



The Anglican Regional Ministry of Saugeen Shores, Tara and Chatsworth

Reverend Carrie writes ...

Dear siblings in Christ,

*Look up and seek God,
Look back and thank God
Look around and serve God
Look forward and trust God*

Each time I sit to write my weekly letter or sermon, I often find myself pondering how to begin. Those first few words can often be the hardest. Likewise, as we come out of our COVID cocoons, slowly emerging from our homes and reconnecting to our community face to face, those first few steps can be daunting. Pre-COVID, we knew who welcomed our hugs, social niceties told us to shake hands, to scooch over and share a pew, to hold the door open for someone, and even to pick up a dropped item, and hand it back to someone. Such simple things no longer seem so simple. How do we regain our footing, finding courage in venturing out again, reconnecting and finding comfort in our post pandemic world, finding comfort in our long overdue gatherings? I think the answer comes from the invitation above.

In my preparation for our outdoor service in Southampton on Sunday, the first in-person Eucharistic service I have led in over 10 months, I find myself thinking about first steps, and how difficult they sometimes are. I ask myself, how do we come together again, creating welcome, safety, and comfort, and I am reminded of this invitation. An invitation to seek God, thank God, serve God and most importantly, trust God. There has not been a moment of this pandemic when God has not been with us, acting in the world around us, reminding us of God's promise. Yes, we have experienced and heard of tremendous loss, we have felt significant fear, we have all missed important

moments and celebrations, but through it all, God has offered God's constant presence and moments of grace and gift.

At the beginning of the pandemic, many wondered how we could possibly continue in our ministry, how we would gather and hold one another and the world in prayer through communal worship. We discovered we could, through virtual means. We wondered how we would stay in contact and care

for one another, and calling teams were organized, drive-by celebrations happened, new friends near and far were made.

We worried about our financial situation, but even in that we have been blessed with the generous and faithful support of our congregations. While we have not been in a season of financial growth, and have had to rely on some reserves, we have certainly seen the abundance of care and commitment our worshipping families have held faithfully to.

We wonder now, how we will transition from our at-home sacred spaces to outdoor worship spaces to indoor worship spaces, and in this too, God is with us.

Careful planning on the part of your leadership teams, superb guidance from our Bishop's office and local health authorities all come together within the loving hold of God's presence. Where God is, all things are possible. The world looks utterly different through the eyes of grace, and that is what our invitation reminds us of. May our response to God's constant and compassionate invitation lead us all to see the possibilities and joy and grace found within our first steps into a new and opening world.

May God keep you and bless you in all your first steps, first words, and first actions this day.

Blessings,

Carrie



What are you most looking forward to in the weeks, and months ahead?

Coming back together is one of the things I am most excited about, as we see this pandemic come under control. In the days, weeks and months ahead, what are you most looking forward to? Speaking these things out loud helps us to witness to our faith in our future, and in our God, who has been at work in our lives this whole time. So, not only will we share our hopes for the future, but we will also offer thanksgiving for the blessings that have been a part of this past year. Rev. Carrie

What I'm most looking forward to in a post pandemic world is being able to welcome all friends and family back into my home without worrying about restrictions and the spread of the virus to loved ones. I realized that the planning, activities and love and laughter that comes from these visits is a key factor that brings joy into my life! Cathy O'Hagan

I am hopeful for a careful, scientifically cautious and smooth transition to a gentler "normal" so we do not regress again! I am looking forward to travel. Getting out of Grey-Bruce! Seeing my sister in Ontario and my daughters in BC after 2 years apart. Debbie Campbell

I long to resume putting together prayers, to restart bible study/MP. I have a real desire to look at our mission and see where we can do more to focus on reconciliation, learning about our own treaties, setting up ways for our regional ministry to work together to learn more, have speakers, films, book studies...whatever folks desire to help us to move forward and be able to contribute to our own area. I also look forward to a renewed focus on the importance of seeing ourselves as a group of worshippers with common goals, not just three or four separate congregations. I look forward to whatever changes we decide to make that will serve our needs. Enough, I am hopeful for the future. Marilyn Stewart



Of course I am looking forward to worshipping with our congregation in person but I am also looking forward to going to aqua fit at the pool and then coffee with my friends afterwards. Cassie Wallace

As well as seeing friends and being within a "loving" social group again I am looking forward to resuming communion again, ---- I have missed that very much. Maybe some music if possible? Joan Devlin

I am looking forward to celebrating our Granddaughter's Marriage in September. Diana Tripp

That's the big question, where do you start. I guess for me is to see my Mother, that's the big one. She lives outside of Ottawa and we have not seen her since last early summer, yay zoom good but not the same as in person for a hug. Second would be just going out for dinner INSIDE a restaurant not the patio or delivery.

I could go on but you said a couple! Chuck and Linda Stuckey

Looking forward to seeing everyone and indoor services!

