

Dear Friends in Christ,

With the Feast of All Saints now behind us we are quickly approaching the end of the church year and the beginning of the season of Advent and Christmas. This season is often one of the favourites of the church, even as the weather gets colder, we enjoy the warmth, the familiarity and beauty of the age old traditions of the seasons of Advent and Christmas. This year, however, is anything but familiar – we are still in the grip of a global pandemic that continues to rage and surge in communities throughout the world and will force us to modify our normal holiday celebrations.

We are all waiting. We are waiting for the current surge to crest; we are waiting for the doctors and researchers to develop a safe and effective vaccine; we are waiting to hug or even see our friends and family; we are waiting for normal life to resume.

As Christians we should be well poised for this waiting. Advent is a season of waiting – yes waiting for the celebration for Christmas, but more importantly it marks a season of waiting for Jesus' second coming. As a church we have been patiently waiting for that day for almost two-thousand years, perseverance is a hallmark of our faith and so I call each and every one of us to keep the faith and to embrace the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love that we experience and celebrate in the Advent season.

Waiting isn't easy, but by the power of the Holy Spirit and through the faith and support of your fellow members I pray that you will persevere and not lose hope. God is with you; God is with our church; God is with our communities. That I know, and I pray that you will know that truth too.

Fond Farewells – Rev. Julie Golding-Page and Rev. Steve Page

It is with regret that we say farewell to Julie, Steve and Anastasia this month as they have made the decision to move to New Brunswick, closer to family. We have been blessed with their presence, their preaching and their encouragement to learn about a whole range of matters, especially with regards to Indigenous relations and the lived experience of our Indigenous brothers and sisters here in Canada.

Unfortunately, due to the current COVID-19 situation we will be unable to properly say goodbye, fortunately however Steve, Julie and Asta still have ties to Ontario and we hope that we will have the opportunity to celebrate with them at a future date. I encourage you to pray for them as they go through the transition and the grief of uprooting from the life they have established here in Toronto over the last few years.

Christmas Plant and Fruit Cake Fundraiser

For many years the Advent and Christmas seasons at Grace Church have been marked by the sale of Christmas Cakes in support of the Lions Club and the provision of Poinsettias by our wonderful Knitting and Quilting Group. This year due to the pandemic both groups have been unable to continue their usual generous endeavours. Recognizing that these items are important to many, the leadership of Grace Church has organized a Poinsettia and Christmas Cake Fundraiser. Accompanying this letter, you will find an order form that includes both the cakes and flowers. Please return these to the church by December 1st. Payment can be made by cheque or cash. Please return payment with the form if paying by cheque, and if paying by cash please bring an envelope to the office (Tuesday/Thursday 9:30 am - 1:30 pm) or church on a Sunday morning.

New Mailbox

For those hoping to drop off offerings or any other mailings to the church you may have noticed that our usual mailbox at the back of the church is no longer there. Prior to reopening in September we had an issue with someone breaking into and destroying our mailbox that was at the back door. We purchased a stronger and safer mailbox and have placed it to the right of our front door. We believe that the location is more visible and less likely to be the subject of any nefarious activity.

Worship Remains Open

Even as we continue to live through the second wave of COVID-19 here in Ontario, I am happy to say that we will continue to remain open for worship for the time being. If you have yet to come out for worship, please do call the office to let us know. Everyone is certainly welcome to attend, but due to COVID-19 restrictions limiting our capacity we like to know who intends to come. If you still don't feel comfortable or safe attending worship in person we do have a live-stream of the service available for those who have a computer/tablet/smartphone and internet connection at home. Livestreaming is offered through Facebook Live (www.facebook.com/GraceChurchScarborough/live) but is accessible through our website and available even if you do not have a Facebook account.

May God bless you and your families this Advent and Christmas season, and may we all persevere in faith as we wait for better days which lie ahead.

Blessings,

Rev. Graham McCaffrey

