

## Peg's Ponderings

September 11, 2020



Why didn't I pay attention.... at school and at home?

The pictures I have shared in the newsletter today are from a short road trip I took this summer to Ivanhoe, Ontario. It's a little hamlet just north of Bellville.

I went there to begin some research on my Great-great-great grandfather Henry Gauen who settled in Ivanhoe in the mid-1800's with his wife Fanny. It turns out he was a bit of a celebrity in town. He was part of a significant historical event and co-founded the Ivanhoe Cheese Company which is now owned by Gaylea. There's even a historical site road sign to he and his wife's cemetery.

I had heard about him through my Grandma, his great granddaughter, when I was growing up. But I didn't pay much attention. Every once in a while she would take a wooden model of a merchant ship out of her basement closet and tell me it was carved by her dad's grandpa when he was stuck in the ice in the Arctic. I never asked questions, never thought much beyond the fact that it looked cool. I was not allowed to play with the ship, or even touch it so it never held much interest to me.

However, I now own this model. It sits on the mantle in my living room. When it was given to me after my father passed away I began to ask questions. It turns out that Henry Gauen was stuck in the ice as part of the McClure Expedition. Who knew? Thankfully my mom! So began my desire to learn more.

I'm sure some of you know about the history of the search for the Northwest Passage, a route that was sought out so that ships travelling from northern European countries could travel faster to Asia. Until the passage was discovered, ship traffic had to sail south and around the southern tip of South America and back up to get to Asia.

In 1845 Sir John Franklin and his crew left England seeking the Passage and a rich reward if they did so. However, just months after setting sail they were seen in Baffin Bay, and never seen again.

Pressured by Franklin's wife, the English Admiralty sent out Captain Robert J McClure and crew in the "Investigator" and Captain Richard Collinson and crew in the "Enterprise", both in search of Franklin. The two ships parted ways prior to reaching the Arctic Circle. The McClure expedition entered the Arctic Ocean and by all accounts did little to find the Franklin Expedition. Instead McClure seemed to focus on navigating a successful passage through the Arctic waters. Consequently they did not come back to England with any real information about what happened to the Franklin ships, but they did discover the Northwest Passage. (The Enterprise went on to become an important ship on a successful television and movie franchise.)

The bits of information I paid attention to as a kid never would have led me to understand the significance of this model ship that sits on my mantle.

I have started my own search of the Northwest Passage in a way, discovering some family history and world history along the way.

Why didn't I listen carefully to the stories I was told as a kid? I'll never know, but what I do know is how important the stories are. In my case, the fact that all the men in the Gauen family have been carpenters by trade or carpenters at home is significant as Henry was the Carpenter's Mate on the "Investigator".

Stories about family history and our culture's history help us understand who we are. So although I don't think I have any family connection to the Biblical Story, I see why it is so important to us as people of faith. The scriptures help us understand what it means to be a faithful people. It helps us understand our relationship with the Creator. To engage in the stories deeply is to engage with our ancestors' challenges and joys as believers and to their experiences of God engaging with them. Sure other faith stories have been told and written about since. Also the fact that the scriptures are limited to those chosen by "committee" provides some challenges. There is the sense that relying solely on scripture to enlighten our faith is limiting. Yet we are certainly free to look at faith stories outside of scripture to enrich our faith and lives. However, not understanding where we come from and what the stories in scripture really mean to how we became who we are today is, I believe, a misstep.

The stories of Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Jesus, the Disciples, Paul and others are the basis for our Christian families connections. To listen and learn from them will strengthen the bonds we have in community, for we will understand what brought us together and what will hold us together as we move forward.

I am just learning to appreciate my family stories as I explore what they mean to who I am today. May we appreciate our faith stories as we explore together what it means to us as Christ's family today.

**August 28, 2020**

### Gearing up!

Not too long ago it was decided that we would not open for in-person worship until at least October. As you can imagine, that was a difficult decision.

