



My brothers and sisters in Christ;

To say that 2021 has been challenging would be an understatement. Collectively we have been holding our breath. First thinking that the pandemic would be a few weeks, maybe a month or two at most, and now, here we stand 19 months after our first lockdown.

We have lived through Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost and Thanksgiving in a time of global pandemic...twice. We have lived through Remembrance Day and Christmas once...so far.

Personally, I have stopped waiting for when this pandemic will be over and instead, reframed my view to how we live through and during a time of pandemic. Twenty-four months ago, the idea of having to wear masks while doing such simple things as grocery shopping would be unheard of, and yet, here we are.

Most of the time I have a mask in my pocket, one around my wrist and one in the car. Sometimes I leave all of them in one place, and arrive at my destination, to have to turn around and go home to retrieve them. They are as imperative as keys these days.

You may have heard that the congregation at Knox United Church made a radical and life-changing decision. The congregation is aging. The building, the beloved building, is too big for our purposes. The daycare made the difficult decision to leave and thus our main source of income dried up.

A congregational vote was held and the decision was made - to dispose of the building, with the hope and wish that it will be resurrected as something new. And to dare to be a Worshipping Community without a building.

Hear me very clearly when I say this ...the Congregation of Knox United did not fail. We are not dead. We are taking a bold step in living what we have learned that Church is NOT the sticks and bricks, it is the people inside it.

Christ Church is looking forward to welcoming our brothers and sisters from Knox United. We have been worshipping together for 19 months, at first online only, and recently in our buildings. We have developed a Sunday routine of first and third Sunday's as United Church Worship and second and fourth Sunday's as Anglican Church Worship.

Every Wednesday there is a Saint's Day Worship at Christ Church. And as we continue to walk through the pandemic, and dare to dream of what will come, we are learning blended Church with people in attendance and joining us online. I have learned that a virtual community is indeed a community and we are much richer for our brothers and sisters who join us from British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta, Montana, Texas, Florida and our beloved Ida who faithfully joins us from England. We wouldn't be who we are as a Worshipping Community without each other.

So, here's the thing. Even though we do a great deal online, our Parish expenses continue...the biggest one being my stipend. I don't like to talk about money, but the reality is, without it, we can't continue. We can't pay the electric bill, the gas bill, the tithes to our Regional and Diocesan offices, and we can't pay for ministry.

We have so much for which to be grateful. We live in a beautiful part of the world. We have accessibility to a vaccine which has enabled us to join again with our parishioners at Rocky Mountain Village, and hopefully soon, our parishioners at Trinity Lodge (in person).

I am so grateful for each and every one of you. I hold you in my prayers and I know you keep me in yours. Please continue to pray for the Parish. Pray for each other at Knox United and Christ Church. Pray for Archbishop Lynne and our Regional Minister Kathy Davies. Pray for me, your Incumbent, and please, pray for yourselves.

Please consider a monthly offering, or a one-time financial gift. In order for us to continue as God's people in the world, providing ministry in the Elk Valley and beyond, we need both prayer and finances. We may have times when we cannot access our buildings, but they still need to be heated and lit.

Together we can dare to dream of a world where God is known by all. A world where we can face challenges head on and know that we are there for each other. We can be a beacon in the darkness of the world. Showing that in difficult times and in good times, we trust and love God and each other.

As the apostle Paul said to the Church in Ephesus, "clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful." Ephesians 3:14-15, NRSV

In this season of Thanksgiving, please know I hold you in my heart, in my prayers and know that God continues to bless you in all you do.

With humble gratitude, I remain, your servant,

Andrea