Saturday, March 13, 2020, 3:41 p.m.

Dear friends,

I'm sure we have all been watching, with concern, the coverage about COVID-19 and feeling concerned about how our communities will be affected.

It is the consensus of Session that we will **temporarily stop worship gatherings beginning tomorrow, Sunday March 15 until and including Sunday April 5,** after which time Session will re-evaluate what public health officials are asking us to do.

Cancelling worship has its benefits and also poses a challenge.  On the helpful side, by not gathering for worship, we are supporting our wider community's efforts in 'social distancing' and working together to slow the spread of COVID-19 cases so that our Health care resources are not suddenly overwhelmed by a sudden dramatic spike in cases.  This will help our health care providers care for us better when we need it.

On the challenging side, temporarily stopping our worship gatherings means that we will be missing the very support that we need the most at this time - the care and support of our faith community which we experience in communal worship.

**Please know that my ministry continues through this time**, as does the ministry of our whole Claremont United Church community.

**I encourage you to reach out** to me, and to each other for support.  If you are aware of members who are requiring specific kinds of support, please let me know.  And I will be reaching out to members through this time as well, to check in with you all to provide pastoral support.

**Email worship Services**

I will be sending out an email worship service for each Sunday that we are closed, to all of our members, so that we can worship together through this medium.  I will also use our website for these worship resources, for easy access.

**I will also - on Sunday March 22, 29, and April 5 - be "live" on Facebook with a live online worship service, at 10:30 am,**at Goodwood United Church so that you can be part of a worship service through Facebook.   How does this work?  You can friend me on Facebook, or even if you don't friend me, you can search my name, and the service that I upload live on Facebook Live will be set as "PUBLIC" on it's Facebook settings so that anyone who searches my name can find it and watch it.   It will be broadcast live on Facebook at 10:30 am from Goodwood united, so please join in for online worship on that day.  I'll send out a reminder when we get closer to March 22nd.

And together we will explore how we can continue to be the living and loving Body of Christ together during these challenging times.

May we be embraced in God's care, and filled with courage, and trust in God's steadying presence through this time.

With blessings,

Rev.  Lionel

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Rev. Lionel Ketola, BA, M Div.

He / him

**Minister, Claremont United Church**

5052 Old Brock Rd, Claremont, ON L1Y 1B3,  Church office: 905 649 1363

**Minister, Goodwood United Church**

3999 Front Street  (Concession 3 Road) Goodwood Ontario,  L0C 1A0,  Church: 905 868 5507