

May 19, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of The Old Scotch Church,

You know I'm a planner, or at least one who looks ahead. Sometimes that catches others off guard (like asking too early who is thinking about in-person worship), but most of the time folks like the chance to get ready and to prepare for what's coming. So I've been thinking about life post-Covid-19. And I've wondered how different it will be from life pre-Covid-19.

Make no mistake. I hope life post-Covid19 is different. Now, I know there will be a slow economic recovery, starts and stops to fighting the pandemic, some masked-hybrid way of relating to people, and a lot of global bridge-building to do. Those are a few hard parts of the changes coming which we can expect. My hope for those arenas is that we will persevere and seek to engage life ahead with grace.

What I've been thinking about lately is how we can make some of the positive temporary changes we've experienced part of our new reality in the post-Covid-19 world. The easy ones that come to mind are family dinners, calling each other often enough that we get beyond the surface to how we are *really* doing, more board games-even if it's over the phone or via Zoom, meetings from home on cold, dark, rainy nights, and more home cooking. We've all found a bit of a silver lining in our new rhythms.

But I'm also thinking about changes to society, cultural norms, and world views. We have seen the reason Jesus took on the rich as we watch people (often the wealthy) declare that money means more than life, especially when they don't believe it means their life. Even knowing the economic recovery will be challenging, do we walk away from this pandemic knowing that Jesus is our God, not the false security of our bank account?

And then there is our consumption, cleverly called retail therapy or indulgences or status symbols. We've seen the healing of our world's air, water and land quality in the respite staying home has given the earth. Do we really need to go back to that pace of life, with the careless attitude of using up and throwing out?

We've also seen vocational power subverted, learning that essential workers include far more than doctors as we marvel at the energy of teachers to education our children, shelf-stockers to work all night for our convenience, delivery people to risk for our safety, and custodians to scrub for our health. Clapping for them with a word of thanks is nice, but will we pay attention to their standard of living, access to healthcare, and affordability of a college education?

Then there is the shift of how we use our time. One of the favorite questions I received in my phone calls over the months was "Who do I need to be praying for?" This was asked because they'd say, "I've got lots of time to pray these days." I don't want to lose the cloud of witnesses who have been praying. I love the artwork that's come out in this time, like Meredith's new church banners and Karen's drawings. I get to see our youth regularly, because they have time to zoom in and hang out. I like the drive-by visits, even those posted on Facebook. What ways are we spending our time that are worthy of re-arranging post-Covid-19 life to keep doing?

Well, these are my musings as I look ahead. This is my invitation to take a long look at what changes are coming, getting ready especially for those changes we can prepare for to make in our lives, as we follow Christ in the days ahead.

Grace and peace,

*Pastor Tracie*