

Campbell River “Inspirer”

Issue 3
May 2020

Special Interests

Peeking into Ministry

Lectionary for June 2020



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Dear Friends of Campbell River United Church

Sending out a newsletter without any news is a daunting task.

Campbell River United Church news is pretty much the same as the last time I wrote to you. An air quality test of our church building was conducted last week on Thursday, and we are waiting for the results and recommendations. We should know more in the next two to three weeks. Sunday services are at 10:00 on Zoom, my office hours are on Zoom from 11:00-12:00 Wednesdays to Fridays, Bible study meets on Thursdays at 2:00 pm, and the Coffee & Conversation meeting is cancelled until further notice.

Some who feel comfortable and have a deep need for church and fellowship are coming to our Zoom Sunday services, while others do not. A few feel technologically overwhelmed, although we are offering them assistance. Some of those not attending the services are watching them later by downloading them from the CRUC webpage; others do not feel this need. Taking this into consideration, I have been thinking about church and CRUC. Of course, my observations are influenced by the fact that overall I have preached more to the camera on my desk with people in their Zoom boxes than at the physical church in Campbell River.

Nevertheless, as the weeks pass, I am growing ever more curious

about what church means to each of you. I wonder how you experience the qualities of physical-church, Zoom church, and how sentimental tradition influences your present choice of worship. I've wondered about your expectations and how people are fulfilling their religious needs during these strange times. I wonder if some of you feel there is no church without physically attending it, singing in a choir, and hanging out for coffee after a service. Besides, at this time of COVID 19, I wonder about the members of our congregation in the high-risk category. What does it mean to you to know that even giving lunches in paper bags to the hungry is a risky undertaking that needs to be well thought through? Basically, I am curious about the members of CRUC, whose ethos is centered on serving the poor, how it feels for you to be sitting it out on the sidelines?

Given the current situation, I feel compelled to begin a conversation with you about church then and now. I begin with two questions: What does church mean to you? How does church look for you in the future? I'd love to know what you are thinking.

Some churches beyond ours are talking about reopening their buildings. Other churches are talking about closing forever. Still, others are trying to fulfill the religious, sentimental needs of

"Creator God, you have entrusted to us knowledge of good and evil.

You have permitted us knowledge of the world in which we live, and that knowledge has yielded immense gains for us, gains of control, of productivity, of explanation, of connections of causes and effects.

Only rarely – like now! – do we collide with Your hiddenness that summons us and embarrasses us.

We peek into your awesome hidden presence; we find our certitudes quite disrupted.

Thus, we pause at the edge of holiness, Finding that your unfathomable presence is an odd mix of mercy and judgments, of generosity and accountability, of forgiveness and starchy realism.

We dwell at the edge of your mystery for an instant...not longer.

Then we return to our proper work of knowledge, research, explanation, and management.

By that instant, however, we are changed...sobered, summoned, emancipated, filled with wonder before your holiness. It is for that holiness that outflanks us that we give you thanks.

Amen."

Peeking into Ministry

A Prayer by Walter Brueggemann in *Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Uncertainty*



congregants by going to the building and making a video of a service where the preacher preaches to an empty sanctuary. Then these efforts to emulate reality are put in a video online. Congregants watch these usually in solitude.

Some churches are pushing pastors to hold outdoor services. These take about a week to think through, set up, sanitize, and put away afterward. Such services are risky by nature.

Getting into our cars, setting up a radio station, and seeing each other from our cars is perhaps a North American thing that I simply fail to understand. This method, too, takes a lot of work, with what seems to me unsatisfactory results.

I have posted the UCC statement about continuing services in the church building on our webpage for you to see so that we all have the same information.

There is the option of meeting outside, note bene, without singing. Well, maybe we could risk singing lightly into the masks

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is now requiring us to wear.

We could also meet in the church in groups of 7-8. Treena Duncan from the Pacific Mountain United Church Regional Office thinks this would be *sort of okay* for meetings. Church like this would mean a cleaning crew before, in between, and afterward. Thinking through this in terms of Sunday services, members would have to draw a two-meter circle between them and others. The minister, me, would have to be contained in a plexiglass container, wearing a mask, and serve all of the little groups of 7-8, which means lots of exposure to others. In the case of CRUC, it also means we would be meeting in potentially unhealthy, stagnant air. Someone would have to keep a list of the groups and make sure the rules are not broken.

Oh, yes, I forgot, we would also need to provide hand sanitizing stations and police the bathrooms.

The question of what Church is now, what will our church be, feels as daunting as writing a newsletter without any news.

