

Dear Friends

Defined loosely, *hybrid* refers to something that has come into existence from two original yet distinct sources. In school it seems to me it was primarily used to describe the cross breeding of plants. Today it seems the term *hybrid* is everywhere. There is a new generation of golf clubs called hybrids. They are a little like irons and a little like woods. Some people refer to them as 'rescue' clubs. I have one but more often than not it just gets me into more trouble as opposed to rescuing.

Even more common is the use of the word *hybrid* to describe cars. As you likely know a *hybrid* is sort of like an electric car but not completely, and sort of like a traditional combustion engine car, but not completely. Elsewhere *hybrid* is regularly used to describe something that is two things at once.

So it is not surprising that I recently read an article from Luther Seminary (Minnesota) called "Church as *Hybrid* Experience". It was one of the clearest descriptions I have found of the challenges facing the church during the COVID 19 pandemic. The writer, Ryan Panzer, calls the present reality of ministry as "simultaneously being offline and online". These are two separate and distinct things that are coming together to make church *hybrid*. Let me describe that in terms of our situation at Charleswood.

We are currently continuing to create an online worship experience for our YouTube channel, notice of which you receive through links in emails. At the same time, we are planning for ways to resume in-person worship experiences (or offline) in ways that be safe. These two experiences represent our *hybrid* worship.

But it applies to other aspects of ministry as well. For example, we are going to working on ways to have a children's ministry online. At the same time we will be planning for the return of children to an in-person Sunday school. That is *hybrid* ministry. We are using an app to create an online music ministry. At the same time we look for ways for music to be experienced in-person. Our capacity for outreach is being forged into online (i.e. emergency responses communicated through email) as well as offline (i.e. last week's Farmer's Market). Coming this Fall we will be looking for ways to carry out Fellowship, Stewardship, and Christian Education programs in both an online and offline format. *Hybrid* ministry will be a description for almost everything we do in the immediate future.

It is all very challenging. But also, somewhat exciting. The great advantage the church has going for it as *hybrid* ministry comes into focus, is that we are organized around a very solid and certain foundation. Whatever we do and however we do it, loving God with our heart, mind, body, and soul and loving our neighbour as ourselves is *raison d'être* of the Christian community.

Online or offline, in-person or remotely, virtually or traditionally, hybrid or old school, love is all that matters.

Grace and peace,

Michael