This past week, I met with Rob Pond, chair of the Board and Phil Wood, chair of Ministry and Personnel, to discuss what opening for worship would look like, if we went ahead with it on October 4, 2020. Consequently, Phil has taken on the task of reviewing provincial guidelines to determine what precautions we need to take in order to keep our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of the responsibility for preparing and maintaining the church for worship will fall on members of the Property Committee and Val Ivanecy, our custodian. We thank them in advance for their hard work in this matter and we acknowledge that our Property Committee is hard-working throughout the year and Val maintains the building and the grounds beautifully.

Presently there is not a Chairperson for the Property Committee, which oversees all of the projects and needs related to the church building. If you have the time and energy and feel called to commit to this venture, please speak with Rev. Peg or Rob Pond. Or if you're not able to chair the committee, but would be willing to take on a project or two, please speak with either Peg or Rob. Thank you.

Back to the re-opening of the church for worship: barring any unforeseen circumstances, our first in-person worship service will take place at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, October 4th. Once all the precautions and regulations are understood and taken, you will receive an update as to what to expect on Sunday mornings when we gather for worship.

I am excited at the thought that in just a few weeks we will be able to celebrate God's presence in our lives and offer prayer and support to one another in person! We will also be able to see each other and enjoy being gathered as community, albeit distanced from one another.

I am also excited at the thought that we will be able to gather in small groups soon. Starting the week of September 10th we will provide several times a week when we can gather outside in the lower parking lot for a time of mutual care and conversation. If weather prevents us from gathering outside, we will open up the fellowship room and arrange the space in a way that ensures appropriate social distancing and conversation. These gatherings, "Community Despite COVID," will provide an opportunity for us to connect with each other, as well as discuss how the church can best take the things we've learned during the pandemic and incorporate these learnings as we move ahead. These times will not be structured in a way that will limit the conversation to any one topic. We ask that you bring your own beverage and lawn chair (if you're not able to, there will be a few chairs available). Times and dates will be announced next week. I am looking forward to seeing you again!

Opportunities for our young people to engage in church activities will also begin soon. On Sunday mornings there will be a Children's Time during the service. There will also be a Thursday delivery of material, to your home, to help our kids engage in the biblical story each week. This will include activities and a topic of conversation to share with their families. To ensure that all of our young people have an opportunity to receive the Thursday package and that this is something each family would like to have, I will be contacting the parents of our youth. Sending out this material will continue past our October 4th start-up date for any families who would like to continue sharing in worship on-line.

Other activities set to begin soon are:

- Confirmation class
- The Book Club
- Zoom Cafes

We will continue to stream Worship services to our YouTube Channel every Sunday, whether we meet in person or not. We want to ensure that worship is available to all members of our community, recognizing that there are some people who, due to health concerns or other reasons, are not able to attend in-person worship.

As we move forward, our goal is to provide a safe place for worship. We are determined to take the steps needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We are determined to take the steps needed to provide a place of welcome and acceptance for members of the LGBTQ+ community in Dundas and beyond. We are determined to offer God's love and grace to all who wish to be a part of the St. Mark's faith community in any way. To do all of this, we must be determined to live out the gospel message of Jesus, to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and with all our souls and with all our strength and with all our minds and to love our neighbours as ourselves (Luke 10: 27). May it be so!

Blessings,

Peg

**August 8, 2020**

*To open or not to open. That is the question.*

Hello my friends, I just realized I have passed the mid-point of my holidays and started to think about what normally happens this time of year. We are just a month away from what would be an exciting, albeit anxious time for our young people. BACK TO SCHOOL TIME. Each year I look forward to back to school shopping, even when I'm not in school. I would have started by now and new binders, pencil crayons and shoes would top the shopping list. Ok actually, shoes would have topped the list. Anyway, I do have a point to this and that is our normal gearing up for September is very different this year. It seems that schools may be returning in September, but in most cases it will look very different for our youth, teachers and administrators. The use of social distancing, masks and online courses will change how our students learn, how our teachers teach and how those in charge offer support to both groups.

