**A message from Council – February 12, 2021**

 We have chosen this time to reach out to all of our church members and adherents to recap what has been going on with Council since our Annual meeting in February 2020. The words that I highlighted at that meeting, when talking about council, were: vision, celebrate, look to the future, inspire and appreciate. Not long after that our vision definitely took a bit of a different course.

 As you know, from following our monthly reports and by tuning in to zoom church services or recordings of those services, by joining email retreats or coffee chats or by talking with a neighbour or friend about the church, we have much to celebrate and to appreciate for those able to go with the flow of the changes to our regular worship services and committee work.

 Now is the time to look to the future and be inspired by all that has taken place within our community of faith over the past year. Of course we are hoping that we will be returning to regular worship services, along with singing and joining in spoken prayer, but we will take things slowly and follow all guidelines set out by health officials and by the national church’s recommendations.

 Council’s leadership roles throughout these past months have been phenomenal. Every hard decision was made with the best interest of all of those connected to Minnedosa United Church in mind. We are anxious to be able to begin to provide space again for those groups who have relied on our space and to open our doors to the fun and folic of fundraising activities and performances and concerts, welcoming back the artists whose livelihood has been put on hold.

 We are presently planning our Annual meeting and look forward to many of you coming forward to help plan and work towards our new vision of

re-opening our doors with welcoming arms and warm hearts. Please consider this if you are asked to join a committee, and if you would like to volunteer your time and haven’t been asked, please let me know.

 These were my closing words from that same meeting and that are more than relevant today:

*Take care to take care of one another. We are a community of faith who knows how to look out for one another. Sometimes we are on the receiving side of something we need and sometimes we are on the giving side for someone who needs something from us. I believe there is a spirit that lives inside each one of us that will help us find our way in life. Please continue to be the disciples God has asked us to be and share that peace with others today and every day*…..**Julie Hutton, Chairperson**

Our **Finance committee** would like to extend their appreciation to our church family for the financial support to the operations of Minnedosa United Church. Council decided from the start of this pandemic that we would not lay off any of the staff. Even though the church has been closed at times to the public because of health restrictions there is still much activity going on behind the scenes. Federal & provincial government financial programs have helped us this past year to offset being unable to fundraise or rent out our facility for income. Currently the church is in a stable position largely due to your generous financial support. Thank you! Going forward there are many unknowns for this next year but we hope people will find ways to continue to financially support the church.…. **Barry McNabb, Chairperson**

**Ministry and Personnel** want to take a moment to say Thank you.

 Firstly, we want to extend appreciation and best wishes to Eleanor Taylor who has retired as Pianist/Organist for Minnedosa United Church after many years.

 We are very grateful for many people who have volunteered and stepped up to do a variety of things to keep the church running, music in our services and provide Church services (in different formats).

 Thank you to Alexis Harvey who has been filling the role of pianist in Eleanor’s absence. Thank you to Jim Comrie, Clark McNabb and Mary Dalton for sharing their musical talents!

 Stacey Wilson’s thought provoking reflections and stories are very much appreciated!

 Thank you to Alf Iverson for all his technical contributions in the sound booth! We also want to thank the creative team and the many people involved in the Christmas pageant – what an awesome production!

 Hilton Martinez, thank you for continuing to keep the Church clean and safe! Thank you Michelle for keeping the Church office running smoothly, despite all the changes and challenges of the last year! Kathy, this last year has required churches to change in so many ways - thank you for continuing to find ways to keep us connected in community and growing in faith!…**Maxine Gray, Chairperson**

**From Kathy Platt** (Minister)

 In the mid-80’s when Apartheid was a stark and ugly reality in South Africa, and when Nelson Mandala was still imprisoned with no liberty in sight, Bishop Desmond Tutu spoke in Ohio: “*I believe that one day South Africa will be free – all of her children – Black, Brown & colored – all will be free. I believe it not because I can see it, but because I believe that God has a dream – and because I believe that there is nothing that can stop God.”*

I know that one day, we will step out of the isolation of our own homes, and we will re-gather as a beloved community. As I said in church on Sunday, we will find a way to “come near, and to take hold”, and we will be re-invigorated to be living more clearly in the way God dreams for us to be living. In the meantime – know that I hold each and every one of you close in prayer. Blessed be….*Kathy*