

October 23, 2020

Dear Friends,

Do you have any funny stories these days? I'd love to hear.

Here's mine. My son carved a pumpkin some weeks back. It had a lopsided smile. He thought it would be funny to place the pumpkin on top of the kitchen cupboards looking down at his parents from above. The great pumpkin! As time passed, I noticed the pumpkin's face was sinking and I asked for it to be removed from the cupboard. More days passed. By this point the pumpkin's smile was uber lopsided. I made my demand. "Please take that pumpkin down from the cupboard top right now!" So, he did. He climbed on a stool, grabbed the good-sized pumpkin, and handed it down to me: "Here Mom!" I reached up to take it from him. That's when it happened. The pumpkin disintegrated in his hands, and its mushy contents splatted on top of me and across the kitchen floor. We laughed for thirty minutes straight as *he* cleaned it up!

Laughter can be good medicine. I think this [Jimmy Fallon skit](#) with heckler Will Ferrell is really funny; it's a parody on Journey's *Don't Stop Believin'* (1981). If you think my sense of humour needs some refining, go easy on me and coach me by sending a story or video that makes *you* laugh.

Coping strategies are the things we do or ways we think to help us overcome, tolerate, minimize, or get through stressful events. Humour is a coping strategy.

Prepare for your Covid-style Baptism

When I arrived in my position at Sunnyside in July 2018 someone commented positively on my sense of humour. My response to them was, "If you see me losing my sense of humour, please kick me." I didn't know at that time that I would be adding "expertise in figuring out how to baptize people in a global pandemic" to the resumé! And you know what? We are figuring it out. At least four people in our community are preparing for their baptism or confirmation during this season.

Praying with the Psalmists

We will also share the sacrament of Communion and participate in a *Praying with the Psalmists* in-person worship gathering on the theme of "Healing" this coming Wednesday (October 28) at 7 p.m. Al and Beth Fleming will lead us in worship through music. Chris and Heather Barrett and I will facilitate us as we read scripture, ponder what God is saying to us, and respond in prayer. Please [register here](#) today. Current protocols will be 100% in place as per Sunnyside's [Worshipping Together Guidelines](#) and Ottawa Public Health's [Guidance for Places of Worship](#).

Sunday Online Worship Gathering at 10 a.m.

This coming Sunday Pastor Matt will preach on Jesus' greatest commandments (Matthew 22:34-46). Prepare to be moved by God.

Please [email me](#) for a Zoom link.

*Please join the Zoom meeting after 9:30 a.m. to avoid problems entering the meeting.

For this week's scripture readings and other announcements, go to [Sunday's bulletin](#).

Sunday School for grades 4-6 at 11:15 a.m.

You may 'send' your child to Sunday School (grades 4-6) at 11:15 a.m. For a Zoom link, contact our [family pastor](#).

Tuesday Prayer Gathering: October 27

You are welcome to [send your prayer request](#) so our prayer team can remember you on Tuesday at our 11:30 a.m. meeting.

Winter Well-Being

We need each others' help to lean into and live from the goodness of God. As we approach the winter, I am thinking about how we might mutually support each other with nobody bearing too heavy of a load.

Loosely, I am planning to facilitate a group of some sort which offers accountability and companionship as we seek wholeness this winter. We will share our plans to exercise and perhaps take occasional distanced group walks depending on Ottawa's regulations, we will share strategies for coping with anxiety and depression, and we will commit to and keep each other accountable to a life of prayer. The only way this will work is if everybody in the group sees themselves as a giver and a receiver, making space for each others' care.

Let me know if this appeals to you. I'm looking at a late November start. I've heard from several of you already.

That, my friends, is the end of this 33rd edition of Covid letters! I leave you with a scripture verse in the wisdom tradition: "A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones." (Proverbs 17:22) And I leave you with a prayer from my readings earlier this week: "Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Relieve the troubles of my heart and bring me out of my distress. Consider my afflictions and my trouble and forgive all my sins." (Psalm 25:16-18)

May the Lord lift up your head and give you his joy. You are loved and remembered!

With prayers,

Pastor Kerry Kronberg (with the whole team)