Sadly, churches have had to consider different ways to worship and reach out to the community as well. We have used online worship and relied heavily on our Electronic newsletter to stay in contact with folks in our community. We have sought new ways to work with our neighbouring churches to continue to provide the Weekly Community Dinners on Monday nights. (Please read Dorothy Bartolos' announcement in this newsletter for an update). I have met with families from the Dundas community who wish to gather with a loved one who has passed away yet are unable to celebrate the individual because of restrictions around the numbers allowed to gather due to COVID-19.

This past Monday, I met with Rob Pond, the chair of the board, Phil Wood, the chair of Ministry and Personnel and we discussed how we will move ahead in September. There are a number of restrictions the government has placed on places of worship which makes opening for regular Sunday worship a challenge and a worry. We would need to limit those in attendance, require folks to register for worship so they can be contacted in case someone in attendance contacts Covid-19 and at this point hymn singing would not be allowed. These are just a few of the challenges.

**As a result, it was decided that, we will not open for regular Sunday worship until at least October.**

This being said, we will continue our weekly online worship services on YouTube.

However, we will be open in September for other aspects of church life. Please stay tuned for information regarding small group gatherings that will be created to allow us times and opportunities to safely connect with members and friends of St. Mark's. If you have any ideas about what you would like to see the church offer in the fall, please let us know. Please keep in mind that we will have to adhere to all government regulations regarding social distancing.

For now, we will continue to pray for those affected by the COVID virus and take care of each other with phone calls, emails and texts.

I look forward to being with you again in September.

Peg

**April 17, 2020**

Phil Wood sent me a great CBC article the other day. (Thanks, Phil!) It is entitled "*How the ancient Israelites dealt with epidemics, Bible tells of prophecy and rituals*" by Hanna Tervanotko- Canadian Press.

I have been asked recently why we use the Bible as a basis for our faith. This article helps with that question as well as telling us how ancient peoples dealt with epidemics and challenges in their day.

The article, which is linked to this email, begins "Death has come up into our windows, it has entered our palaces, to cut off the children from the streets and the young men from the squares" (Jeremiah 9:20). Sounds familiar, right? The

authors of scripture recorded their history through story and these stories provide us with a lens that helps us see how they understood the world, their place in it and their God. There was a strong belief that the way in which humans conducted their lives directly affected what was going on in their world.

Jeremiah began prophesying around 627 BCE and continued his ministry until after the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC. He warned of the destruction of Judah because of the people's refusal to repent of their sins and worship of false gods. In some ways I shudder when I hear this sort of theology - the Creator being described as a vengeful, mean source of suffering for God's children. Yet when horrible events occur in the world, our lives and our homes, we often try to find a place or a person to blame. In Jeremiah's experience, when bad things happened to the people such as a plague or an enemy takeover, it was believed that God was unhappy with their behaviour, unhappy with their worship and their way of life. If the people were obeying the laws and the requirements of their faith, God would not let terrible things happen in their lives.

However, if we go a bit deeper with the thought that our behaviours do affect the world we live in, I do and can stomach Jeremiah's warning, because there are consequences and a price to be paid.

The destruction of Judah happened because the people replaced their relationship with God with a relationship with riches and material goods. They were not being punished by God. Rather their downfall had more to do with consequences of bad choices. Jeremiah's prophecy was correct in that if the people of Judah chose not to turn their lives around, their greed and their lifestyle meant they would not be able to take care of their country or the poor and vulnerable. Their misuse of resources and their lack of care for each other meant that as a nation they were ill prepared to stand together and take on the problems they would face, be it a plague or enemy attack.

Sometimes the stories that we read and reflect on each week may seem to be irrelevant to us and our living. However, the wisdom, the prophecies and the moral compass these stories provide are very important as we make decisions about how we live in the world.

Some faith communities, governments and individuals have stated that this pandemic is God's punishment for the world and they give many reasons why they believe the world needs to be punished - gay marriage and LGBTQ+ inclusion, not enough people attending churches, capitalism, negligence of the environment, etc.

