

April 14 2020

Trinity Musings: Rev Brian Goodings (self-isolating and feeling a bit indignant in my office at Trinity United Church: Collingwood)

Guy flipped me “the bird” the other day on a street next to my house. He had almost hit me when he came roaring out of his driveway, so I did drive slowly in front of him to see who it was in my rear view mirror. I know almost everyone in Thornbury and I’d never seen this dude before. Then he gave me “the sign” before he turned right and raced away. I was furious and all kinds of nasty words and thoughts ran through my head. In spite of everything you might want to believe about yourself, when a wave of road-rage sweeps over you it reveals your nastiest inner self. I was going to follow him and...well I don’t know what I was really going to do. Andrea (my always calm partner in life) told me to get a grip. “So he’s a jerk...don’t you behave like one too.”

I was a bit surprised with my own sudden anger. Of course we feel like we’re completely innocent in situations like these but there was something deeper to my hurt feelings. After a few days of thinking about it I realized that part of my sudden indignation was that, especially now, the rude-gesture really doesn’t fit.

We are living in a rather rare time of gentle civility towards each other. There are signs on many lawns supporting our front line workers; someone has painted small stones with beautiful colours and loving words and left them in many places along sidewalks in Thornbury. Other homes have rainbows or hearts displayed in their front windows. It’s a love-in right now.

Doug Ford has become besties with Justin and Chrystia and they are all singing each other’s praises. They can’t say enough good things about each other and almost everyone I know has expressed delight and confidence in the harmony they feel in our leadership and communities right now.

I am delighted in these displays of kindness and how unified we are in this time of massive uncertainty. We are being our best selves and the strengths of our community structures are showing...but so are some of our weaknesses.

We have been given pause to realize/admit how poorly we have been treating our elderly folk and the staff that work in our nursing homes. It is really brutal to hear death counts rise and the suffering of all those involved in caring for our weakest and most vulnerable. The lowest price we have been paying for years is now an unpaid bill that has come at a hugely tragic cost.

Now, in this time of cultural generosity and rethinking about everything we are doing, is the time to decide we have to change these practices and stories. Maybe our politicians will learn something too? Lower taxes are not always the right choice.

We have settled for what have seemed like the cheapest solutions for a long time now and are suddenly aware how vulnerable our short-sighted choices have made us. None of us are immune. The crazy red-rooster to the south of us doesn’t have our best interests at heart and could decide in a minute of rage to cut all of us off. He is extremely consistent and unapologetic in his narcissistic “America/Donald First” behaviours. He really doesn’t care what you think or how you might suffer.

We are scurrying to grow our own food again and change what we are manufacturing but it is going to take time to make a shift. Thank goodness it’s the spring and not November.

I don’t ever remember a time when we all felt so much in the same boat and so far we are doing rather well navigating these rough waters together. I do believe we are going to emerge stronger from these

troubled times, but when the danger from this virus has passed I pray we don't forget how important it has been to pull together.

There are signs of spring and good intentions in our neighbourhoods and there is good reason for optimism and faith that what lies ahead is a better world. (Yep, I'm a Big Believer in the universe bending towards a greater God/good).

Notwithstanding the odd rude driver we will still encounter on the road, of course. But I've decided he was probably a Bruins fan. That would explain it. It certainly couldn't have been my fault...lol?

