



25 Main Street, P.O. Box 61, Grand Bend, Ontario N0M 1T0 \* (519) 238-2402  
[huronshoresunitedchurch@gmail.com](mailto:huronshoresunitedchurch@gmail.com) \* [www.huronshoresunitedchurch.com](http://www.huronshoresunitedchurch.com)

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## **The New Teachers**

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

Dear Ones,

We are entering our third week of physical distancing – it hardly seems real! What to many of us seemed impossible and strange at first – not socializing, staying home, keeping apart from friends and family – is now becoming the "new normal." I am beginning to wonder whether I want to go back to the hectic, frenetic life we used to have! But that is a subject for another letter on another day.

Today I want to lift up and honour the New Teachers among us. As I have been making contact with you in various ways, I am hearing from *some* people that life really has not changed all that much. Our most senior members often impose a self-isolation upon themselves during flu season. While the hale and the hearty don't touques and snowshoes to enjoy the winter wonderland, those of us with fragile respiratory systems hunker down, light the fire, and work through piles of jigsaw puzzles. They already know that this will pass – and that a season of hibernation can be good for the soul.

Some of our folks are physically challenged. Knees and hips are no longer trustworthy, balance is uncertain. They have already learned to take life slowly, to make an adventure of climbing the stairs, to relish just getting up off the sofa. They already know that a smaller world can be complete.

And some of us just know deeply how to take joy in whatever circumstances life brings. Joan shared with me that she and Miriam have been loving every day that they are spending together. They write out a schedule, to give some structure and shape to the hours, and make sure to include life-giving activities like making art. One day recently they made cards of love and hope, and walked through their neighbourhood, leaving them on porches and front door steps, to bring joy to their neighbours and friends.

The New Teachers are the ones whom our culture has often deemed "less than" or "over the hill." Yet in this moment, they are the Wise Ones, who can show us all the way, because they have been here before, and have already learned what is beautiful and good. They hold the map – and are generous guides to the new land we are travelling, because this is their native land.

**Grace to you, and peace,**

**Kate**

[katecrawfordmn@gmail.com](mailto:katecrawfordmn@gmail.com)

*"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."*