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18 March, 2020

At the table

"My help comes from God, the maker of heaven and earth." Psalm 121:1

Dear Ones,

I want to let you know what these few days has been like for me, your minister, so that you can picture how your church continues to function in this strange time.

First, you must imagine me sitting at my dining room table – where I always work, near the window and the cedar tree outside. But I am not alone! My daughter, Norah, has come home from university, and her boyfriend Richard is here, along with my new tenant from the Stratford Festival, Emma. Plus Thorn, of course, and Emma's dog, Thea. Four of us at the table, and two underneath... I have gone from being an empty-nester to a full-nester!

Your congregational staff and leadership are very active, using email and telephone, to continue to make decisions for the well-being of the congregation. Elise, Janna, Janice, Debbie, Bob and even Charles who is in Portugal are in contact multiple times a day, with the entire Council preparing to meet tomorrow in a new electronic format. Pastoral care by me is continuing by email and by phone, with visits to hospitals and homes in emergency situations. 10 elders are undertaking to call every household, to establish contact and make sure everyone is OK. We expect Shorelines to come out on Friday as usual, and these daily Kate Letters (with one tomorrow coming from Elise) keep our community together.

I am also keeping in touch with our Regional Council staff, who are giving us excellent support regarding policy, worship possibilities, and creative ideas regarding finances. Networks exist connecting clergy across the nation, to share ideas, offer resources, and answer questions. The Moderator of The United Church of Canada, The Right Reverend Richard Bott, is reaching out regularly and offering worship services electronically to support our whole denomination.

In my daily prayers I hold you all in the light of God, and as I open my computer you join me at the table. Truly, "We are not alone." (The New Creed) I hope you feel the community of saints all around.

Grace to you, and peace,

Kate

*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*