I believe this pandemic is not direct punishment from God, but is the consequence of our poor decisions and the way we have cared for - or not cared for - each other for years. What we learn about in this story from Scripture is the goodness of God. Jeremiah was called by God to draw the attention of Judah's king and people to the need to change their ways before their society fell, but fall it did. And God went with them into exile after they were conquered and sent leaders who would support and help restore Judah in the future.

As we make our way through this pandemic together, let us listen carefully for what God wants us to pay attention to, watch carefully for the places we see God working during this time and pay close attention to political, medical and social leaders, who are working to support and restore God's people to a society that will be better able to handle plagues and challenges in the future, a place where we already feel a part of something powerful and right, a place where God's love and justice is known by all.

### **April 3, 2020**

During this time of social distancing and isolation it has become clear that having a community to share life with is important to us. Not only does community fulfill our social needs, it fulfills our spiritual needs as well - and not just on Sunday mornings. A faith community gives us a connection with those who are seeking to be in a relationship with God and others. It gives us a place to support and care for God's people. Most importantly, a faith community gives us a place to do God's work with others, for we can do so much more together than alone.

Being a faith community right now seems awkward and the fear of becoming disconnected is real, as we are required to stay home. Since it's going to take a while before COVID-19 is under control, I have decided that we need to keep going. We need to continue to plan for the future. Go ahead and consider what being a community of faith is really about for

those of us who gather at St. Mark's. After all, we don't know when life will return to normal and what that normal will look like, but what I know is, the community of St. Mark's needs to find a way into the future that is meaningful, hopeful and reflective of the way God loves us.

So, I've been thinking...(and you don't know me well enough to be afraid of that statement)...here's the thing - we need to define what it is we really want to focus on. What gifts, passions and visions do we want to develop to help us continue to be a vital part of the Dundas community and a place where folks recognize that something different and powerful is happening between us and God. Therefore, I'm looking for a few visionaries...approximately 6 folks who have a great sense of imagination and are willing to spend a few months in some intentional time of dreaming a new reality for St. Mark's. Luckily for us we can still dream during this time.

If you are interested or have some ideas about who would be an asset to such a Dream Team, let me know. The first thing I would ask of you, just so you know what will be involved at least at the beginning, is that we read and discuss the concepts developed by Cameron Trimble in her book, *Piloting Church*.

Often churches bring in an outside consultant or professional to do such work, but I'm of the mind that any idea about the future and any program that comes out of that idea, is accepted better if it comes from the congregation and is nurtured and supported by its leadership team.

Seems to me this is a great time to read a book!

Continued blessings this coming week and let's all stay connected, however that may look!

Take care

**March 20, 2020**

*"To boldly go where no one has gone before."* - Captain James T. Kirk of the Enterprise

The Sci-fi series "Star Trek" was an after school staple at our sitters when I was in elementary school. It was never my favourite program but the boys always seemed to get to the T.V. before us girls. The story lines and characters seemed too unbelievable to me. Aliens and strange afflictions, deserted planets and crew members in isolation just seemed silly. But here we are living out a reality that we had only imagined in fictional places with fictional people.

This has been an extraordinary week full of unimaginable happenings and news. As events have unfolded I have had to shake my head a few times because I kept thinking I was hearing the voices of Star Trek characters.

For instance, the "Enterprise," the famous starship that roamed the universe, had quite the eclectic crew. The ship's Second Officer and Chief Engineer was Montgomery Scott, called Scotty by the rest of the crew. Scotty was in charge of the ship's engine and often had to remind the Captain of its limitations. Scotty was always able to get more out of the engine than thought possible but there was always panic and drama before he succeeded. Scotty's famous line: "She cannae' take any more Captain! She's gonna blow," was maybe not said by anyone this week, but the tone and the panic expressed in Scotty's voice was definitely heard. His sense of urgency and quick action saved the crew more than once.

Another character I heard in the news this week was Spock. Spock was the First Officer and Science Officer on the Enterprise. He was always calm, cool and collected and logical. Spock sought to understand what was happening on each mission and offered advice and insights that also kept the crew safe.

