

Wednesday 13th May 2020



Minister's Letter

Dear friends,

I have received the following from Sr Dickinson which she has asked me to share with you all:

This coming Sunday [at Fulneck] is Sisters' Sunday – not was but is. We are not able to gather physically to celebrate this Memorial Day, but I hope some of us will find a way to mark the occasion. We can take time to remember the amazing Moravian sisters from the past such as Doctor Mary Driver who travelled to Tibet and served for many years. At the present time we think particularly, with admiration and gratefulness, of all the sisters in our church and the wider community who are tending, nursing and assisting people with great compassion. Even the smallest gestures can show love and bring hope and joy.

As I listened to the news recently, I was struck by the unexpected way in which words and phrases have entered our vocabulary. The pandemic has brought us the phrase 'the new normal', the abbreviation 'PPE', and 'Happy lockdown', the latter used at times as a greeting or parting wish. At this precarious time, I remember a powerful word used by the Inuit from when I lived in Labrador. On parting the Inuit would simply say 'Aksunai', be strong. That word encapsulated the thoughts of be careful and take care.

With these thoughts in mind, I hope the goodwill and closeness created over the past weeks, despite lockdown, will make us stronger together. Let us be able and willing to share the love which Jesus unconditionally gives to us. So, Aksunai, be strong, and God bless all in our congregations, but on Sunday especially all the sisters.

Sr Myra Dickinson

Sr Janet Cooper, who was due to lead the Sisters' Festival service, has contacted me to say that she is thinking of everyone, especially the Sisters, and hopes that we have a good Sisters' Sunday.

I have also received the following from Church House following the government announcement on Sunday:

The Provincial Board will be reviewing the situation & planning a safe return, but for now, we do not have a date for this, and our position remains the same. Church buildings will remain closed and the pause on regular activities will continue until such time as we have confidence that we can reopen safely.

In addition to this, we have had to make the decision to cancel Summer Camp this year. While necessary, this

was a very difficult decision to make as Summer Camp is at the heart of our Province. Joy, our camp leaders and PYCC are busy making plans to provide an alternative online experience for our Summer Campers in August and beyond.

Our greatest hope is that we will be meeting together soon, but we must have a measure and comprehensive plans in place before this is possible. While there has been a slight divergence in government policy between England and Northern Ireland, we are hopeful that we can have a cohesive and uniform approach.

As most of you know, I am due to go on sabbatical from the beginning of June. Following discussions with the Provincial Board, I will still be taking two months away from congregation work to complete assignments for my MA course. If services are able to begin again during this period, I will temporarily return to normal duties.

In the meantime, it is important that we maintain our worship and fellowship, which is why I am making sure that the things we have been doing will continue:

- The Church Committee members will continue to keep in contact with those on their pastoral lists.
- From this week the newsletters will be produced once every two weeks. They will include worship resources for two Sundays. These bi-weekly newsletters will be produced by Sr Mary Holmes.
- I am preparing material for another two months of YouTube services which will be produced by Sr Claire Newman with the help of other volunteers.

Thank you to those who have given feedback on the YouTube services – it is good to know that they are appreciated. We seem to have resolved the volume problems that some people had reported. Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far, and if you would like to take part in future weeks, please let me know.

Stay safe. The next newsletter will be out on the 27th.

Yours in Christ,

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