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Spring Newsletter March 2020

(Special update related to the COVID-19 Pandemic)

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Trinity is considering a wide range of measures that can be implemented to reduce the probability of spreading the virus within the Trinity congregation, the church staff and related groups and services.

Some actions have already been taken. The first was the cancellation of the 10.30 worship service on Sunday March 15th. This information was disseminated primarily via emails, however, many of our members were informed by telephone and were also requested to share the message with their friends and relatives. Messages were attached to the doors of the church and the information was posted on the "Wayside Pulpit" It appears that our coverage was effective; however we apologize if you did not get the message in time.

As of Monday March 16th, a COVID-19 Response Team was formed. It is an emergency executive committee that is empowered to make urgent decisions that will affect church activities while the Corona virus remains a threat. The team consists of two representatives of the Ministerial team, plus four from the following; Chair, Vice Chair, Past Chair, Secretary, Finance, Trustees, and Building & Grounds. Resource persons include the Treasurer and the Church Administrator.

The initial actions to be taken by the team are as follows:

- ◆ in order to keep everyone informed of changes, contact lists will be updated including those of the Board, the congregation and the community groups. If you have any updates such as cancelling your home phone or moving, please call the church office so our lists can be kept current;
- ◆ changes will be disseminated through social media, a "phone tree", Trinity's website, an email list, the North Bay Nugget, the "Wayside Pulpit" and newsletters as required;
- ◆ the church will now be closed up to and including April 5th. Regular office hours and worship services are suspended until Monday April 6th (or longer if deemed necessary). It is probable that there will be further church closures beyond that date;
- ◆ The Trinity Food Shelf and the Infant Food Shelf are considered essential services and will remain open in order to meet local needs. Distribution processes will be amended to reduce risks;
- ◆ staff support will still be required during these closures, however our staff members will be able to consider options of their own choosing (i.e. work-from-home etc.) in order to reduce or eliminate their COVID-19 exposure at the church. Emails to the church and messages left on the church answering machine will be monitored on an ongoing basis;
- ◆ weddings and funerals will not be held in the church until further notice. Please contact your funeral service provider to discuss details should the need arise;
- ◆ cleaning of the church and access to sanitizers will remain a high priority.

Pastoral care concerns have not been forgotten. Discussions are ongoing on various levels to devise procedures for maintaining contact with our members and for dealing with outreach emergencies.

A number of previously scheduled social events have been postponed including the Chili Cook-Off on 27 March and the Michael White Led Zeppelin concert on 18 April.

Further newsletters will be provided as information becomes available.

In an earlier time of considerable anxiety, Saint Paul wrote to his Christian protégé Timothy, "God did not give us a Spirit of fear, but rather a Spirit of boldness and of love and of good sense" (2 Timothy 1:7). In today's disruptive time of anxiety and isolation, we in the Trinity family will care for our neighbours and one another with that same loving Spirit: *bold, loving, and sensible*. May that same Holy Spirit guide and sustain you through these days.

From Rev. Ted's Desk: "A Deeper, **Bluer Lent**"

To My Dear Church Family~

We had already been encouraging one another to see this Lenten season through a "Blues lens" - exploring the deep emotional realities of living our Christian story. And then - in a time when some of us sometimes take on an extra season-long spiritual discipline - a powerful discipline has been imposed on all of us, and certainly not one of our choosing!

The virulence of Covid-19 has forced us to physically withdraw from one another.

Please realize this: we will remember this strange "*closed-for-business*" period for the rest of our lifetimes! These days and weeks will echo on in the years and decades to come.

Anticipating that 'echo,' I encourage you to make this time of isolation memorable in a paradoxical way: memorable not just for how the isolation **closed you down**, but also for **the ways that you will open up!**

Times of retreat and seclusion can be unique opportunities *to open yourself up* - open to spiritual inquiry, to opportunities for service, to the wealths of our faith tradition, and to practices of prayer. Consider: calling a lonely neighbour, or writing someone an old-fashioned letter. Take a week to read one of the Gospels in a deliberately prayerful way, or download a meaningful book, or experiment with meditation, listening to God's "still small voice" in this blue season of unusual quietude.

Don't do any of these things to simply clutter or occupy your days - instead regard them as permission - open your spirit to enrichment, expansiveness, and discernment. This Lent, allow God to bless you in that spaciousness.

Your in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ted', with a small flourish at the end.

P.S. You'll be hearing from Trinity staff soon about various home worship and activity options for various ages. If you want to chat with me personally about what may help bring *your* spirit to life this season, send me an e-mail and we'll schedule a telephone conversation. (However, unlike at church, you may have to prepare your own coffee!)