



GEORGE STREET UNITED CHURCH



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

***Jesus did many other things as well. If everyone of them were written books that would be written.
--John 21: 25***

26 June 2020,

To the Scattered Saints of the George Street Pastoral Charge:

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

If you have read the document produced by First Dawn, Eastern Edge [<https://ucceast.ca/59063-re-entry-to-our-church-buildings-checklist-june-17-2020/>] or the guidelines produced by the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Authority [<https://ucceast.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID-19-Guidance-for-Faith-Based-Organizations-June-2020.pdf>] then you would be able to empathize with the author of John's Gospel about how much space is occupied by things written down for our health and well-being.

The Province and The Region have given us clear direction about what is expected from Communities of Faith as they reopen for live, in-person worship. It is a lot to digest and, quite frankly, while the guidelines are appreciated, applying the guidelines to our specific context is no small feat.

Understanding that the next bit of news will be difficult for some. We want you to know that the Modified Mission Team Board (Official Board in our old language) takes your well-being seriously and we will be using these guidelines to ensure your return to worship at George Street is as safe as we can possibly make it.

Our return will not be before September. At this time of year, most Churches would ordinarily be winding down their yearly activities. The protocols called for



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by the Province and the Church, however, require the exact opposite to winding down. So, the Modified Mission Team Board has moved that we not meet again until we are prepared. Believe me: this decision was not made lightly or joyfully. But I am convinced that, as somberly as we voted to take this action, we were also doing so both faithfully and lovingly.

We need more time to consider what these restrictions mean and what ways we might use to operate within the parameters set for us by our Public Health Authority.

We did get some very welcome news amidst some concerning news. Our budget shows that our revenue from congregational giving is down, significantly down and yet, our revenue from other sources is actually on par with last year so we do not find ourselves in dire straits just yet. We do need our members to consider their patterns of giving during the pandemic and whether or not they can help in this difficult time. The Modified Mission Team Board fully appreciates that for those on fixed or limited income this pandemic has put no little pressure on your personal finances so protect your household first and help us later when you can. Doreen will be sharing some information from the Sustainment Team that will hopefully accompany this letter.

My final service as your Appointed Minister will be Sunday, June 28, 2020. I want to thank all of you for a very enjoyable and memorable year. My first service with you as your permanent Called Minister will be August 30, 2020 by live stream on the Church's Facebook page. Until then, I will be taking study leave and vacation. As my gift to you, I decided to record services for the Sundays that I will be absent—renewing and refreshing—and they will be posted and available for your Sunday mornings. The Church Regions in our Atlantic



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Bubble have also produced Sunday worship services that can be accessed at:

<https://ucceast.ca/59121-ucc-regions-east-worship-services-for-communities-of-faith/>

The Reverend Miriam Bowlby of Cochrane Street United Church will be handling our emergency coverage beginning June 29, 2020 and ending July 24, 2020.

(709) 728-8410

The Reverend Grant Stuckless of the Pouch Cove-Bauline Pastoral Charge will be handling our emergency coverage from July 25, 2020 to August 16, 2020.

(709) 725-6314

The Reverend Oliver Dingwell of Cowan Heights United Church will be handling our emergency coverage from August 17, 2020 to August 23, 2020.

(709) 640-4632

(709) 745-2871

See you in the fall. God willing!

Your Servant in Christ Jesus,

Reverend John Maich

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