

29 March 2020

Dear Friends of Elmwood,

Once again, I wish we could greet each other in person, but that is not to be. And yet, though we must keep physically distant from each other until this crisis passes, the Church's life carries on. "It's Church life, Jim, but not as we know it," as Spock might have said.

Many of you, I know, worshipped at our usual time last Sunday. You worshipped at home, physically alone, or alongside others in your home. Some of you connected with others by speaker phone. Some played music and sang. I worshipped with you too, alone in our sanctuary. This feels right to me. I want God still to be worshipped from the sanctuary of Elmwood until we're allowed to gather there again. Let it not be a long wait. When we do re-gather, what a joyful noise we'll make!

I'm attaching to this note a 'pdf' file with material for worship this Sunday. Use it in ways that seem right to you and befit your circumstances. Share it as widely as you wish. Though physically apart, we will keep spiritually together.

With a heavy heart, the Session agreed to keep the Church building closed until the COVID-19 crisis has passed and it's safe to re-open our doors. This decision follows the advice of the Presbytery of London and the General Assembly office in Toronto. It also accords with government directives informed by the best medical knowledge. Only Church employees may enter the building for essential duties. You will receive (if you haven't already) a special issue of *Hark the Herald*. Three cheers for our intrepid editor, Marjorie Howell, and for all who contributed. From the office, Karen Russo keeps Elmwood running administratively. People are still making their offerings by mail or by "PAR". I frequent my study to carry out tasks I can only do there. My study wants straightening up, too. You'd think this is a good time to do it, but I'm still managing to avoid it.

I'm heartened when I hear from you. I hear stories of people connecting with each other in all the ways we still can, looking out for each other's material needs, delivering food to the doorstep, phoning and emailing each other. I'm not allowed to visit hospitals and homes, but I'm visiting people by phone each day, and emailing too. If you wish, tell me how you're faring, and what you're thinking and feeling.

I will keep sending a note like this every Friday or Saturday, with material attached for our *Common Worship in Separate Places*. If you'd rather not receive this,

please click the “unsubscribe” button. It should work properly now. Some things in this life are fixable!

Yours in the faith,

Andrew