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Trinity Musings #30: from Rev Brian Goodings trinityminister@bmts.com
Serving Trinity United Church: Collingwood

When we turn our clocks backwards this weekend, why stop at an hour? Why don't we just turn them all the way back to January or February 2020? Remember when there was a before-Covid time?

Today, I heard about an employee in Toronto who had, for the first time since the lock-down, gone into their office building. He was among the first to do so and discovered everything was still decorated for St. Patrick's Day. That was the time the place was abandoned.

I imagine that many empty offices and buildings, formerly filled with people, also look frozen in the past and decorated with a lot of dead office plants too. Calendars on the walls would be displaying March 2020.

It's been almost eight months since life, as we knew it, stopped.

I am reminded of the character Miss Havisham from Charles Dickens' Great Expectations. She had been left "at the altar" by a suitor who did not appear and stayed frozen in that time. She refused to take off her wedding dress and there was an untouched breakfast and wedding cake on her table. She even had all the clocks stopped at precisely the time she received notice of her abandonment.

It's hard not to feel like we've lost a lot over this year and much of what we have lost is the time we thought was coming to us. We are accustomed to living by the clock and we assess our personal value by how productive we are in the hours we "spend".

"Time is money" as Benjamin Franklin observed. Others have said, "Time is of the essence" (author unknown) and "(Tide and) time wait for no man (sic) (Geoffrey Chaucer). You probably know other sayings too.

Remember dial up internet? I have no idea why we had all those buzzes and bells and weird noises, but we waited at least thirty seconds for the connection. Now, if my computer doesn't do something **immediately** after I click, I am annoyed and my anxiety rises.

Time was for Western society, as the writer Tuan said, “An arrow pointing to the successive and pending deadlines of the future.” He also said that living with an acute sense of the passing of time is the source of much of our fatiguing urgency and distress.

This seems to apply to everything. For instance, have you noticed that most of the new housing developments erect privacy fences around each property that are solid and at least six feet high? Unless you are a lot taller than I am (and most of you are), talking to your neighbour, over the fence just isn't possible.

Who had the time anyway? There was work to do and money to be made.

Now, thanks or no thanks to Covid, we're having to adjust how we think about time.

Is this pause going to prove to have been against us, and measured only in losses, or as Mick Jagger crooned...is it “on our side” and will it be measured in how we gained new perspectives and changed for the better?

So much has stopped now that, for better and for worse, we aren't going to ever return to the world as we once knew it. The future, always really imaginary, in spite of the numerous entries on our calendars, has been changed.

In the time that has passed, although we seem to have been in the same place, our planet earth has travelled almost 400 million miles in its orbit around the sun. The birds have come and gone and so have 2 full seasons. The leaves are now falling and probably won't win the cup again...but I digress.

We aren't the same people anymore and will bear the changes the Covid-virus has created in us for the rest of our lives.

Our sense of the preciousness of not taking freedom and good times for granted is similar now to the people who survived the Great Depressions and World Wars. Maybe that's a good thing. Time will tell.

