

24 March 2020

Hello Knox Friends and Family!

Worship at Knox will be emailed on Saturday and posted on the website. You can follow along with the video using the print material that accompanies it. <https://pccweb.ca/knoxpcvictoria/>

This Sunday the **PWSD story** highlighted below focuses on farmers in Malawi. Please read it and remember those who may struggle with food security. The intergeneration service and visit from UVic students planned for today will be rescheduled.

The session (via the clerk, moderator and treasurer) has decided to suspend all gatherings at Knox Church at least until the end of April – no face-to-face worship, meetings, study groups, etc. Grace Church will likely make the same decision as have our other user groups. This means that we will continue with email, phone calls, videos and other “virtual” methods of being a community of faith for the foreseeable future.

Knox Book Club met on Saturday via Zoom and it worked quite smoothly. We would like to try hosting a “**coffee time**” using the same method. The “virtual coffee time” will be on **Thursday at 2:30pm**. There will be a link on the website tomorrow and you may receive an email notification from me. All you need to do is click on the link at the scheduled time and follow the directions from Zoom. This is free for you, but you need to bring your own coffee, tea or other snack! Everyone is invited to participate.

Most of you have connected with your elder on the phone or by email. They are working hard to help us remain in community. Reach out to one another as you are able and let me know if you need anything at all. If you know someone who is feeling especially isolated and alone, please help me connect with them. Let’s all stay home as much as possible and stay safe.

Please know you are cared about and that we are doing our best to stay in touch and to provide worship and other spiritual supports. Continue to pray for each other. Stay calm and do not be afraid. We all need encouragement in these days of uncertainty. **Call or text anytime 250-415-8173 or email ltknox@telus.net**

Peace,

Laura

Reducing Costs and Doubling Crops

In a group of mostly women, Komani stands out. The 34-year-old is one of just a few male farmers assembled under the shade of a mango tree in Karonga, Malawi.

Komani is meeting with other members of a village savings group, where farmers come together to share loans to buy farming supplies and meet other needs.

The savings group is part of a PWS&D and Canadian Foodgrains Bank project teaching farmers to grow more food and overcome hunger.

Komani reports that with extra money and training in sustainable farming methods like conservation agriculture, he has doubled his maize crop.

"This area is affected by dry spells," explains Komani. "With conservation agriculture, we've seen a difference. There is a positive outcome with both quality and quantity."

A champion for women's empowerment, Komani encourages his wife to decide how to allocate loans from the savings group. When women have more control over household savings, the well-being of the whole family tends to improve.

This Lenten season faithfully respond to equip farmers with the resources they need to combat hunger and care for their families.

A prayer for today...

Holy One, out of our poverty we seek your riches of mercy, for our loved ones and friends and neighbours, for strangers in other lands and also for our enemies.

We ask you to bless those most dear to us, forgiving their sins, cherishing their good qualities, challenging their follies, nursing their ills, and encompassing them with your guiding light. We ask you to bless those working at home or in challenging situations – those with too much time for leisure – our neighbours and friends in isolation – the kind and the more difficult, and those distant friends whom we do not see often enough.

We ask you to bless those who serve us in places of business or in medical contexts, those who remove our garbage, deliver our mail, and provide all manner of service. We ask you to bless those people around the world who are disliked and abused, exploited or oppressed, persecuted, imprisoned or forced to flee from their homeland.

Heavenly Father, we pray too for our church – this congregation of your people – this community of faith. Help us to welcome the gifts of all among us, and to dedicate our own gifts to you without regard to the amount or measure by which others serve you. Help everyone to acknowledge each other as the reflection of your glory and to hear from each voice the good news of your love.

Generous God, you gather us together as a church even when we are physically separated from one another. Help us to be your church at its finest. May our friendship be fond, may our conversation be creative, may our actions bear witness to your presence in our midst and to your promise for our future. We bring these prayers in the name of Christ Jesus, our Lord, our teacher, our guide and our friend. Amen