



TOPSAIL UNITED CHURCH

The Church By The Side Of The Road

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Christian Greetings
from
the Minister's Study
APRIL 23, 2020

PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP IN

“HOW DO I LOVE YOU IF I CAN'T BE WITH YOU?”

I come to you in unprecedented times in our country Firstly, the pandemic known as covid-19 has weighed heavy upon us as we hear stories of families separated and our loved ones dying alone and, now, our neighbours in the province of Nova Scotia are experiencing the worst shooting tragedy in the entire history of our country. ‘How can *we* love if *we* can't be with *them*'?

I am not going to minimize your pain. We all want to wrap our arms around the people we love and hold them close at times like this.

Our sisters and brothers in Nova Scotia have a hard road ahead, filled with grief and questions pertaining to such an evil and destructive act; covid-19 requires that we exercise patience and strict control, re social distancing and self isolation. as we chafe to break free of its grip. However, all is not lost: there are still myriads of ways to connect with one another.

It can be a way to check-in reliably, but it may also need to be used sparingly for sanity right now. We must be careful of relying on too much social media - of misinformation, for some it is raising our anxiety instead.

And what about your neighbors? These days we are better at reaching people at a distance than the people we live right next door to. We have online conferencing options like Zoom. You could sit down to dinner with people through Zoom or have Bible Study or UCW and UC Men circle. Maybe we can take a lead from the younger generations for despite living and working in distant places, they have been able to maintain close contact and friends through the different forms of social media. They can show us how to be authentic as we relate in new ways.

And, there is the good old-fashioned way – the telephone or letter and card writing. Send them to shut-ins (*which may be practically everyone for a bit*), folks in nursing homes, your grandkids or grandparents, people in prison, police and fire and medical personnel. Your care and concern for people could be put to great use right now in a world that fears all this isolation.

Members of Topsail United Church, this may be your moment to help us remember the people right next door to us. As the weather improves, what if our congregation led by sitting out on our porches, waving, or chatting with people as they walk by? If we keep safely social distancing, as long as we interact with one another with space between us and stay within guidelines that the Provincial and National Health Advisors recommends, we can keep or make new connections with one another. Perhaps we will have two or three gathered in front yards this summer.

Friends, you are called to love. If there was ever a time when the world needs love, it is now. Do not let the bounds of isolation keep you from who you are called to be as a disciple of Christ.

Be safe, be responsible, but also be open. Your love will be transformative for others because it is the love that flows from Christ.

Rev. Wayne

A legal expert stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to gain eternal life?”

Jesus replied, “What is written in the Law? How do you interpret it?”

He responded, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus said to him, “You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.”

But the legal expert wanted to prove that he was right, so he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:25-29, CEB translation)