

Dear friends of St Paul's-Eastern United,

November 15, 2015

One step at a time as we are led by the Spirit.

As a nation we have been through a long ordeal of political campaigning with sounds of rejoicing, the groans of defeat and lament still in the air. But now with a new government installed it is time for us a people to press forward in facing the many complex problems that face our nation, our world, our creation to hopefully learn now ways of getting along and finding creative solutions to our problems.

Students, especially first year students now know the reality of term papers and projects, absorbing and analyzing vast amounts of material, developing those essential skills of prioritizing. Hopefully you are learning the art of taking one step at a time and taking time for self-care, renewing prayer and play!

The Aboriginal Experience Chef's School which has been using our hall/kitchen to train new chefs and servers is ready to graduate their first class in mid-November. Now they are getting ready to take the next step of finding employment, using their newly acquired work skills and self-confidence. Their first venture was to provide a meal and serve the members of Ottawa Presbytery which met at our church on Tuesday, November 10. They served a delicious aboriginal meal of squash soup, Bison meat loaf, multi-coloured potatoes and rice pudding. It was a time of encouragement and nourishment for them and for us.

As a family of faith we too are taking new steps on our journey together as we live into our new Mission Statement, especially as we discern how best to serve our neighbours and to do so faithfully, reflectively and courageously. How do we move forward as a United Church on this journey of reconciliation as we continue to create and nurture our relationships with First Nations people through the Odawa native Friendship centre? Do we have the imagination and motivation to begin to re-purpose our sanctuary and our church building to better meet our own needs as a small congregation and the needs of the community? We will need to have more spirited conversation and planning.

There are many exciting possibilities for our future and in invite people to become engaged in these conversations as we move forward. I am deeply grateful for the wisdom, depth of spirit and companionship for those who are already giving so much of their time, heart and prayer. I am constantly reminded what I learned on the Camion, Nova Scotia pilgrimage this June while on my sabbatical, that the long journey always happens one step at a time.

So I invite you to keep walking, keep praying, keep opening your hearts and minds to the lure and the grace of God that never gives up hope in us or our world. Also, good shoes really help with the long walk!

Many blessings to you in this season of peace.

Yours in Christ's service.

Laurie

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