

January 21, 2021

Trinity Musings #41: from Rev Brian Goodings [trinityminister@bmts.com](mailto:trinityminister@bmts.com)  
Serving Trinity United Church: Collingwood

Going to the bathroom at my age, no matter the time of day or night, is something I deem as REALLY “essential travel”.

The rate of these journeys is in direct correlation with how much beer or coffee I’ve had or how long I’ve been putting off the inevitable while trying not to get out of bed.

Doug Ford is getting to be of a “certain age” himself so I’m sure he would support these trips to the water-closet that, I notice, are increasing in frequency and urgency as I age.

His message to the province is pretty fuzzy anyway. All he said was...”DON’T TRAVEL OUTSIDE YOUR HOME UNLESS ITS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL”.

Talk about wiggle room! Thank goodness it up to us to define what is “Essential”.

Religionists are really good at teasing out the meaning of an official pronouncement to lean in their favour. For example the “Thou Shalt Nots” at the front of the 10 Commandments look pretty clear at first reading but we’ve found lots of ways to get around them. Easy peasy.

I’d have to say that the rest of the travelling I do in a week is generally less essential than trips to the loo...but easily rationalized as kinda sorta important enough to bend the rules just a tad.

Mea culpa...last weekend I drove all the way to Barrie to pick up more bird feed from a very specialized bird-food store.

I convinced myself it was an ok thing to do. After all, we have to support our economy and not only did I get to spend a lot of money on high-end seed, but I had to buy gas for my car too.

Andrea, my totally honest and rule supporting companion, raised both eyebrows when I told her my plans. “Surely”, she said, “there is bird feed at our local hardware store?!”

“Yeah”, I said, “but it’s not the right kind. My birds are finicky. Since I’ve been feeding them the expensive food they don’t like the cheaper stuff from the hardware store anymore. If they are willing to risk life and limb being picked off by the hawk to entertain me at the window, then don’t I have to make it worth their while?” (Note- As some of my readership have suggested, it actually might be a merlin not a sharp shinned hawk.)

As I left, I pretended I didn’t hear her say...“How can you say this is really essential travel?” She’s been working on conference calls with her colleagues about how to follow provincial rulings since I got back and I haven’t had to talk about it with her.

Thank goodness there’s not a snitch line to report people like me...and maybe you? But isn’t this complicated?

Maybe the Province should really be saying that All Non-Essential CONTACT with other people is to be avoided. Travel doesn’t transmit the virus, contact does. This is the “ta-da” argument I’m going to try to use with Andrea. I didn’t contact anyone from the time I left home until I got back. The bird seed dude put the seed in the back of the car for me and I didn’t come near them...I got my own gas in Thornbury and sanitized my hands right afterwards.

But perhaps the Province, in the spirit of encouraging, rather than threatening, good responsible Canadians to do the right thing has said enough. Do we want to live in a really heavy handed state? Do I want a guy standing outside my door watching me?

We all know that the reason the Covid case numbers were going up is because we were bending the spirit of the rules, even though we may have tried to convince ourselves that we are following the letter.

This strategy of just leaving it up to us to decide should have had better results because, in a free country, we are all responsible for our own behaviour.

So, for at least the next little while, I'm going to really rethink what I'm doing and be more honest with myself.

Maybe you will too? If we all try harder and more honestly, the numbers will surely come down sooner than later.

Full disclosure, I've got enough bird seed now to last until most of us are vaccinated.

I'm not looking forward to having the conversation with Andrea about how much it is costing us to feed a bunch of squirrels and birds.

Perhaps she will decide I'm not all that "Essential" and put me outside to quarantine with my critters. Hopefully, I can still come in to use the bathroom?