

From: Rev Brian Goodings (self-isolating in my office at Trinity UC)

If we were to select a song to hum or sing during these trying times, a good choice would be the Beatle's song "*Let It Be*". The reason I say this is, if you don't know or have forgotten the words, it speaks strongly of a time the writer finds themselves in deep "trouble" and no way to fix it themselves. There are some things we can do to help each other get through this very anxious time but about all else, this is the time for trust and prayers. In this song the writer finds solace in "Mother Mary" who assures them they need to wait for the answers that will come after a time of hopeful vigilance. Letting "it" be is not our strong suit because we are solution oriented people and much of our perplexion and angst comes from not being able to fix "it". Some things, we are learning, are really beyond our control. It is important to remember our own history and as people of faith from many traditions believe, that no matter how fierce the storm, this too shall pass. I hasten to add that it will be at a cost, but "it" will eventually pass. Hopefully, sooner than later.

I do not believe or suggest that this virus has been sent by "an angry God" or will be vanquished by "a warrior God", but I do believe that "God" is deeply involved in our suffering and as Psalm 46 assures us, "is a very present help in time of trouble". As our *New Creed* proclaims..."We are not alone. We Live in God's World". The best thing we can do now is to love and care for our God-given neighbours in this time of shared trouble.

In a very remarkable and even shocking way, this virus has shown us that we really are on this spaceship earth together. Astronauts who return from orbiting this beautiful blue planet all say the same thing, borders don't really exist except on maps. Maybe one of the better things that will come from this global epidemic is the realization that "elsewhere" in the world is really our neighbourhood too. Maybe we have been given a very unwelcome pause, but a pause nonetheless, to start to think about what we might do on a global scale for the wellbeing of others and this creation. I believe there are large-scale, positive and permanent changes in our economy and politics and global health units that will come from this current crisis.

The other night on television, I watched a very determined-looking and large group of Chinese doctors and nurses getting off a plane in Italy with tons of medical equipment and respirators. They were there to help and came with equipment and expertise having faced the same crisis in their home country. I suspect the relationships that will come of this between the Chinese and Italians will be permanent and life-giving in ways yet unforeseen. I, like lots of you, have been glued to our radios and televisions and we are getting a steady diet of “everything is getting worse and nobody can stop or save us”. I am not trying to diminish the seriousness of the announcement and **STONGLY** encourage you to follow the medical advice...but....I also encourage you to check out what is happening in places like Singapore, Taiwan and even China right now. There is good reason to believe they are on the other side of this epidemic and, as unlikely as it might seem, one day we will be too.

In the meanwhile, help others if you can (quit hoarding the toilet paper!) pray, laugh, walk outside, keep hope, wash your hands...and, for now at least, stay 2 meters away from everyone. Good songs will travel at least that far anyway and good music, like hopeful prayers, are best when shared.

Shalom Rev Brian Goodings