

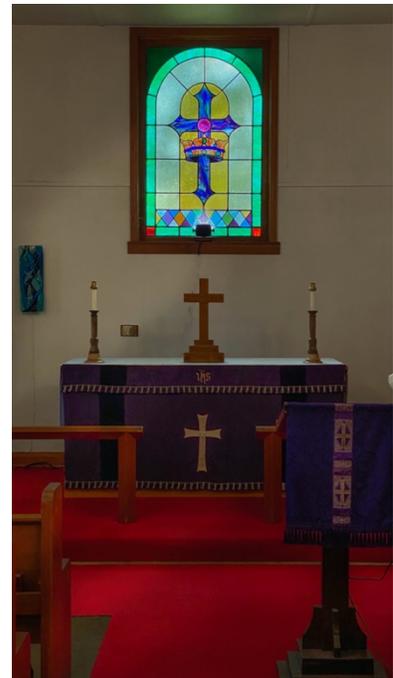


March 21, 2020

Dear Friends,

Who would ever have thought!! – how quickly and thoroughly circumstances change. As the season of Lent began, just four weeks ago, we had no idea what we'd be dealing with now, with anxiety, uncertainty, and isolation. Worry for each other, our children, whatever their ages; fear of the unknown, the unknowable; a sense of helplessness in the face of a viral enemy; an awareness of our interdependence, and our need for cooperation in keeping one another as safe as possible, while still ensuring we and our neighbours have food and other necessities available.

Our community here on Galiano continues to move me deeply as people step up to help others: kindness, compassion and care is on display in countless practical ways in our midst. I am grateful indeed.

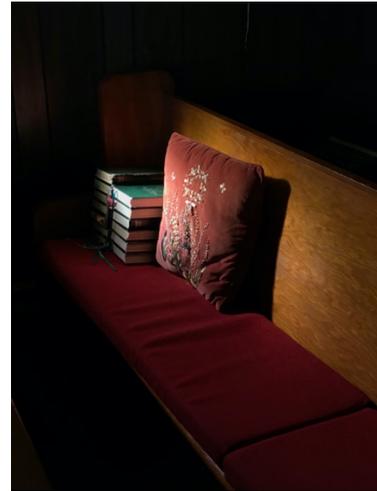


I am also deeply aware of how much I have taken for granted the freedom to gather, to visit, to chat, to simply be with others, to laugh, cry, or sing; to talk, be challenged in discussion, and to share meals together. It is hard, hard for all of us in different ways. And I want to know how it is for you. And how to connect best with you, and how we can best connect with *each other* in this time.

Some clergy have planned to have some sort of video stream of a sermon, or church service. I will be thinking through what I might create to share online. In the meantime, I'm most concerned to just be in touch. To offer a wee bit of encouragement. And to offer some written

reflections that might further that encouragement or spark some good 'thinking'. Also, I'm working on setting up an online discussion forum so we can 'converse' about some of the Bible readings that are in our lectionary as we move through Lent and toward Holy Week and Easter.

When I was setting up at Food Bank yesterday, I spent some time in the church sanctuary, going through each empty pew, praying for each of you as I 'saw' you there in the empty spaces, and praying for those in the larger community that are all held in the love of God, the sphere of his Mercy. The sun was streaming in the windows even as I stood in the darkened sanctuary. And it was quiet. So quiet. I thought of our singing this past Sunday, and our voices blending and soaring as we breathed the music of the hymns and the wonderful hope of our closing hymn – My shepherd is the Living Lord....



My prayers are still with you all.
May the peace of God be with you, and steady your hearts.

In the bond of Grace, always,
Sarah