And then of course the Captain. When I was a kid Captain James T. Kirk was at the helm of the Enterprise - the always brave and fearless leader who would literally take his ship and crew to places no one had been before. His desire to explore new galaxies often brought new knowledge and understanding of other people and different ways of living, all the while keeping his crew safe.

What I noticed this week, as I "bumped into" each of these characters as we navigate our way around the "galaxy" called COVID-19, is that each of them want s what's best for us. I realized also that we each need to be kind and gentle with each other as none of us knows what lies ahead and we are all dealing with the stress of the unknown in different ways.

Since the words "Beam me up, Scotty" are not effective in our reality, may the words "I am with you, you are not alone and I am here for you" be the ones that become the quotables of this non-fictional reality we are experiencing now.

May we all "Live long and prosper."

Take good care, my friends,

**March 6, 2020**

*Ashes of death on our foreheads,  
seeds of hope in our hearts.  
As we begin the journey, beyond the cross,  
let us remember, God prepares us for life  
and not for death, for resurrection and not for crucifixion,  
for love and not for hate.  
In a world where death holds us bound,  
and violence seems to reign  
in thought and deed,  
may this journey of Lent get us ready,  
to be God's good news of hope and wholeness,  
and resurrection life.*

*(by Christine Sine <http://godspace-msa.com>)*

Lent is often thought of as a sombre time, a time of fasting and giving up of some of our favourite things or habits. Therefore, I like the positive aspect of this poem: that God prepares us for life, resurrection and love! I'm struck by the phrase in the first line, "seeds of hope in our hearts." This is a lovely image to carry with us during Lent. It reminds me of the times I've planted seeds in little pots in the early spring so that they have a head-start when it's safe to plant them in the garden. Just looking at those little green sprouts gives me hope!

The word Lent comes from an old English word meaning spring or lengthening of the hours of daylight and for many of us this is a sign of hope. Recently I've heard several people marvel at the fact that it is still light out at suppertime. The growing daylight lifts our spirits.

Lent is a time to prepare ourselves not only for the sorrowful days of Holy Week but also for the joyful news of Easter. It is a time to reflect on how the way we live our life answers Jesus' call to work for peace and justice in the world.

May God's word of hope renew and encourage us so that we may be, as the last line of the poem says, "God's good news of hope and wholeness, and of resurrection life."

**February 21, 2020**

As I write this pondering I can smell cookies baking in the oven. It's a great smell! However, the cookies are not for me (insert sad face here), but they are for the kids who will be coming to take part in the Strike Day Event. Maybe I'll get one tomorrow?!?! Or maybe not. Either way, I'm pretty excited about the day.

We have 10 youth signed up to hang out at the church. Maleigha, Barb Williams and I planned the events and food today. Helen Coon has volunteered to help out. It will really be a day of fun. And for the most part this is the first day I've had a chance to spend time with some of our youth. I have met them but have not had much time to talk to them or have fun with them. These young people are such an important part of our community that I can't wait to get to know them and what is important to them.

But wait there's more...I am so pleased that we have an opportunity to help our families that have school-age children. It's a win-win for everyone, don't you think?

If someone were to ask me why being part of a faith community is so important to me, days like tomorrow would be what I would point to. We have a unique opportunity to care for others, because we can share the load. I could not offer



a day like this on my own. In a faith community we can work together to offer care to each other and to those beyond our doors in a way none of us can do alone.

Thank you for letting me be a part of this great community!

**Friday February 7, 2020**

WE DON'T THINK WE SEE THEM,  
BUT THEY'RE HERE.

ARE YOU AFRAID YET?  
DON'T BE.

Recently I looked at a list of Teenagers who had been a part of our Sunday School program or are connected to the church in one way or another.

THIS IS WHAT I DISCOVERED....THERE ARE 14 YOUNG PEOPLE CONNECTED TO ST. MARK'S IN HIGH SCHOOL!

I was delighted to note that although I have only been here a few months, I can put faces to the names of these youth. This means that they are here! Not every Sunday, or maybe any Sunday, but I have met them ... flipping pancakes, or helping out at a community dinner, greeting at the door or selling cookies at our Breakfast with Santa. Some I know from Confirmation Class.

