

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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June 25, 2020

Dear friends in Christ:

I am amazed to realize how quickly things can change and how fast our thinking can change. When I wrote to you last week, the leadership at St. Andrew's was looking at Sunday, July 5th as a possible start date for resuming regular Sunday worship services. We knew that worship would look different than what we had been used to in the past. No Bibles or hymnbooks in the pews. No singing. No offering taken up – just plates at the back for putting your offering in. Face masks to be worn for the entire church service. No visiting in the church after the service. Congregants spaced out throughout the sanctuary.

Well, last Thursday evening the Session and some members of the Board of Managers held a mini-service in the church sanctuary. It was hot as blazes as St. Andrew's often is during the summer when we have one of those warm humid spells. Usually we would meet in the basement when the weather is like this, but that was not an option. To maintain the six foot social distancing, we had to leave two empty pews between everyone that was occupied. As I looked out over those assembled, it looked like a bank robbery gone wrong! With everyone wearing masks, it was hard to tell who the bad guys were!! It was wonderful to hear Ann at the organ, but it felt so wrong not to be able to sing. And it was so uncomfortable to spend more than an hour wearing a mask. It may feel different if a church has air conditioning, but air conditioning is not an option for St. Andrew's.

So, the consensus of the Session and the Board was that we not physically open the church for worship services until September when things have begun to cool down and wearing a mask during worship would not be so uncomfortable and hard to breath. That means that our present online services will continue until the end of August. In other words, for now, everything will remain just the same as it has since the middle of March. I will continue to provide a full worship service just as you are receiving now until the end of July. August I will be on holidays (except for my surgery in February, I have had only one Sunday off since last August). I have arranged for guests to supply the services for August. Session considered cancelling services completely for August, but in these times of uncertainty I feel

“... a place to belong!”

that weekly worship is essential. No one knows what the future holds, but we will continue to monitor the situation in our community knowing that we can depend on our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to give us the wisdom, discernment and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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

“... a place to belong!”