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HORSESHOE FALLS
REGIONAL COUNCIL
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Hello Siblings in Christ!

There is always a passage of scripture to spur us on as Christians, and for this season the Apostle Paul provides us with yet another Word to ponder. He writes in Phil. 2:1-2, "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind." Wow! A Word in season. If there is ever a time for a community of sharing and the demonstration of one accord through compassion is now. Christendom has been under attack from various angles ... inside and out, and as a region we have not gone unscathed.

With many communities of faith facing the scary prospect of closure, negotiating the turbulence of dwindling numbers, and dealing with the onslaught of many negative comments about the institution of the church, it's clear there is much work to do. Perhaps a ministry of presence in the respective communities of our existence should be contemplated. What if there is reprioritizing of the vocation as presenters of God's presence in the world? What if we cultivate the habits and liturgies that create the space and contours for that presence to be felt and known? Would that then redefine the place of the church?

My sense is that we wrestle with many things, not least of which is the consumerism of contemporary Christianity, which has unsurprisingly led to many communities of faith becoming more homogeneous than ever. So, when we go to churches that fit us (how we look, talk and worship) we will naturally be surrounded by people who look, talk and worship just like us. But homogeneity is not the biblical ideal. The power of the gospel is that of unifying diverse groups of people, breaking down the walls of hostility that naturally divide us (race, class, culture, gender, music preference, whatever). At a time when social media allows us to curate feeds and surround ourselves with people who agree with us and confirm our biases, this work becomes even more difficult. There is much work to do.

In this new season of Renewal and Transformation, we want to hear the stories from your communities of faith. We know some will be difficult to tell, but we also know that there are some which are filled with hope that will inspire us to keep going striving. The assignment right now may seem daunting, but let's hear again the words of assurance offered to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9). Let's keep journeying together.

Looking forward to our engagement!

One Love,

Rev. Lennox Scarlett

President Horseshoe Falls Regional Council