

April 17, 2020

Dear friends,

How are you?

When I studied to become a nurse, I learned Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's theory about the stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression (or despair), and acceptance. Grief is not a linear process; we cycle back around through earlier stages. People have been discussing grief in relation to COVID-19. Here are some examples, in the [Harvard Business Review](#) and from [Briercrest College and Seminary](#).

These years I have become entirely convinced that "reality must be embraced before it can be changed." (David Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery*) God comes to us *as we are* and raises us to fullness of life. Hypocrisy is counterproductive. There is no benefit to presenting a false self to God. There is great value in learning how to come before God honestly, open to the guaranteed divine movements in your present situation. This is a good time to practice showing up to God with hands open, just as you are. At our [Ash Wednesday](#) service – which feels like a lifetime ago – that's what I talked about; it's a relevant message today.

One day at a time, we continue to live our lives with God and with each other. Our worship gatherings - the reading of scripture, the proclamation of God's good news, prayer, witness to the goodness of God – are a space where we are cheered along as people of faith. Keep showing up - for God's sake, for your sake and for our sake.

NEW Time – Sunday Online 10 a.m. – One Worship Gathering Together

For the six-week Easter Season, sermons will be based on the first letter of Peter. You may wish to read 1 Peter through. It is a short letter, only five chapters long.

You could probably finish reading 1 Peter in the same amount of time it took you to watch one episode of Tiger King if you happen to be one of the 34.3 million Netflix subscribers who was drawn to the show during the first days of social distancing. Peter writes to people undergoing exile and suffering. He talks about a tiger, too – well, actually, "a roaring lion, your adversary the devil [who] prowls around looking for someone to devour (5:8)." Peter's cautions and encouragements translate to our time. Paul Racine will focus this week on our "living hope" described in 1 Peter 1:3-9.

To receive a Zoom link for our 10 a.m. Sunday service, please contact seniorpastor@sunnysidechurch.ca, preferably no later than 9 a.m. that morning.

For this week's scripture readings and other announcements, go to Publications>Bulletins>April 19.

Beyond Sundays

You are welcome to stick around to 'visit' after our online services. It can be a little awkward, we know! So, if you'd like a different way to be with people, please talk to [Gilles Doucet](#) about joining a small group. Smaller numbers of people allow for better connections and intentional spiritual growth.

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

You may 'send' your child to Sunday School (grades 4-6) on April 19 at 11:15 by Zoom. Please contact familypastor@sunnysidechurch.ca for a link.

Baptism Group

Are you interested in baptism or confirmation sometime down the road when we worship together in-person again? (A happy thought!) To join me on April 19 at 12:00 p.m. to learn about what baptism and confirmation are, and to prepare yourself for your baptism or confirmation, please contact seniorpastor@sunnysidechurch.ca.

What would Screwtape say? And, how do we resist?

I close this seventh(!) update e-letter with a link to a [Christianity Today article](#) that offers some wisdom for our time drawn from C.S. Lewis' work *The Screwtape Letters*. Lewis gives a fictional account of a senior devil (Screwtape) advising a junior devil on how to gain the upper hand in human lives. As the article puts it: "Lewis, who was an old-fashioned Christian, tried to dissuade Christian people from listening to [Screwtape's] sage counsel. 'Readers are advised to remember that the devil is a liar,' [Lewis] wrote in the preface of *The Screwtape Letters* in 1942." You may enjoy the article. And, if you read 1 Peter, you will hear some common themes.

"...And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 5:10-11)

With love and prayers,

Pastor Kerry Kronberg (with the whole team)