

Aurora United Church
Message from Rev. Lorraine & Rev. Andy
June, 2020

Rev. Lorraine:

Hello everyone it is great to be able to connect with all of you in what has been in the last few months an unprecedented time in all of our lives. Little did we know back in middle March that three months later we would be still be worshipping online and that church life itself would have changed so profoundly. But of course it has. Being the storied church community that we are having come through some significant life altering situations in the past. It appears that we are coping as well as we can and we have discovered something about ourselves as a church, something that we learned initially six years ago, and that was that a building does not make a church. As we continue to declare church didn't close of course – only the buildings closed. However the life that is the spirit of our church continues and we continue, all of us, to see that and the spirit of our church goes on. It will of course do that until we can all be together again - but we will not be together again in the sanctuary of Trinity until we are entirely safe to do so. We miss all of you so much and that certainly continues to be the case. Zoom is wonderful and has kept us connected but it is a reminder of what we are missing and we certainly do miss all of you.

Our online worship experience has been one of learning as we go and I am sure you can see that. Members of the congregation have been very generous in offering to participate in worship – calling us into worship, reading scripture, telling stories, singing, playing – all of it and we are just so grateful that that continues to be so. It is wonderful to see people doing their filming at home – inside and outside. It's been great. Thank you everyone.

For the most part our groups and committees have continued in this time and we have all become Zoom masters to some degree in order to stay in touch. Recent news of churches reopening may have stressed you or excited you. There is still a lot of course that is unknown in this regard. It is safe to say at this point that it is not likely that we will be back in church again for a number of months as planning evolves for guidelines to keep worship goes as safe as possible and of course we worship in Trinity's building and their building is remaining closed until at least September. We will be involved in some planning then to get us back there. We will continue to worship online and meeting with our groups and committees as needs arise.

As we come to the end of June we will make that summer shift that we normally make. For the most part meetings will cease until September. The staff will continue to connect through the summer. Prayer Shawl knitters, Chancel Choir, UCW and handbell ringers will stay in touch – that social aspect to stay in touch over the summer. Andy and I are going take the first three weeks of August for holidays. We will provide worship resources and links to area churches and beyond so that you won't miss out on worship opportunities and we will see you back in the last week of August.

I think the most difficult part of this experience has been the social distancing that has kept us apart. If anything, church is about being together and being present to one another in our mutual expression of our faith in worship and in the wider life of the church. That has been so hard. We know too that at the same time we will be together again in time. Work on our new church building is about to begin and good things will continue to happen there and still across our church ministries even still. We look forward to that time when we will be together, although being together again will look entirely different from what we have been used to – for a time. We will be a changed community, no doubt, but we will still be the congregation of Aurora United Church. In the mean time we will further find creative ways to be together.

Rev. Andy:

I want to share with you a few things that are happening. In regard to our outreach ministries – they continue – especially our meal programs through Welcoming Arms – Martha’s Table Thursday at lunch and Welcome Table on Wednesday night. Both of these are take-out meals with the support of the Aurora cares Committee and Mayor Tom Mrakas. We are grateful that these meal programs have continued. Rise and Shine Breakfast, our takeout program started up a few weeks ago with help of YRFN who are supplying the breakfast. Our volunteers arrive on Saturday morning to bag the breakfast along with a few lunch items. We have Tim Horton’s coffee as well. It is great to have breakfast Saturday morning from the Trinity parking lot. These programs continue to serve the vulnerable and those who need the meals at this time.

Our children and youth ministries continue. Our children are online every Sunday with Sunday School hosted by the Shining Waters Regional Council. Every two weeks our own children have been getting together to share in prayer, reflection, singing and being together with one another. The youth have come together every Wednesday afternoon. A few weeks ago we joined with the youth in the region to make some plans for the fall especially in regards to anti-black racism and how we can raise awareness within Shining Waters.

Rev. Lorraine:

As we come into these summer days now, let us welcome the God of creation whose expressions of love give meaning and hope to our lives.

God bless.