



*“The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have said this to you, so that in me, you may have peace. In the world you face turmoil. But take courage; I have conquered the world!” (John 16:32-33)*

“Unprecedented times,” “unchartered waters,” “extraordinary measures,” “profound adversity,”: these are words that by now you’ve heard/read/spoken numerous times. “Social distancing” is now the new normal which seems to run counter to our nature as social beings.

As a result, Cordova Bay United Church has suspended all activities until further notice. “But! The church is not ‘closed.’ YOU are the church!” The season of Lent is a time of deepening faith and spiritual renewal in which we reflect on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and his journey to the cross. It is also a time to think about our own spiritual journey in these perilous circumstances in which so many Canadians are experiencing enormous upheaval and economic hardship.

What can we still do? Well, “social distancing” must not result in “social isolation.” Call/text/email family, friends, and church members; meet as a small group using technology; have food or supplies delivered to someone; play worship music in your home, and “pray”!

As a colleague in the United States reminded subscribers to her weekly newsletter: “It should go without saying but we know now is the time for focused prayer. Get organized and schedule some designated time to pray for your church, your community, and this pandemic.



Specifically, pray for those who are at the greatest risk and the health care workers who get exposed to this virus every day. Also, for our healthcare system to sustain the influx of patients in the coming days. Pray for those who are alone, people who are at risk, people who still have to work and those who cannot work from home, small business owners, truckdrivers, farmworkers, first responders..."

We can remain steadfast in the practice of our faith even as we practice "social distancing". Our most recent statement of faith proclaims the Creator as the One

*"who made humans to live and move and have their being in God.*

*In and with God we can direct our lives toward right relationship with each other and with God.*

*We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.*

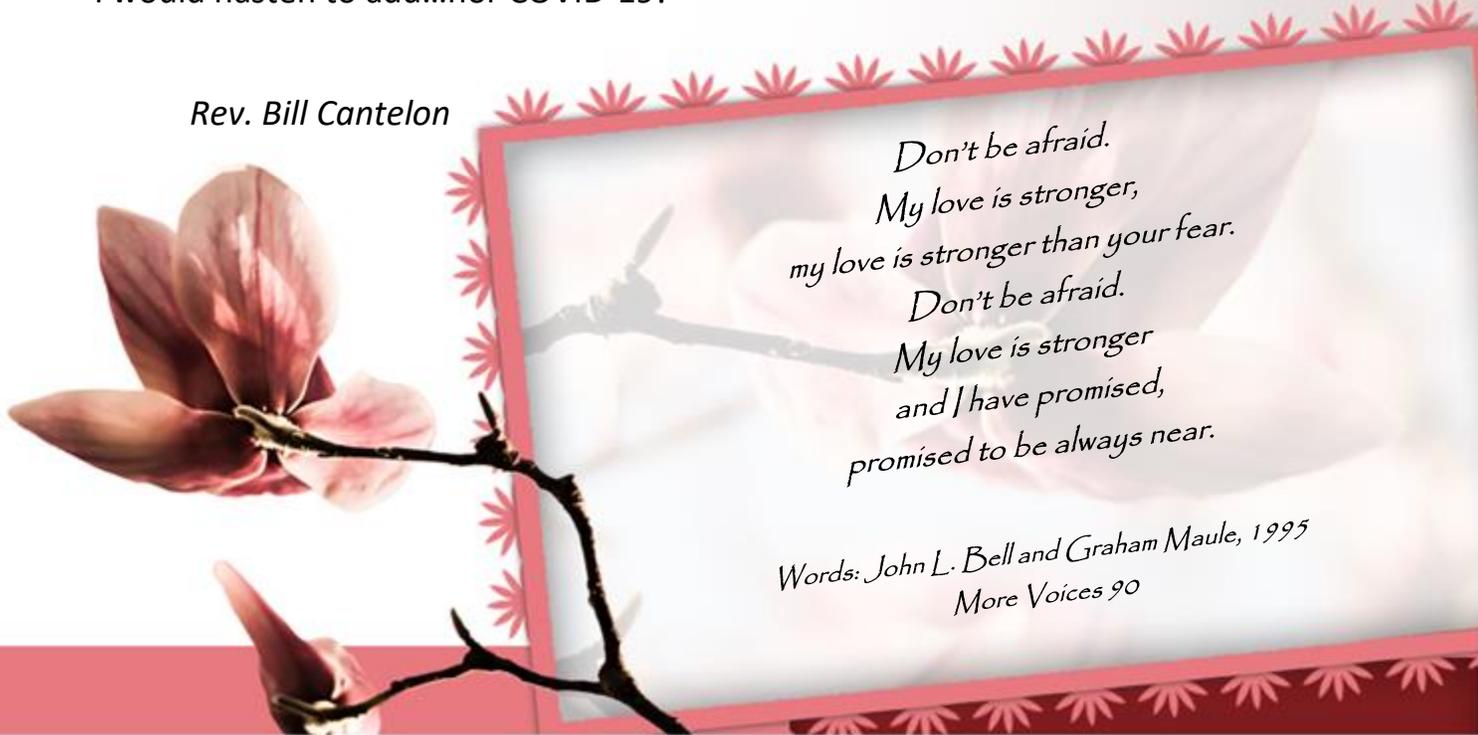
*We can grow in wisdom and compassion.*

*We can recognize all people as kin.*

*We can accept our mortality and finitude, not as a curse, but as a challenge to make our lives and choices matter."*

And we can draw strength (and courage) from the words of St. Paul: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, not angels, not rulers nor things present, not things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." I would hasten to add...nor COVID-19!

*Rev. Bill Cantelon*



*Don't be afraid.  
My love is stronger,  
my love is stronger than your fear.  
Don't be afraid.  
My love is stronger  
and I have promised,  
promised to be always near.*

*Words: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1995  
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