

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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To: My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Today is a perfect spring day. Clear sky and lots of sunshine. Susan just returned from doing the grocery shopping, her first in 12 days. There are a few boats out on the lake in the last few days, but at this point it looks like it is going to be a quiet summer. All the public boat launches have been closed and since marinas are not an essential service, most of their doors are locked as well. In the larger scheme of things this is not a big issue.

However, some people are starting to get impatient. April 16th there was a protest in Lansing, Michigan of more than a thousand people who demanded that things be opened up. They wanted to be able to get their hair cut and their nails done. They chanted in regard to their female governor: "Lock her up! Lock her up!" Where have we heard that line before? This past Saturday, about 100 protestors showed up in front of the Ontario Legislature at Queen's Park demanding that the coronavirus restrictions be lifted and that the economy be restarted. Premier Doug Ford called them a bunch of "Yahoos" and hoped that the Toronto Police would slap them with heavy fines.

We are an impatient people. We are determined to get whatever we want and we want it now. We are not willing to wait. Previous generations had to wait for a depression or a war to be over before they were able to buy a house or a car. They learned to save and paid cash for most of their belongings. Credit cards were unheard of. They got married and started families when they could barely find work. People born between 1901 and 1924 are known as The Greatest Generation, while those born between 1925 and 1945 are known as the Builder Generation. And then there comes my generation. We are the Baby Boomers and were born between 1946 and 1964.



“... a place to belong!”

I don't know if I am typical of the Baby Boom Generation but my mother once told me that I was always in a hurry. I was in such a hurry to come into this world and get on with my life that she had to stay in bed for 7 months to try and slow the process down. I was in a hurry to grow up. I was riding a two wheeled bicycle by the time I was four and could drive a car (on back roads) by the time I was 13. As I point out in this week's sermon, patience has never been one of my strengths. Dr. William Fitch, long time minister of Knox Presbyterian Church on Spadina Ave. in Toronto, once said that it takes 20 years to turn a church around – to take it from death to life. As a young man in Niagara Falls, I tried to do it in five. I drove a lot of people away and almost wore myself out.

God, on the other hand, is patient. His approach from the Upper Story is to take a long term view. He is not behind in causing his people to wait for him to fulfill his promises. As we saw last week, he made Abraham wait for 25 years before he gave him a son. The children of Israel, because of their impatience and unbelief, he caused to wander the Sinai Desert for 40 years before he allowed them to enter the Promised Land. For 400 years he was silent, from the time he spoke to Israel through the last prophet until the day he spoke to Mary promising that in 9 months, she would give birth to the Saviour of the world.

We would do well to heed this lesson. Slow down. View life from the Upper Story and not just the short term. The lockdown measures for COVID-19 could go on for months. Be patient. They are put in place for our own good, not by a cavalier or vindictive government. Be more concerned about what God wants to teach you during this time than that things get back to normal. The reality is that some things will never go back to the way they used to be. Most of our problems are what might be termed "First World problems". It is better that we learn to be patient in the face of the adversities we are facing, and remember the words of Paul:

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

(1 Thessalonians 5)

12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4)

Your servant in Christ,
Rev. Stephen Dunkin

“... a place to belong!”