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29 May, 2020

New World Order

"My help comes from God, the maker of heaven and earth." Psalm 121:1

Dear Ones,

Did you hear the one about the Chinese laboratory deliberately creating a virus that would take down the global economy? Or how about American soldiers bringing the virus to Wuhan during military exercises last December? Or how The New World Order, a clandestine totalitarian world government, is using the COVID-19 virus to destabilize democracies and assume global control? Jake brought that one to my attention.

There are a *lot* of extreme theories floating around about where COVID-19 came from, and why it might be spreading so quickly through every population on the planet. How are we to respond to those theories? How can we, humble non-scientists that most of us are, even begin to evaluate them? Especially when they touch on our deepest unspoken fears.

Down at the bottom of our dark well of fear is some pretty primal stuff: will I be OK? Can I protect those whom I love? Will I be overwhelmed by forces beyond my control? I am sure that our distant evolutionary ancestors sitting on the Serengeti Plain, scanning the horizon for lions or bushfires asked themselves the same questions. Will we make it? These questions are in our bones.

And those ancestors of ours had a leg up on us, in some regards, since they knew the origin of their fear. They knew where lions came from – lion dens. They knew where bushfires came from – lightning strikes. We don't know where COVID-19 came from, really. Perhaps a wild animal in a market in China. Perhaps a nefarious laboratory. Either theory is possible, and neither is demonstrably untrue.

Yet.

In time, I am confident that we will know the answers. In time, after careful scientific research, and intelligent journalism, and generous sharing of facts and theories, in time we will know. But we don't know yet.

And not knowing something opens up a space where fear can speak the loudest. Maybe someone did this on purpose? Maybe it will never be alright again.

We people of faith have a deeper truth which we hold in our hands, brandishing it like a sword, or wearing it like a breastplate. By faith we know that we are always safe within the heart of God. Living or dying, we are safe.
Healthy or ill, we are safe.
Courageous or afraid, we are safe.

We are safe, because we are saved, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.
Nothing can truly harm us.

Not even a virus.

Strap that truth on when you arise in the morning, and do not succumb to speculation or fear-mongering. In time we will know more. Right now we don't. But we do know the deepest truth:

We are not alone. We live in God's world.

In life. In death. In life beyond death.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

(from *The New Creed* of The United Church of Canada).

Grace to you, and peace,

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*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*