

*“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” – Jeremiah 29:11*

Dear friends in Christ at Chippawa,

I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself. I am Pastor Cherie Inksetter and I will be your Interim Moderator during this time of transition from the wonderful ministry of Rev. Doug Schonberg to the minister that God is leading to be the next shepherd for you. I've been pastor at St. Giles in St. Catharines for 8 years and every day I say how lucky I am to be doing something I love. I'm a mom to three great kids, Bob, Lindsay (who got married in February) and Michelle (who is set to make me a grandma for the first time in July). I've been clerk of the Presbytery for 3 years and I have been an Interim Moderator previously to St. Andrew's, Beamsville and Smithville

As we enter this time of vacancy, we understand that this is a time of transition but also a time of discernment. You are called to ask yourselves (always, but particularly now) where God is leading you as a congregation. You have had a long history as a faithful community of Christ and there has been much to be thankful for. You have had challenges and you have had blessings, and this is the way of Christ's church from the beginning. Similarly, as each generation comes along, things change, that is the way of the world. And so we are recognizing that we are the precipice of change and challenge. This can be a scary thing for many and so I am writing to you in order that we can maintain open dialogue and transparency.

I am committed to helping you as YOU determine, with God's guidance, what the future holds. In the weeks and months to come your Session and I will be visioning, exploring possibilities, and thinking outside the box. We will be taking some time to determine how you would like ministry to look in this place in the years to come. If you can take the time to prayerfully discern where God is leading you, you will be in a much better position to attract the type of person that God feels will lead you there.

This will not be a quick process, as much as you might like to be 'settled' again. We need to be mindful of giving everyone a chance to adjust to Doug's departure, and to allow the process to work as well as it is designed to do. Added to this, of course, is the state of the world right now. The pandemic will restrict the work that we need to do to a certain degree, but we will use the technology available to us to aid us as we move along. But, rest assured, we won't dawdle, either.

Speaking of technology, I know many of you are watching your church service online each Sunday and staying connected in that way. That's wonderful! In order for there to be some continuity and some reassurance for all of you in the weeks to come, your Session has asked Doug to continue to lead worship for the next few weeks, and Doug has graciously agreed. The exception will be May 3<sup>rd</sup> when you'll see my smiling face. In this time of anxiousness, it is nice to see a familiar presence but this will only be for a short while and this will be Doug's only responsibility during this time. Other questions, concerns and pastoral care should be directed to the office or myself.

It is vital that we keep the lines of communication open and that you feel your voice is being heard. To that end, I would encourage you to share your thoughts with your elders and with me. You can share your thoughts with me via email [pastorcherie@gmail.com](mailto:pastorcherie@gmail.com) or send them to me at the church, St. Giles Presbyterian Church, 205 Linwell Rd. St. Catharines, L2N 1S1. Alternatively, jot your concerns, questions and suggestions down and pass them on to your clerk who will make sure I get them. You may reach me at any time on my cell 905-401-7641 and I look forward to meeting all of you in the months to come.

We are going to walk through this time together led by God.

Blessings,

Pastor Cherie Inksetter