The day I saw the list I realized that high school exams were to start the next day. So I dropped cards off on behalf of St. Mark's to let these youth know we were thinking of them as they studied.

HOWEVER...HAVE YOU ACTUALLY BEEN ABLE TO TAKE ANY OF THIS IN SINCE YOU READ WE HAVE 14 TEENAGERS...? 14!

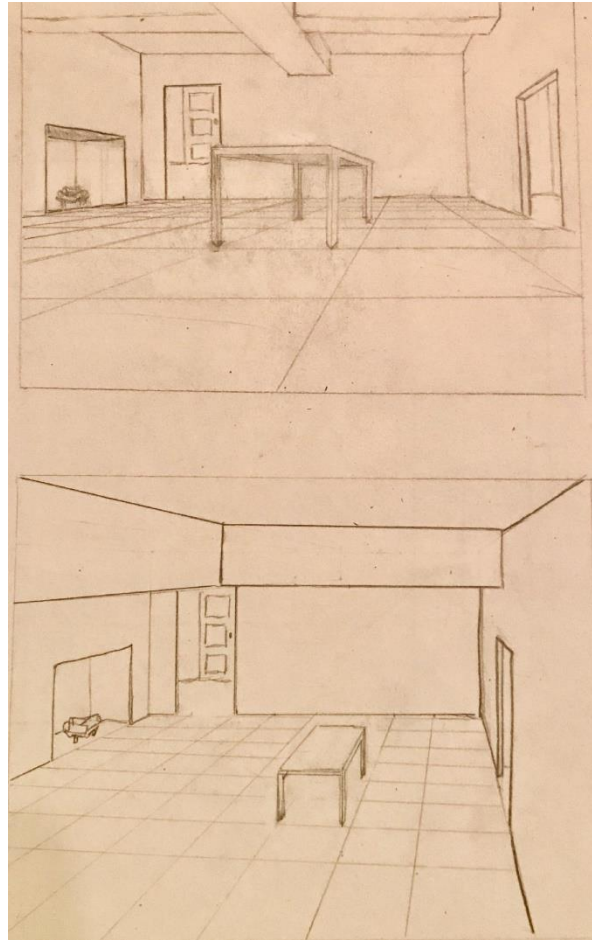
We could field a baseball team easily! (Hmm, that could be fun:)

It's a little cold for that so instead we are going bowling at University Plaza on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.

IF YOU KNOW OF ANY YOUTH, HIGH SCHOOL AGE OR OLDER, PLEASE LET THEM KNOW ABOUT THIS EVENT. MALEIGHA AND I WOULD LOVE TO HAVE THEM JOIN US THAT NIGHT.

DROP US A LINE AT: [minister@stmarksunitedchurch.ca](mailto:minister@stmarksunitedchurch.ca) or [maleigha@stmarksunitedchurch.ca](mailto:maleigha@stmarksunitedchurch.ca)

Friday January 24, 2020



I am taking a beginner's drawing class at Dundas Valley School of Art. This week's lesson was all about perspective. We were taught how to draw a simple room with a "one-point perspective." Basically, you place yourself in the room, determine the horizon line, mark the point on the horizon that is right in front of you and then you use this point (vanishing point) to create the planes of the ceiling, floor and walls. We used this method and created several imaginary rooms from different imaginary positions.

I am just amazed at how different the room looks depending on where you are. The term, "it's all about perspective" came alive for me. Often we use this term when we are talking about the different ways we see the world given our socio-economic position. If we are wealthy, we tend to see things one way, and the same is true for others given their level of wealth. Well, when I drew my room from the vantage point of the top of an imaginary ladder, I could see almost everything in the room. If there had been items on top of the table, I would have seen them clearly. However, when I drew from the perspective of sitting on the floor, the room looked smaller, the table looked large and I couldn't see if there was anything on it.

