



## GEORGE STREET UNITED CHURCH



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

***For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?  
--Psalm 137: 3-4***

30 April 2020

To the Scattered Saints of the George Street Pastoral Charge:

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

The text I am offering up as a focal point for this particular letter is a Psalm composed by Israelite musicians while in captivity far from home in Babylon. The Psalmist lays bare the enormity of their grief while in exile that prevented them from lifting up the songs of their faith far distant from God's holy temple.

Since then theologians have stressed over and over again that the human body is the temple of God, that the Holy of Holies is the human heart and that God is not restricted to any particular bit of geography. God is the God of all times and all places.

And yet, as people of God we have our sacred spaces and the sacred space we share in common is the sanctuary of George Street United Church. As a congregation we take great pride in our choirs and our musicians. Some are now raising small laments of their own that this point of pride is not a part of our online worship.

That is by design. It is not by desire.

The Modified Mission Team of George Street United Church very early in our pandemic experience asked all staff to work from home as much as possible. This also extended to the choir and our organists.

As much as I love the great hymns of our faith and singing them, I am not a trained musician and I prefer to sing as part of a choir rather than featured



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soloist. Trying to lead a camera through worship is struggle enough. Trying to lead a camera through congregational singing would not, I fear, lead to anything satisfactory. As restrictions are lifted, I promise you we will talk with the choir and our musicians to see how we might begin to incorporate song into the live-stream worship events. As the pandemic protocols endure we may have to invest in other technologies that allow us to increase a sense of togetherness in worship.

Every day is a new learning opportunity for all of us and it may very well be that the lessons we learn for this current reality are the first things we leave behind when we are given the all clear to gather together again.

And remember, though we are called to be apart we are never alone. God is with us. Thanks be to God.

Your Servant in Christ Jesus,

Reverend John Maich