

Pastoral Reflection
Wednesday, March 18

Yesterday was the feast day of St. Patrick, the fifth-century patron saint of Ireland, best known for explaining the unity and diversity of the Trinity using the three leaves of the shamrock. It's usually a day of celebration and gatherings, but with the new health guidelines of "social distancing," things looked decidedly different.

In this uncertain time, as many of us prepare for several weeks of quiet, we can't help but feel unsettled. As a church community, we value that *community* piece – we value gathering together for worship and fellowship. We value visiting and studying and serving together in smaller groups. And these activities are not available to us for several weeks – at least not in their usual form.

It's understandable to feel disappointed, anxious, even overwhelmed these days. If you are feeling this way and would like to talk, please reach out to Susanne, Patrick, or a member of our Caring and Visitation Committee for a phone call or email conversation. Our church board is also preparing to connect with each of us in the coming week. Let's remember that though we may have limits on our in-person contact, that does not mean we have to be isolated from one another. We can still connect with, support, and encourage one another across the distance. We can still be the church and live out our love for God and our neighbour. In these days, even following the health guidelines is a form of caring for our neighbours.

May the love and presence of God enfold us in the days ahead and give us peace. We close with a prayer of comfort attributed to the breastplate of St. Patrick:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me
Christ to comfort and restore me.

Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.
AMEN

- Co-Pastors Patrick and Susanne