Lectionary for June 2020

Trinity Sunday June 7

Genesis 1:1—2:4a

Psalms 8

2 Corinthians 13:11–13

Matthew 28:16–20

June 14

Genesis 18:1–15, (21:1–7)

Psalms 116:1–2, 12–19

Exodus 19:2–8a

Psalms 100

Romans 5:1–8

Matthew 9:35—10:8, (9–23)

June 21

Genesis 21:8–21

Psalms 86:1–10, 16–17

Jeremiah 20:7–13

Psalms 69:7–10, (11–15), 16–18

Romans 6:1b–11

Matthew 10:24–39

June 28

Genesis 22:1–14

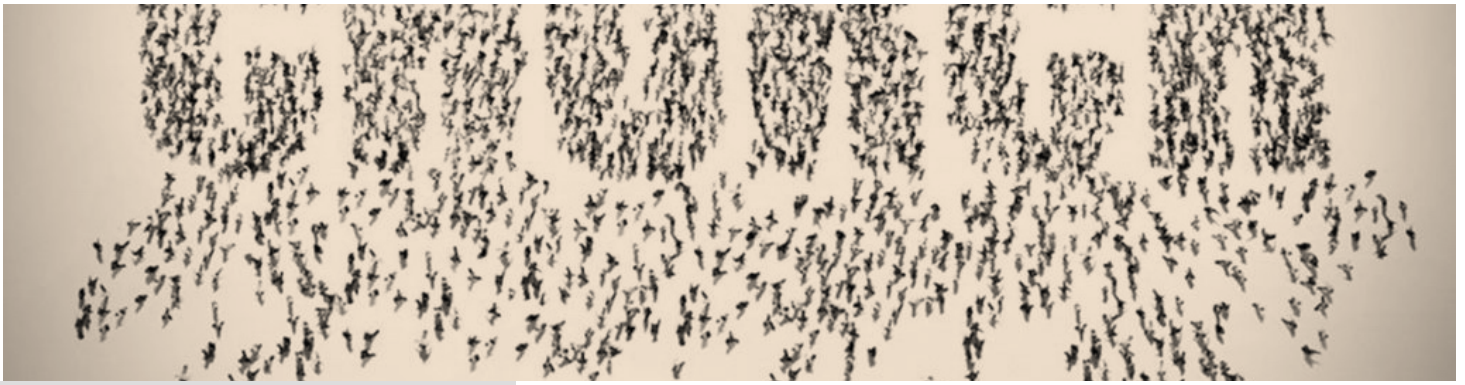
Psalms 13

Jeremiah 28:5–9

Psalms 89:1–4, 15–18

Romans 6:12–23

Matthew 10:40–42



What is the Church?

I'd like to inform my question, "what is the church" with some ideas from the vantage point of three perspectives. First, I will provide a historical perspective – a really short overview. Then I will brush across a biblical-theological perspective. Finally, I will give you a peak at my, Rebecca's perspective, which includes what many global church leaders are chatting about in these trying times.

Historically, the early church between the resurrection of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was an exile church meeting in homes until the fourth century. The rich and poor Christians would gather for a meal, prayer, prophetic sharing, perhaps a sermon, and news. It would not have been until circa 60 B.C. that a gospel reading could take place – there was storytelling about what the members remembered of Christ and some preaching about his teachings. Between 150-250 A.D., houses were renovated to be used exclusively as meeting places or Christian community centers. By this time, the Lord's Supper had been formalized from the original agape meal. Between 250-313, large buildings and halls served as places of worship.

After this, Constantine (ca. 288-377) conquered Constantinople

and installed Christianity as a state religion in his empire. From that time forward, churches were erected mostly as edifices with towers stretching to heaven. The towers and grand buildings were symbols of God's power and overwhelming clerical authority but also political empire.

When the church split between the Roman Catholic and Reformed camps during the sixteenth-century Reformation, church buildings were often reclaimed, and something called iconoclasm took place where religious symbols were removed by the reforming groups. The destruction of art and symbols, even pipe organs, was done in the hope that the Christian church would refocus on scripture and justification by grace, through faith. Ornate Catholic churches were stripped of their precious cultural and religious artifacts. After the Reformation, church buildings were essential but less significant than before.

Today, many expressions of the Christian church around the globe include people meeting in homes, halls, church buildings, bars, streets, parks, and wherever they decide to get together and worship God. Christ is central to all Christian churches around the world.



Church from a Theological Perspective

The word 'church' is derived from the Greek word, which means "thing belonging to the Lord." Church, in this sense, refers to the church building itself. The Greek word *ecclesia* is also used for the church building but, in fact, refers to an assembly of self-governing citizens and was used to describe the assembly or congregation of the Israelites in covenant with YHWH (God). Jesus only mentions *ecclesia* twice in the gospels. He does so in Matthew 16:18, "I tell you that you are Peter. And I'll build my church on this rock. The gates of the underworld won't be able to stand against it. and 18:17, "But if they still won't pay attention, report it to the church. If they won't pay attention even to the church, treat them as you would a Gentile and tax collector."

The Book of Acts and Paul's Letters in the New Testament tell us about an early church, which was considered a sect meeting in homes by Ancient Mideastern others and by the leaders of the Rome Empire. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* says, "Two doctrines of the church received wide acceptance: (a) the more conservative, that the church is a visible body and in the Divine intention one throughout the world, but that in view of corruptions and errors which have arisen it is justified within a particular nation in reforming itself, even if this involves a breach of visible unity; (b) the more radical, that the true Church is in essence an invisible body, since the essential fact by which a man is saved and made a member of the Church is the inward fact of faith. Thus constituted, the Church is a body whose actual membership is known only to God."

