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Trinity Musings #28: Rev Brian Goodings (meaculpa@Trinity United Church: Collingwood)

I'm not a conspiracy dude. I just don't have the time or energy to double think about everything. It exhausts me to listen to people tell me why they believe nobody walked on the moon or how JFK was murdered by...I dunno was it the Clintons?...and so on and so on.

Conspiracy theories are thriving in this Trumpian age and groups like QAnon, an ultra-right-wing group are growing. In general, they believe everything the government and authority figures say is a lie and there is a grand and very evil conspiracy afoot.

I know I'm naïve, but I really was surprised to learn that Mounties burn barns; Big Church abused kids and covered it up; Big Tobacco knew about cancer; Big Sugar lied about heart attacks and obesity and Big Pharma is as interested in cures as profits.

Add to this, the revelation that Facebook and Google are really more about collecting and selling data on YOU than anything else and...well it's hard not to be slightly cynical and suspicious. Turns out that good ol' Mark Zuckerberg, even in spite of all his boyish good looks, is really not our harmless little buddy- he needs to be "Unfriended".

But as Freud is reported to have said, "Sometimes a cigar is really just a cigar." Sometimes, there is nothing more to "it" than "it" appears. No agenda beyond smoking it.

Which brings me, finally, to how I unknowingly contributed to the ignorance, paranoia and cynicism of our time in my last Musing #27. A good friend who is a medical doctor working hard to limit the spread of Covid-19, rightfully called me out on that one.

In that Musing, I suggested that installing the Covid-19 Contact Tracing App might not be a great thing to do. Turns out I was wrong and stand corrected.

As directed by my friend, I've been reading about the Contact Tracing App and why it differs from every other App on our phones. Without going into it

too far, it uses Blue Tooth and the strength of other signals and codes and distance...and well it isn't spyware.

It won't know or care if you go to the Brass Rail or not but it will tell you if you have been in close contact with someone within the last 14 days who has Covid-19. I would encourage you to read up on it yourselves.

I learned about the App and also, that sometimes stuff I do or say that I think is harmless or helpful turns out not always to be so.

I was sharply reminded of this the other day at my home.

I have six bird feeders in my backyard and take great delight in watching birds come and go. It helps me feel better on days when I feel like there is not much else I can really do to help mend or care for the world. It's a simple quiet pleasure for me. Sometimes, the best ministry of my week.

But our cat likes to watch them too. It's not usually a problem, but last month I found the bodies of a few young nuthatches and at least two black capped chickadees that have fallen prey to her.

If I hadn't put the feeders up they likely wouldn't have come near the house and wouldn't have been caught. If I had kept my cat in the house then the birds wouldn't have been killed but, then again, I might have killed my cat. (Long story...we have a love/hate relationship and I wouldn't really kill my son's cat.)

I would also not have helped hundreds of other migrating birds find food for their arduous trip south.

That's life I guess. Sometimes, the things we do to help, causes some harm too.

So...put the Contact Tracing App on your phone, wash your hands, wear a mask and keep your cat in the house as much as you can.

It's important we not lose faith and fall prey to ignorance and fear. It's important to have friends to remind you to do that too. Thanks Doc!