

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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Dear friends in Christ:

When things were locked down in late winter except for essential services, marinas had to close their doors. It wasn't much of a problem in March, but as things began to warm up this spring, it became a problem for boat owners. It was what my friend George would have called a "first world problem". Suddenly cottage and boat owners were demanding that marinas get their boats out of storage, service them and get them in the water. You may remember that for a period of time, the Ontario Government and municipalities in



cottage country were strongly telling seasonal residents to stay at home. While we live in cottage country, Susan and I are permanent, year round residents. So living at the lake was not a problem for us. But our older pontoon boat was in storage at the marina and it looked for awhile like it would remain there for the foreseeable future. I have spent every summer of my life on the water and the thought of not being able to go out in a boat, while a first world problem, did seem a bit discouraging.

So we decided to get out the little 12 foot aluminum boat that we had not used since we moved here in 2016. We quite enjoy touring Big Rideau Lake and the Rideau Canal system in our pontoon boat. It is great for taking out family and friends. You may think that being reduced to the small aluminum boat would be a letdown, but that is not true. It is just the perfect size for Susan and I, and it just sips gas. We quite enjoy going out in it and there is one big benefit. Because it is so small and doesn't need much water to run in, we have been able to tour and explore parts of the lake we could never reach before.



One of our favourite discoveries is a place called "Lost Lake". We would never have considered

"... a place to belong!"



taking the pontoon boat down in there. Lost lake is hidden in an archipelago of islands called Long Island on the north and Colonel By Island on the south. Colonel By Island is owned by Parks Canada and it is where all the bigger cabin cruisers like to moor. It is protected and always packed with boats during the summer. There is another lake hidden back in this group of islands called Long Island Lake and it is popular with smaller boats. But Lost Lake feels like a different world. The first time we visited it we came across these turtles sunning

themselves on a log.

As we followed the winding waterway into Lost Lake it felt like we were entering a wild place. Fallen trees littered the shore. Looking down into the water and it was possible to see huge stumps that are remnants of trees that grew here before the land was flooded by the Rideau Canal system in the 1830's. We discovered all this because the present pandemic shut down the marinas and we were moved to use a boat that had just been sitting on the shore for 4 years.



A lot of tragic and terrible things have happened during this pandemic, but some good things have happened as well. God has a way of turning what seems bad or evil into good. Joseph discovered this. In Genesis 50 we find this man who had been sold into slavery by his brothers saying: [19](#) **“Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? [20](#) You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.** In Proverbs 16 we read: **9 In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.** We make our plans, but in the end it is the Lord who determines our steps. One final verse from Proverbs 3 to leave you with: **5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.** As children of the one true God we can depend on him to do right by us. Things may not turn out as we had planned, but the hand of our God is upon us. He is utterly dependable even in the darkest circumstances of life.

Your servant in Christ,
Rev. Stephen Dunkin
Loch Mor
Big Rideau Lake

“... a place to belong!”