

Coop's Scoops March 21<sup>st</sup>

Here I am, just looking out the office window at the falling snow, wondering and praying about what to write about today. Ding...I get a text from our Tracey...and she asks "So in these crazy times, what do you think God is up to?" Sounds like a great topic for today. Ask and you shall receive!

The simple answer to Tracey's question is that God is doing the same things He always does: Keeping the universe going, attending to the principalities and powers and angels and martyrs and all who abide in His Kingdom through faith, hearing the prayers of billions of people, watching the little sparrow that falls, getting the sap ready to run and the grass to rise, lifting up the fallen, forgiving the repentant, seeking out the lost, saving all who come to Him, rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep, and loving US...all of US.

He's pretty busy! Tracey you are one excellent administrator, but can you imagine for even one day, being in charge of God's schedule? Now that is just me "funning" because God is in time and outside of time all at the same time, and that is a mystery beyond our understanding.

The Holy Spirit sent to us by God the Father and the Son is certainly working in this COVID-19 time. People are being inspired to do remarkable deeds of kindness, to creative thinking and planning, to caring for neighbours in practical ways, to being responsible and placing the health of the whole community above their own personal longings and freedoms. That's the big picture. When I saw that lovely Italian opera singer performing on her balcony, when I heard some jazz being played on balconies in New Orleans, when I watched the Anishinabek people of Northwestern Ontario do their jingle bell dances, using pots and pans to make a joyful noise while staying far apart in their own front yards, when I read that in England everyone is lighting a candle in a street visible window this week....those are also all things that God is up to.....bringing out the best in us and of us and through us to bless one another and the world.

I even heard of about 25 rascalion Christian folk from a church called St. Thomas's in Bracebridge standing on their porches and belting out "How Great Thou Art" and "What a Friend we have in Jesus" and other favourite songs of

praise! Some of them every day! One of them told it was so liberating because she didn't have to worry about how loud she sang! The volunteers at the Winter Pantry at St. Ambrose in Baysville set up safe practices to sort and box and deliver needed groceries to many people in their community...helping out of compassion with much skill and hard work. For Christians, the heart and will to do such things comes from the depths of the love of God for us, which led us to trust in Him, and to hope in Him, and to live in Him. And many of no faith, or other faiths, are also doing wonderful deeds of kindness.

I think God is also up to growing the church in this desperate time. Now God did not cause Covid -19 or plan a plague to build the church. Uh Uh. God's timeless plan is not to condemn the world but to bless the world. Remember John 3: 16. We, at St Thomas and Lake of Bays churches, are the agents of His blessings. In this time, we are reconnecting. Calling neighbours. Showing that we care. Remembering people we may have unintentionally overlooked or forgotten. I have had several messages from folks who haven't been to St. Thomas in some time, who had thought themselves abandoned by us, the church. A simple thing like mailing a Scoops has touched their hearts. They will be back. And they will make us "better", stronger, kinder, more inclusive, and also just really happy!

Some other Scriptures to bring us hope:

- "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29: 11.
- A merry heart is good medicine, but a downcast spirit makes the bones ache" Proverbs 17:22 ( those jokes and smiles and play are HEALTHY!)
- " I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or what you shall drink, or about your body, what you will wear. ... Look at the birds of the air, they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ... Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be given unto you. " Matthew 6: 25-27.

I would love to hear from some of you! Just a text, or a story about what you are doing to make this hard time a better time, or a prayer, or anything at all. What you might have to say could be just what another one of us needs to hear.

#### Joke for the Day:

A new family moved into a lovely little town, something like Port Cunnington, or Dorset. Six kids, two parents and a low-slung Beagle. Being welcoming folk the people at the Anglican church checked out the newcomers with a basket of muffins. They were sad to hear that the family was very, very poor, and that they had never attended a church because they had never had clothing good enough to wear. Sigh. So the folks at St. James or St. Mary Magdalene got busy. They took up some donations and went and bought brand new items for all eight people...no hand me downs, everything right in style. When they delivered the clothing, the family was amazed and delighted. They'd be in church for sure that Sunday. So on the great day, the folks at the little church peered down the road watching for them. They waited and waited and then the service had to start. The people never came. The ACW president was terribly concerned that some sickness had overcome then dropped by again with more muffins. When she enquired about their health, the mother exclaimed " O no, we're not sick. It's just that those clothes were so fancy they were good enough for us to go the fancy church in Huntsville!. They even had a choir!"

#### Prayer for the Day:

Heavenly Father, we pray for those today who are ill with COVID-19 whether isolating at home or in hospital. We ask that they may recover. We pray for all who care for them, that they may be protected from this virus. We pray for all who mourn the loss of a loved one in this time when isolation compounds grief. We pray for Your consolation and the compassion of neighbours and friends.

We pray that we may be agents of life and hope by the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessings abundant, from Judie+