

From the desk of John Lindsay-Botten:

As John Lennon sang, “Nobody told me there’d be days like these... strange days indeed...”

This is certainly not the Easter letter I was wanting to type, what with the physical distancing and on-line worship and, to put it bluntly, an unknown future. Most move to thoughts of fear and trepidation, certainly anxiety, and these sometimes lead to caustic remarks, a place of scarcity (look at the toilet paper hoarding by some last month) and a state of mental imbalance. One thing that works for some people, to help balance their emotions, is exercise. Simply walking around the neighbourhood (pretty much the only place you CAN walk outside right now) is one way to help alleviate the what-ifs that clog up our thought patterns. I am personally making this a habit (though I missed one stormy day), but don’t know how others in our Knox family can manage. What happens for those who live in continuing care residences, for example? Will there be there enough physical stimuli to counterbalance the emotional unrest we sometimes carry? I’m grateful to those of you who can pick up the phone and call those of us who may not have access to a computer right now; those who choose not to be online in any way, shape or form. Personally, my family and I go screen free for two hours a day at least; from 2-4pm each day while in self-isolation, you can’t get a hold of me. Unless you travel to our street and catch us while on a family walk, I can’t be heard or seen. And that, too, helps “flatten the curve” of our collective emotional rollercoaster (plus, you can reduce your white bread and sugar intake, while you’re at it ☺).

But music, you say...what about the music?

Well, I am teaching again, after a week off, but via Zoom now, a different on-line availability that’s really growing in popularity, though with the time lapse, I can’t accompany for those on the other end so much. With Vanessa hoping to resume some new normal with YouGottaSing, she’s operating from Zoom, too, but in a different, more patient way. (Wednesday evenings for her resume next week.) We all must call on patience more than anything these days. Who knew that halfway through Lent – and Easter – I’d be giving up hands-on choir leadership? Certainly not you nor me.

I pray for more patience, but not for more patients...

I pray for more love, I pray for more trust...

I pray that, as we come back from this odd way of doing things, we continue to find balance in our lives, that we may become our best selves, that we may be our best as we do our best, and that you and I can come back to Knox and find common, holy ground from where to sing, to dance, to play, to work, to pray, to worship, to help each other and to commune once more as a body of Christ, leading each other by example, and by the example that Jesus still is for us, inside and outside these walls.

I’d also like to include the first and last verse of a new hymn text written by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. She’s given her permission that anyone may share it at this time of pandemic. May these words bring you a sense of comfort and knowledge that we’re all going through this differently, yet together. You might have a favourite hymn melody come to you as you read it:

God whose will is health and wholeness, hear your people as we pray:
Many now are facing illness; more face sickness every day.
As we lift our song toward heaven, may we use the gifts you give —
Science, justice, and compassion — to help others safely live.

Loving God, we ask your blessing on the sick and those they love,
And we pray for those now grieving as they lift their cries above.
There is trouble all around us; illness causes pain and fear.
Give compassion, love and kindness as we serve your people here.

Copyright © 2020 Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. www.carolynshymns.com

In conclusion, with a strange, new Easter coming up soon, I’d like to remind you that all are welcome in this place, this church, this body of believers, where the circle we form is a flexible one, reaching outward, so that others may join hands with us (virtually right now, anyway) and share - by God’s grace – in the life we’re each meant to live... with dignity;
with community;
with God’s inestimable love, Jesus’ forthright example, and the grace and peace we know and realize in the Holy Spirit...

...as one.