

# A Note From the Revs

June 4, 2020

## Virtch



Sitting at the computer on this sunny Monday morning, I (Molly) am realizing that 11 (or is it almost 12) weeks into this new routine, while it feels so very uncomfortable and hard, that I am slowly getting used to the new rhythm of my life. Perhaps you too are feeling that you have found your new normal, strange and unwelcome as it may be.



I think one of the greatest examples of our new normal is the way that we have figured out how we can worship together, apart. The seven-church, seven-minister collective that has joined together to offer weekly worship has now become a really well-oiled machine. We have a weekly rhythm to our planning, preparation and recording of worship each week, and are supported by an incredible host of volunteers to make it all possible. Some one has described our efforts as creating Sesame Street church – a whole bunch of snippets on a common theme strung together.

Others have said they see undertones of Mr. Rogers Neighbourhood when watching. One of the best words we have heard yet came from Scott's son, Ian, who coined the term "Virtch" from "virtual church" – I think it encapsulates this "thing" that we are creating which is church, but in a new way. Whatever it is you choose to call our experience, we hope you are finding it a meaningful way to connect with your own souls, with each other, and with God.

As we read about plans of re-opening buildings and re-instating services, we watch closely to see what our siblings in the United States and in other Canadian provinces are doing. For many of us, while we long for a return to what once was, we also feel a deep dread that these moves are too soon. As clergy, we want you to rest assured that the health and safety of our beloved flock remain our greatest priority in the time to come. Our Council is working hard to discern how it is that we can best care for our congregation and our tenants in ways that are safe and responsible. What this means practically is that while we might see some smaller gatherings in the future, it is safe for us to assume that we will not be gathering as a larger worshipping community for quite some time. Realistically, we are making plans for on-line worship to continue well into the fall/winter, even into 2021. We know this brings much sadness to you, as it does to us - you have no idea the grief that we as clergy feel as we mourn the loss of leading in person worship.

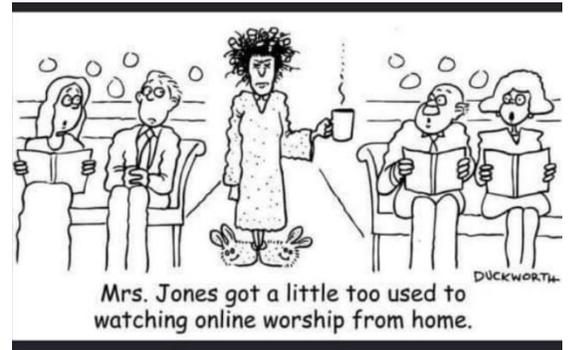


However there is Good News dear friends – there always is when God is with us! While we may not be gathering in person on Sundays, the church is far from closed! We have witnessed God at work in so many different ways over the past months, and we see that the church is alive, well, and active in the world. We have also learned that we can gather virtually for worship and still feel a sense of connection and community, not only within our own congregation but amongst a wider collection of churches. These are blessings in a time when we need some anchors within our weeks, and we pray that Virtch will remain such an anchor for you.

We can promise that until we are able to return to meaningful, in-person worship in our sanctuary, we will strive to offer you a virtual worship experience that gives voice to the prayers and questions of your hearts. As always we remain committed to serving you as your pastors and to supporting you in your lives of faith....and we are only a phone call or email away. We hold you in our prayers, and we give thanks for the blessing it is to be your clergy in this brave new world we are all living into. God journeys with us every step of the way. Thanks be to God!

Yours in service....in person and on screen,

Molly & Caroline



### This Week at (virtual) OUC

**Men's Digital Coffee** – Wednesdays at 8 am – contact Dave Clemis ([davidclemis@homemail.com](mailto:davidclemis@homemail.com)) for an invitation.

**On-Line Java Jive** – Thursdays at 10 am – contact Rev. Caroline ([ouc.carolinepenhale@rogers.com](mailto:ouc.carolinepenhale@rogers.com)) for an invitation.

**"Virtch"** – Sundays at 10 am on our YouTube channel ([https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnOu5yFybhiRZ6fGiMIS\\_9w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnOu5yFybhiRZ6fGiMIS_9w))

**Zoom Virtual Sunday School** – Sundays from 11:15 – 11:45 – contact Rev. Molly ([ouc.mollybell@rogers.com](mailto:ouc.mollybell@rogers.com)) for an invitation.

**Zoom Coffee/Tea/Wine Break** for parents with young children – Tuesday June 9, 8:45 pm – contact Luc Lamadeleine ([luc@duuo.ca](mailto:luc@duuo.ca)) for more information and an invitation.