



**ST. ANDREW'S
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
161 Norfolk Street
Guelph, ON N1H 4J8
(519) 822-4772
mailbox@standrewsguelph.com**

April 9th, 2017

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

In a few short weeks I will be starting my Intermission. I want to thank you again for being so incredibly supportive of this opportunity. I know that we both will value the time spent apart and will look forward to our reunion in September. As promised in my previous letter, I can now share with you some specific details about who will be covering the pulpit on Sunday mornings and who to contact in a pastoral emergency while I'm away.

As a refresher, I will be away from **Monday May 29th until Monday September 4th**. I will return to the Office on Tuesday September 5th. My Intermission is completely self-funded through my Continuing Education Allowance; so paying for pulpit supply while I'm away will not be an additional cost for you to bear but will come out of my allowance that is budgeted for annually. During my Intermission, I will be completely unavailable. I will have no email access and the Office has been instructed to not contact me for any reason. This is to ensure that my time away is not interrupted so that it can be a rejuvenating experience for me. I guess the closest comparable absence in the business world would be a parental leave or a medical leave. While I am absent, I and the Session have ensured that your needs will be well covered. I trust that you won't consider this time as a kind of limbo for our congregation... instead I would hope that you might treat it as an opportunity for St. Andrew's to pull together even stronger. I am confident that you will continue to support and encourage each other as you have done so well over the years. I look forward to hearing about your shared life together upon my return.

During my Intermission, any pastoral concerns could be shared with your connector, members of Session, and/or the Church Office. Should you require a minister, the Church Office has the contact information of a number of Presbyterian ministers in our community who are ready and willing to address your concerns. The Rev. Dr. Bob Spencer, our minister in association, will be the primary contact during this time but we can't expect him to take care of everything so that is why other ministers have been contacted to offer their support as well.

If you have a concern that needs the attention of the Session, please feel free to contact the Clerk of Session, Nancy Nicol. She will determine whether a Session meeting needs to be called to address the concern and will contact our Presbytery Liaison, The Rev. Mark Gaskin to moderate. The Session will not be meeting in June.

During this occasion, we will be blessed with some continuity with regard to Sunday mornings. Diane (McAlister) Boyd, daughter of Malcolm and Carol McAlister, is graduating from Knox College this May and will be covering most of the Sundays that I am on Intermission. It gives her a truly 'homebase' where she can preach and lead worship for twelve weeks solid and perhaps invite interested search committees to visit her. Dr. Bob will be covering the final two Sundays of the Intermission.

So the schedule is:

Diane Boyd beginning Sunday June 4th until Sunday August 20th.

Dr. Bob Spencer - Sunday August 27th and Sunday September 3rd.

And I'll be back on Sunday September 10th.

As I reflect on beginning my Intermission, I'm struck by the words of Henri Nouwen in The Genesee Diary where he journals about his experience as a *temporary* Trappist monk for seven months. As his time away got closer, Nouwen realized that all his 'busyness' had brought him "close to believing that I was indispensable." Looking ahead to his intentional time of stopping 'the busyness' he realizes "how much I needed to step back and wonder, 'Is there a quiet stream underneath the fluctuating affirmations and rejections of my little world? Is there a still point where my life is anchored and from which I can reach out with hope and courage and confidence?'" I look forward to the opportunity to rest and be refreshed by the quiet stream in the months ahead.

If you have any questions, I'm happy to answer them. Again, I value this opportunity and know that together we will make it a mutually positive and meaningful experience. You are always in my thoughts and prayers.

Yours in Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Borthwick', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Rev. John Borthwick