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For Children: Our Second Cool School video is available today by clicking here: [CUC Cool School Video #2](#)
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Please enjoy our online worship and feel free to share with others. The **link for sharing** is: <https://youtu.be/FOYcybPOFls>

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, October 18.

Earlier this week, Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, announced that perhaps it was still possible for children to go trick or treating this Halloween in spite of the rising number of Covid-19 cases across the country. She even offered the sage advice that candy could be handed out on the end of a hockey stick or that a pool noodle could be used to gauge social distancing. I think what she was really saying was that a little common sense can go a long way towards not cancelling Halloween as well as navigating a pandemic.

In her announcement though she said something I thought was a very important reminder. Dr. Tam said, "most public health leaders agree that trying to provide some degree of normality is important". *Some degree of normality*. I think that is important for all of us but clearly it is something important to remember about children.

Without any small children in my household, and not able to see and talk to kids at church on Sundays, I can be out of the loop when it comes to how the pandemic is affecting children. In some ways they may be managing better than most. Children remain relatively safe as far as the virus is concerned and perhaps they are less aware of the wider implications of the pandemic and therefore a little less anxiety-ridden. But kids know what it means to have something they look forward to taken away and they are remarkably empathic, sensing the emotional state of adults and reacting to it. Many have returned to school but they have found it is not as it was when they left last March. This is a tough time to be a child.

Jesus said “Whoever does not receive the kingdom like a child will never enter it”. (Mark 10:15) We tend to read that passage in terms of innocence. Fair enough. But in first century Judea, in addition to being innocent, a child was also often excluded, forgotten, or endangered. You may think of the stories of the childhood of Jesus himself, the precarious circumstances of his birth, and his family’s flight to Egypt to escape the violence of Herod. Jesus doesn’t merely embrace children for sentimental reasons but to lift up God’s deep concern for our experiences of risk and vulnerability. Then, as now, children may be showing us the way.

So back to the wisdom of Dr. Tam’s *some degree of normality*. It is a normal thing to get excited about the prospect of putting on a costume, knocking on neighbours’ doors, and counting your candy at the end of the evening. So maybe my job as an adult and a neighbour is to join in the normal-ness of it all. My mask will be on. My candy will be apportioned and separated. My distance will be kept. But I suspect strongly that the best thing about Halloween this year is that I will receive joy and comfort from the infectious laughs and excited calls of the children on my street.

Those children are bringing us some degree of normality.

Grace and peace,

Michael