By simply comparing these two images, I created a visual for myself that illustrates why different folks have different understandings of the world. How must it feel to be coming at everything without being about to see what's available to you? Or always being in the shadow of the items you would like to access? Or seeing the underside of the table and not the feast that may be on it? For me the view from close to floor level was the hardest for me, not to draw but to put myself in. Again my mind wandered. If I was on the floor and wanted to see what was on the table, I would simply stand up. Because of who I am, my social status, my economic status, my race, the chances of anyone telling me I can't get up would be slim. However, there are many - refugees, indigenous and transgendered individuals, for example - who would be told to get right back down because they don't belong at a higher level.

And then something important dawned on me. Inviting everyone to the table - to sit around it and eat at it - was exactly what Jesus did. He changed the perspectives for everyone. He brought the high down, the low up and everyone had access to what he had to offer: love, grace and hope.

Let us make it our work to create a place where everyone who comes into our space is welcome and has the same opportunities. May we, like Jesus, invite all people to the table, a sacred place where love, grace and hope are served.

### **Friday January 10, 2020**

When I was a kid, we had a round, above ground pool. It might have been only 4 ft deep with a 12 ft diameter but it was our grand oasis every summer for years. Weather permitting my friends and I spent hours in it every day. One of our favourite activities in the pool was to spread ourselves evenly around the inside edge and walk around it until the water was swirling like a whirlpool in the same direction we were walking. As the water moved faster, the faster we could walk. It didn't take long until we could lift our feet off the bottom of the pool and float. The current would carry us, maybe once around the pool. Without the energy of our little bodies pushing through it, the water would quickly settle and we would start all over again. We would finish most whirlpools floating around the pool, but sometimes we would try to stand still with our backs to the flow or turn quickly and face the current. The hardest trick was when we stopped moving forward, turned around and then tried to walk against the current. We would huff and puff, pushing against the bottom of the pool to propel our steps forward. Eventually the current would weaken enough and we would be able to make our way "up stream." Much to our delight, in no time at all, we would have a whole new whirlpool, travelling in the opposite direction to our last one.

Moving against the flow, be it in a pool, a crowd or in social systems, is hard. The energy, the easy answers and the quick solutions all seem to be moving gracefully downstream. Why would anyone choose to turn the other way and struggle, slip and expel, what seems like unnecessary energy, in order to go anywhere else?

This week, the news coming from around the world made me feel as if I were caught up in a whirlpool, where the water felt much deeper and the currents much stronger and dangerous than in any whirlpool we ever made as kids: bush fires in Australia, the assassination of an Iranian General, the provocative jabs and barbs being tweeted between world leaders and a horrific plane crash that took the lives of so many, including 2 students and a former post-doctoral fellow from McMaster. All this news makes it seem clear that this is a time in our history when just going with the flow is far more dangerous than pushing our way back against it. For it seems that it is a time in the world's history when we need to turn around, and not just stand and watch the flow of the world's events go by, but to start walking...slowly at first...against the flow. Each of us can do something to help reverse the way things are. We can help wash dishes after coffee time to do our part in addressing the issues of pollution and single-use plastic items. We can become more demanding of our chosen leaders at all levels of government. We need to stop the flow of hate and prejudice by speaking our stories, standing up to bullies in whatever form they take, and offer love to those who are hurting and suffering because of the injustices and inequalities in the world. It will be difficult to make changes and to fight against our human tendency to sit back and float along with others. However, once the current begins to shift everything will flow more easily and important changes will be made.

### **Friday January 3, 2020**

Sometimes we find a piece of advice or a statement and we feel obliged to comment on it or give it our own spin. But in the following quote you will find ideas that I am sure will only be weakened by anything I try to say...so I will say nothing...and let it speak for itself...

*"And now let us believe in a long year  
that is given to us,  
new, untouched,*

*full of things that have never been,  
full of work that has never been done,  
full of tasks, claims, and demands;  
and let us see that we learn to take it  
without letting fall  
too much of what it has to bestow upon those  
who demand of it  
necessary, serious, and great things.”*

- Rainer Marie Rilke

And know that I am very excited to see what God has in store for us in this new year, as individuals and as a community of faith.