

## **Letter from Shelagh**

### **June 3, 2021**

Summer is really here and I greet you!

Every year at this time of blooms and warmth, there is, for many, a feeling of hopefulness and anticipation of beautiful days ahead. 2021 has its own very special spin on expectation and renewal, doesn't it! Recently, Dr Bonnie Henry and Minister Adrian Dix unveiled a long-awaited four-step plan to gradually remove the health orders and restrictions. These changes will unfold over the summer until the fall. But we are wiser now to the impacts of the statements as there are always unknowns.

Many of us at First Met are still awaiting a second vaccine. This is just the most exciting statement!! The vaccine rate will affect the lifting of the restrictions we have lived with for most of this year, and some which have been in place since last March. New COVID-19 cases, and sadly, deaths, will also be taken into account. What that means will be a little bit different for each one of us, for our congregations, and for different aspects of our lives.

“More will be revealed,” was a favourite line in mystery books. It is also a ‘fave’ right now and as the ‘more’ is revealed we will be able to shape our lives in response. Personally, I cannot wait to see my girls in Vancouver. As your minister, I yearn to welcome all activities and all facets of our life as a congregation. Neither one of those is going to happen immediately.

Some activities, like Yoga and Tai Chi, have already resumed. Each activity will be separately considered and plans formulated and shared as widely and as soon as possible. We, too, as a congregation will be looking to find our path forward to the fall with both the health guidelines and other factors needing to be considered in our plan for what activities and contact will resume and when.

The Board and the staff will be conscientious in following the spirit of the guidelines very closely. For each person in our community of faith, many individual decisions will have to be made. One's personal sense of safety and risk will be the guiding principal for all of us. We honour and appreciate that none of us has ever been here before!

So, I personally expect to see some masks as a new part of our normal lives: on flights, in flu season, etc. I know there will be folks who will be glad to share a hug, a handshake, a close visit. But over the coming months, we will make lots of adjustments as individuals and as First Met.

Our deep affection for each other was expressed in following Dr. Henry's guidance through the pandemic; we will continue to show that in our caring and respect for individual decisions about being back together. We will be gentle with each other, I trust that.

There are some very important conversations for us to have about what we have learned during these 15 months of changed living: the interconnectedness of our global village has become real in ways that were made crystal clear. Justice issues of racial inequality were experienced during the pandemic, differently in various sectors of our country and world.

Please watch our website and these weekly letters for information about the re-opening plans for First Metropolitan's worship schedule.