is not the peace found in the termination or absence of conflict, but the peace that is found in courageously facing hard truths. Jesus’ peace gives us comfort when nothing is comfortable. It restores hope in us even in the face of great adversity. With the peace of Jesus in us, we can get up each day to face whatever may lie ahead.* (Emily Bisset)

The church is called to be a messenger to the world of God’s peace. We do this as we reach out to each other and beyond ourselves to provide safe, welcoming space for everyone and anyone. When we judge, distort and refuse to see others as God sees them – as beloved creatures made in the image of God – barriers and divisions are created.

The church is called to be a safe space and community. Where we are safe in body, mind and spirit and invited into honest connection. In this safe space, we protect vulnerability and guard each other from shame. God provides the clothes for us to put on: compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience – with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Even as we remain physically separated, may we be the church that God is calling us to be – as safe space with a welcoming heart.