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## "Essentials"

*"Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money – not even an extra tunic"*  
Luke 9:3

We hear the word 'essential' being bandied about a lot these days. And everyone it seems, has a different definition of who or what is deemed essential. I suppose we could halt the conversation right there with the theological claim that to a God who 'knows us before we are knit together in our mother's womb and who counts every hair on our head', *each* and *every* one of us is essential!

But the secular world in the midst of a pandemic has a different perspective.

At the onset of this crisis, I heard an impassioned colleague lamenting in a sermon how the powers-that-be did not consider the work of the church to be essential. Of course we have quickly demonstrated that the faithful mission of the church carries on in new and innovative forms, reminding us, that church people are more essential than church buildings.

In the real estate world, the building never matters as much as 'location, location, location!' Any house can be renovated, but the property and setting are fixed. As I am looking to purchase a new home, this has led to some honest reflection on what is essential to me in choosing where I settle.

Living within 5 blocks of either Georgian Bay or Lake Huron for the past thirty years, I know that proximity to water is essential. I love to swim, to paddle, to wander shorelines, to stare at waves. These things feed my soul. A tangle of streets and trails to explore nearby is also critical as daily walking/running/biking are part of my physical and spiritual wellness. Long country concessions or barren stretches of highway just don't entice me as do small town nooks and crannies.

And I have concluded that an appropriate outdoor living space actually matters more to me than the inside of the house. A sheltered porch for yoga practice, a shady place to hang my hammock and read, flower gardens where I can dig in the earth and gather blooms for my table, tall trees sheltering birds that I can tempt to my feeders in every season. These are the things I have discovered to be essential about the design of my home. Okay, I'll admit a bathroom and a kitchen are convenient as well. But my outdoor living space truly reveals who I am, and how I choose to live my life, making me feel I'm 'home' as a state of being rather than occupying a piece of property.

What are the things in your living space, that you would deem as essential? Perhaps a designated area where you make music, or create art? A well-stocked kitchen? A workshop where you can escape and tinker? Even a simple corner with a favourite picture on the wall can become an essential haven.

Spending so much time at home these days, I hope you may discover what is *essential* in your personal living space – whether indoors or out. And perhaps consider what these elements reveal about you, how they fulfill important needs in your life and how they make you feel truly at 'home.'

**Be well, stay well,**

*Elise*

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*"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."*