

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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July 22nd, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ:

This letter is the last that you will receive for a month, as after this Sunday I will be on vacation for all of August. It also marks a transition in my ministry at St. Andrew's, as my contract as Stated Supply ends August 31st. You may be wondering what that means and how things will look in the future. In this letter I will try to spell that out.

First, I want to assure you that Sunday Services will not cease. I have arranged "pulpit supply" for the month of August. The following will supply the services in the same format that you have been receiving them since the middle of March.

August 2 nd	Rev. Beryl Orok (Beryl and her husband Rob are well known to our congregation.)
August 9 th	Rev. John McIntyre (John is retired from Lanark Baptist Church and he and his wife Karen have worshipped with us on numerous occasions.)
August 16 th	Rev. Beryl Orok
August 23 rd	Rev John McIntyre
August 30 th	Rev. Rick Lamothe (Rick and his wife Donna are new to St. Andrew's. This fall, Rick will be preaching three Sunday's a month. Rick and Donna recently moved to Oxford Mills from Alberta and are involved with RSVP Ministries.)

So that is what the summer will look like. You will receive the service each week just as you have since churches were closed in March. The leadership of St. Andrew's made the decision not to reopen the church until September.

In September, I will not be Stated Supply but I will continue to be your Interim Moderator. At this point, the plan of the leadership is that we will be worshipping back in the church. I will be preaching September 6th, October 4th (Communion Sunday), probably November 1st, November 29th (beginning of Advent) and December 6th (Communion Sunday). Rick Lamothe will preach the remainder of the Sunday's (three per month). Only the first two Sundays have been agreed upon. The other Sundays are probable, but haven't been finalized.

"... a place to belong!"

As Interim Moderator, I am responsible for making sure the pulpit is supplied each Sunday. I will lead Session meetings on a monthly basis and whenever else they are required. I will continue to work with the Search Committee in helping you to find your next minister. I will not be participating in Presbytery, Ministerial or any other groups of which I have been a part. I will not be doing services at Lanark Lodge or Perth Community Care unless they fall on one of the Sundays I am preaching. I will not be doing regular pastoral visiting, although I am always available for any pastoral emergencies. As you can see, I am working my way much closer to retirement. I guess it would be fair to say that I will be semi-semi-retired!

If this pandemic has taught us anything, it should be that the future is uncertain. We have no idea what will happen in the next year. There is talk of schools opening in September but it is unclear what that is going to look like. There is talk of university classes being online but some universities are also talking about welcoming international students including students from the US. There is the growing belief that as things open up, there will be a second wave of the coronavirus. What that will look like and whether things will shut down again remains to be seen. So yes, the future is uncertain, but that does not mean that we are alone. Being in an uncertain situation when you are in the company of someone who knows the ropes is not stressful. You just relax and let that person lead. We worship the Sovereign God of all Creation and we are saved by the precious blood of Jesus the Lamb of God and sealed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Much better an uncertain future with our Lord leading us than a certain one without him. We do not need to live in fear but rather in peace knowing that the Almighty God abides with us. In John 14 Jesus tells us: **27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.**

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

“... a place to belong!”