



GEORGE STREET UNITED CHURCH



25 Buchanan Street, St. John's, NL, A1C 0A4

***So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new! All this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;
--2 Corinthians 5: 17-18***

12 June 2020,

To the Scattered Saints of the George Street Pastoral Charge:

Grace and peace to you in the midst of your isolation.

In my last letter to you, I mentioned the work of having to translate old ways of being into new ways of being and a new language of being. Before we can engage in these actions, we have to know why we are reorienting ourselves in such a way that the new language and way of being becomes necessary.

Creation shows us that all living things must be growing, or they are no longer living. They atrophy, become less. They wither and die. That is not what Christ wants for His Church; and, I would imagine that, if each of us were asked, that is not what we want for our church, either. So, we need to grow. Or we die.

For a long time, the Church has been tempted to think about growth in quantity, the more we have the better off we are and so the emphasis has been on new members. We missed something along the way. The new Church of Jesus Christ which explodes onto the scene in the book of Acts and takes off in ways the Apostles were not prepared for does, from time to time, use the phrase, "and the Church grew by . . . on that day." But this information is the point of the text. The mention of new converts is always an, "Oh, and by the way," kind of deal. The emphasis on the text is what ministry is happening. Typically, that ministry is evangelism; yet, evangelism alone is not the only ministry which wins hearts. Hearts were won by the way the early Church invested in the ministry of reconciliation: bringing people together again.



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In our new church model, we want to be more active in the ministry of reconciliation. There was hurt in our body which became manifest to such a degree that we needed the intervention of higher courts of the Church. Even that intervention caused pain, similar to the pain we feel when we go to the dentist to have a cavity fixed. Sometimes, the treatment seems more painful than the problem. Cavities left untreated do not heal themselves; but instead lead to deeper and more painful problems.

We need to be mindful that the hurt still exists and it may take some time to completely heal. It will only heal if we continue to work towards reconciliation and make reconciliation part of the love language we use with one another. This means we need to examine ourselves for those qualities which facilitate reconciliation rather than division. Are we gentle in our criticism? Are we cynical about the future? Do we accept that we have a role to play in the healing of the whole, or is it all just a bunch of nonsense?

Moving to a new language allows us to focus on our ministry rather than constantly looking back and examining old injuries. Our ministry should define us more than our grievances do. Individuals are attracted to ways we may serve others and not for an insistence on us being served so that we do not need to change.

Instead of being officially boring, our leadership team has opted to become missionally focused. Instead of committees we are looking to populate teams. And because we will have several teams operating, we clearly need team-mates. You, beloved child of God, are one of the saints that we need on our team. The Holy Spirit has called you and given to you gifts that the Church needs and our first challenge is to uncover the gifts that each has been given so that we know who we can trust with which missions we will embrace moving forward. It is long-past time that we helped you find those gifts. We all have these ministries. Won't you join us in yours?

Your Servant in Christ Jesus,

Reverend John Maich