



GEORGE STREET UNITED CHURCH



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

***And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds,
not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some,
but encouraging one another,
and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10: 24, 25***

2 April 2020

To the Scattered Saints of the George Street Pastoral Charge:

Grace and peace to you.

I have seen the text above used by brothers and sisters in the faith to justify their continuing to meet together; sometimes, in very large numbers. I understand the guilt that quoting such a text can promote. I'm appealing to it today in an attempt to strip it of its guilty grip and to re-centre it in a place of graciousness.

Verse 24 must be neglected in order for this passage to be an effective tool for guilt. Only stripped of its biblical context can verse 25 become weaponized against the faithful. Let us consider, then, how we might provoke one another to love and good deeds. In this time of physical distancing, we can turn to ancient technologies to show our love. The telephone predates the internet, so why not give friends and family a call? Have a good long chat. Neither of you are going anywhere, right? Predating the telephone is: the mail. Now would be an excellent time to write friends or family a brief—or lengthy—letter to let them know you are thinking about them. Both telephone and the mail are great ways to touch the lives of your brothers and sisters at George Street United Church.

We continue our virtual worship events via our Facebook page on Sunday mornings. We can meet together, after a fashion, there, as well. Therefore when we turn to verse 25: "***not neglecting to meet together***" we find our not meeting has nothing to do with neglect. We haven't given up on it. We recognize that currently safety does not exist in numbers. We desire to meet. We would meet if we could find a way to do so safely and lovingly. We are still finding ways to encourage one another in our faith.



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By now, the Pastoral Care team has reached just about everyone of our listed members. The good news is that very few have shared concerns about their safety and, where those concerns were raised, the Pastoral Care Team members have implemented strategies to address those issues. We are actively loving one another even if we cannot meet together as we are accustomed to meeting.

Holy Week is now upon us and I am preparing small, family services that can be shared in home among two or more individuals. Where there is only one, they may need to reach out, or be reached, by telephone. These materials can be disseminated through the email list and we will explore ways to make them accessible through our Church website and Facebook pages.

Finally, while we know Facebook is not everyone's cup of tea, we have launched a YouTube page. At this point in time we cannot move recordings of the Facebook live-streams to the YouTube page the coding is not compatible. If you search for George Street United Church on YouTube, you will find some old live-streams.

We truly are not alone. We are called to be the Church, and we, together, are the Church.

Your Servant in Christ Jesus,

Reverend John Maich