Generally speaking, the twenty-first century church is defined by most of us as the people of God – people of faith in Jesus Christ.

Church is God's people those who are **choosing to live life with Jesus ...**
24/7

For me, the church is both visible and invisible. The church is the people of God, Christ followers, who gather as disciples of Jesus Christ for fellowship, discipleship, to be instructed in the Word, to be encouraged, to worship God together, and to share the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The goal of the church is to be the community of God caring for each other and serving as a city on a hill for the rest of the world to come to know God. As the people of God are transformed

COVID 19 time is a form of judgment on us as earthlings, and we the people of God, the church. We earthlings including people of the church have been completely consumed by a consumer culture that is out of control. When I go outside now and compare nature to how it was nine weeks ago, I am emotionally overwhelmed by the excellent air quality, the amount of wildlife, birds, and fish in the air, the land and sea around me. As catastrophe upon catastrophe shows up in the news cycles, I am even more

What is Church for me?

by grace through faith, we grow more Christlike and our faith becomes manifest in our words and actions – we are the Body of Christ with Christ as our head. Just as Christ was sent into the world, the church is sent into the world to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

I have a lot more to say about what Church is, but this is merely meant to be a conversation starter because my goal for writing this is to hear from you about what you think Church is.

I am starting to think that what church will become depends on how we order what God is doing right now with the church, which is us, the Body of Christ in our world. I think along with many other theologians that this

convinced that we cannot return to where we were before the pandemic. We earthlings and church people need to review who we are as the people of God – the church.

So, my question to you is: What is church? What does your future church look like? How do you define church? How do you want your church to look? Neither you nor I chose the situation we are in, but you and I together with the rest of our church, CRUC, are certainly going to have the chance to reorient who we are after this time of disorientation. The big question is: what does being church mean to you?

Let me know. Shalom,

Your minister, Dr. Rebecca



As John Calvin the great Reformer wrote, **"My time is in God's hands,"** and **"the church belongs to Christ."**

Your council met on May 7, and we dealt with the following items: the Breakfast Club Grant application has been submitted. The membership roll has been updated and changed where needed with thanks to Heather Miller and Carmen-Ann Menegozzo. Little Orca's Daycare were owed half a month's rent as they closed mid-March. We had first thought we would keep it and use it toward their first months rent when they reopened, but in discussion with their staff, it was decided to return it to them, which we have now done.

Peter Bibby sent in an idea for council to discuss. For the purposes here, I have summarized his letter:

Could we, at Campbell River United Church, partner with one, or all, of the funeral directors in Campbell River to provide a pop-up memorial service? We could use one of our car parks for the pop up and the other car park as a car park. We could and should mark out the memorial car park in 12-foot squares or maybe 8-foot squares and with corridors that would be kept clear. A small Memorial group could use the lower carpark using the entrance canopy for the

Chatter from the Chair

officiators. In the larger car park, it would be possible to set up loggias.

We discussed this idea and decided to table it until we have clearer guidelines around gatherings, staff, and the people with energy to undertake a new ministry of this type.

New signing authority at our Bank for Bill Huxham was discussed and, since the council meeting has been arranged, in order that Bill can access the banking information he needs to do his job. He stressed that he is not wanting to be on the list of people who sign cheques but that is the

only way the bank will let him have access.

M&P reported that volunteers have stepped up to do the printing and delivery of newsletters.

Worship met to plan worship ideas for May and June.

Rudy continues to check the building regularly.

The air quality testing was done on Thursday May 14. Logan and Rudy met the tester at the church at 9:30. We await the results.



... Chatter

Due to COVID 19, we have cancelled the summer camp program.

Meeting in the building has been delayed until September when we will have a look at Region's recommendations and decide then about our opening.

The yearly bill for our webpage has been funded

through UCW in the past, but council decided to pay the bill out of general revenue until we can ask UCW if they feel they can continue to help out.

Logan shared that a meeting of Re-Imagine was to held on Wednesday May 13.

Blessings,

Mary-Lou Vanstone

For Your Calendar

"The Only Thing That Is Constant Is Change"

So, please check the events on our website
<https://www.crunityed.ca/> for the happenings regularly.

Our weekly events on Zoom:

- Minister's Office Hours (Wed-Fri, 11:00-12:00)
- Coffee and Conversation (Tue 14:00-15:30)
- Bible Study (Thu, 14:00-15:30)
- Sunday Worship Service (10:00-11:00)

Special Days

May 31, Pentecost Sunday: wear something **red** to the Zoom Worship Service.

June 5, 16:30: Agape Zoom meeting with light snacks.

Birthdays and Anniversaries in June 2020

- 12th: Sarah Ronhovde
- 14th: Elaine Julian & Harvey Kimbal
- 19th: Nicole Taylor
- 19th: Cathy & Gord Smith
- 25th: Sharon Paish
- 26th: Annette McLaren
- 30th: Gord Smith
- 30th: Bill & Vicky Huxham

Please sign up with Heather Miller if you have a ❤️ for Bible Reading and Prayers of the People during the Sunday Worship!