Linda Shular

What I am looking forward to is a night dancing in a pub. The living room floor is getting worn out! Hope Wallace

Compassion for those who don't wish to get the vaccine. Sally Kidson Durrer

I am most excited about being able to socialize with family and friends outdoors. I pray we will return to a school year without online learning. Andre is excited about Golf Camp in August and hopes to be able to have a sleep over with a few friends once indoor gatherings are safe again. Serenity is excited about lots of swimming and hopes to return to Huron Church Camp next summer.

Christine Saunders

What am I looking forward to? I don't want to return to "normal", but return to something better than before. I want to find new ways to seek God, learn from God, and learn about God, whether that be book studies, retreats, Bible study, or new ways not yet tried. I want to look back and thank God for his many blessings, God who has been present with Anne and me, not only in the good times, but even in those dark days when I couldn't find him. I look forward to looking around and serving God, both by resuming previous practices, like leading services as a lay reader, and starting up community suppers again, but also in new ways. I need to look forward and trust God's presence, his promise and his grace. Doug Goar

I am really looking forward to Eucharist! Nothing else comes close. Bill Bowden

Looking forward to getting back to church and family gatherings. Jane Dobie

I am most looking forward to seeing my family and having them able to come visit my mom. We are long overdue for a family reunion. Family up north have not seen mom for almost 2 years. Rose Blackwell

I'm looking forward to being able to visit family in Scotland and for them to come here. It will be so nice for the kids to get back to school. I also hope that all wealthy nations get this vaccine out to other less fortunate countries, we will all benefit from that. Cathy Seaton

I am most looking forward to spending time with my sisters and brother and their families and to spending a night

or two outside my house. Not that I don't like it, just that new scenery would be wonderful. Barb Gledhill

Seeing more of my son and his family and travelling again, although I think international travel is still a ways away. Kevin Ryan

It has been a long time since we have gathered 3 dimensionally. Once it is very safe I look forward to gathering with everyone in the Regional Ministry for pancakes! Wear name tags...It has been a long time. I look forward to a traditional Christmas Eve carol sing with a wassail. Then a traditional Christmas eve candle light service with communion etc. These were times when our church families gathered and we were able to see the 'kids' that are now adults and many with families of their own. I love seeing my Sunday School class; most of them in their 30's now. I look forward to Taize services in the community! Our Tuesday morning Bible study group was a weekly highlight and it was wonderful to include people that were not within easy driving distance. If Zoom is still a thing I am happy with that. I liked the service at 10am! Sometimes it was Monday at 10am. Occasionally I would like to have the opportunity to



visit people in the various senior, care, and LTC centres in our community. Some of the best conversations can happen with people that want to tell their story...maybe for the second or third time but they enjoy a new audience and I enjoy their different story. It will be some time yet before I can do these things but it is always good to have something to look forward to. Sheree Lake

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Anglicans Helping Others

A good friend of St. Paul's, Mary Ellen Harrigan, closed her business at the end of May. Helping her empty her store for many weeks were Betty Shular, and Karen Speight. Jim Stark generously provided his construction trailer for 3 trips to the dump.



From the Priest Assistant's Pew

This summer I have enjoyed watching the Saunders family and their Monarch Butterfly hatchery in full bloom. I remember as a young person doing the exact same thing! Watching the metamorphosis of caterpillar to beautiful butterfly was amazing, though I must admit I didn't name them as Andre and Serenity do. I am still in awe of how God makes wings where none existed before, where the orange colour completely supplants the green, yellow and black. I reflect on this now as we begin, very slowly, to burst from our cocoon. The strings of our masks may still be in place, but we are branching out from our homes, our safe spaces and actually being in community with one another! Our quiet coloured, comfy clothes have been changed into "outdoor, being seen in public" flashy, splashy clothes and we are JOYFUL!



At the conclusion of our Regional Ministry services we have a 4 line affirmation of where God is in our lives. I know you've all heard it, and I'd like to suggest that it is a true saying right now! We are 18 months into this altered life that we've been experiencing and yes, we've needed to *Look Up and Seek God* for sure! How many times have we asked God, no, pleaded with God, to keep us safe during this time. I bet a few more than usual! As we enter

into a bit more freedom have you found yourself *Look (ing) back and Thank(ing) God*? I hope so. It is with Her ever loving arms that we have been able to survive, tolerate, endure (put your own word here) this pandemic.

But now, it's time, time to be, if feeling safe enough, in community with each other in person. It is time to consider the 3rd line of our affirmation: *Look Around and Serve God*. How will we, how are we, serving God RIGHT NOW? Despite masks, myriad hand sanitizer brands and some

restrictions, we still CAN serve God. And finally we can't do the other parts of this affirmation without the concluding line: *Look Forward and Trust God*. What is behind us is history, a memory, a cocoon that held us fast and safe. Today is the present that we have from God. But tomorrow? Tomorrow, with all its hope, challenge, love, peace and

energy is where we anticipate a great and wonderful breaking free to fly! To spread our wings and put our faces to the sun and let the breeze of joy take us to new places in new ways with a new vision.

May the days ahead bring you the gifts that God has bestowed on you, ... and be thankful.

Be well!

Rev. Annie

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