

Dear Members and Friends of the Old Scotch Church,

I hope this finds you well, safe, and finding gratitude where you can. I am so grateful for each and every one of you as we continue to brave a new way of being together as a community. I am reminded of an old hymn, *Braving the Wilds All Unexplored*, first copyrighted in 1928. It was the hymn used as a long-standing tradition for graduation from San Francisco Theological Seminary; written by Scottish/American pastor, Robert Freeman who was at one time a Director at the seminary.

Braving the wilds all unexplored,  
Dreamers of dreams and pioneers,  
Wielding the sickle, goad, and sword,  
They marched with the sun to the last frontiers--  
God of the valiant, grant that they  
Their sons do follow valiantly.

The tune is energetic and does give one the sense of marching or moving forward. One of these days I hope to find the music.

Zoom fellowship has been a wonderful way to see and connect with people from our congregation on Sunday mornings. I miss seeing everyone in person and I know I'm not alone in that. Some of us have found safe ways to connect in person ... socially distanced, outdoor meals; driveway visits (We keep 2 lawn chairs in the back of the car just for this!); and car rendezvous; in my case, usually for coffee with a friend.

We've also had a wonderful group of folks who've been reaching out to friends and members. We divided the congregation alphabetically into pods. Each pod has two or three members responsible for contacting you. You might receive a card, email, or phone call. It's been wonderful to find *stamped* letters in the mailbox and read greetings from people I know well and people I don't know quite as well. Scanning my email inbox and seeing a familiar name sure beats deleting spam and the all too frequent notifications from some listserv I'm on. And, I'm absolutely delighted when caller ID lets me know the caller is someone I'd actually like to talk to and not a telemarketer or scammer! As I have reached out to people, I've enjoyed the responses I've received and getting to know people better, especially when it's a hand-drawn card from one of our younger members. We sincerely hope these brief, or not so brief, ways of staying connected have warmed your heart and fed your soul.

We're changing the leadership for each pod on a monthly basis. That's why you're hearing from different folks. We also use the opportunity to alert you to something happening within our church family. Eventually, we'll be sharing coffee, hot cocoa, and tea in the basement. Kids will be running around, girl scout cookies will be sold, bake sales will happen, and heartfelt hugs will be shared. In the meantime, please know you are thought of, prayed for, and missed. Join us for Zoom fellowship on Sunday mornings at 11:00 am. The link is always provided along with the sermon.

Blessings,  
Chris Macfarlane  
Parish Associate