

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: [May 2 Worship Service Video](#)

- **HeBrews eCafé on Zoom** this Sunday at 10am.
<https://zoom.us/j/4639675160?pwd=V090UmV0VFpMVGJLTWhueGpSekkwZz09>
Meeting ID: 463 967 5160
Passcode: 4F7iE2
phone option: 1 204 272 7920
- Our most recent **Cool School children's video** is available here: <https://youtu.be/n0V2PPkbGAM>
- A **Youth Zoom Gathering** with Jody Poborsa is scheduled for **Monday, May 3 at 6:30 PM**. For link info contact the church office at office@charleswoodunited.org
- **St. Vincent Relief** - We will be collecting donations at the church for the next three weeks for relief efforts in St. Vincent following the eruption of Mt. Soufriere. Donations can be received by mail or e-transfer. Please indicate your gift is for the St. Vincent Appeal.
- **A Cantata is coming! A Cantata is coming!** – our online choir and musicians have been working hard for over a month to bring a special gift to you. They have been recording the cantata *Love Divine*, one person and one piece at a time. When finished and edited we will send it out to you with great fanfare. Look for it in the coming weeks!
- **Offering Information for Charleswood United Church:** www.charleswoodunited.org/donate Thank you for your generous support.

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, May 2, 2021.

It's funny how a passage from scripture can jump out at you. And sometimes just when you need it. I had a funeral this week and at the family's request I read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. You may know it as the series of couplets where every phrase begins *there is a time*. People of a certain age will be especially familiar with it as it was the text that inspired the folk song [Turn, Turn, Turn](#) by The Byrds. (you can click on the title and listen to it)

As I was reading it out loud I came upon one phrase that jumped off the page as if to say, 'why didn't you notice me before'? It was this: "*a time to refrain from embracing*" (Ecclesiastes 3:5)

Here is scripture saying that following public health orders is not only wise and makes common sense, it may be the inspiring and faithful course of action. Ecclesiastes is from a section of the Old Testament often referred to as 'Wisdom Literature'. The best way to describe Wisdom Literature may be to say what it is not. It is not history or genealogy. It is not narrative, story, or myth. It is not law and it is not prophesy. Wisdom Literature stands on its own as writings in which Israel says 'here is what we have found to be true and trustworthy'. And the testimony of Ecclesiastes 3 seems to be that there is no time in which God is not present. No time or experience in which the presence of God does not matter. Including those times when we should *refrain from embracing*.

Perhaps the greatest damage done by the so called third wave has been to our spirit. The arrival of vaccines and the promise of spring, the passage of time itself, made us feel only a little while ago that the end was in sight. There seems to be a lot of reporting, and some reasonable concern, about the state of our mental health. We see accounts of people who are so terribly angry, uncooperative, and even defiant and there is little appetite to tolerate this kind of dissent when everyone has had their lives turned upside down, not just a few.

But even when we must refrain from embracing our spirit can be healed. Ecclesiastes reminds us that the times of our life do not determine when we are in the company of God. To make this manifest I offer that which has served us well in the past:

- ❖ Be outside in the beauty of creation of which you are an integral part.
- ❖ Listen to the birdsong as its crescendos in spring.
- ❖ Read the books which lifts your spirit.
- ❖ (watch less news)
- ❖ Pray in whatever way renews you, with words, in silence, with the words of others.
- ❖ Give thanks...for whatever you are thankful for.
- ❖ Worship with your church for others are praying for you.
- ❖ And embrace in spirit those you cannot presently embrace in person.

The time to embrace will come. God's arms are already open wide.

Grace and peace

Michael

- Please enjoy our online worship and feel free to share with others. The link for sharing is: <https://youtu.be/HrmkGBU8WLS>
- For news and events please have a look at **Life & Work**: <https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work/>
- Read the scripture lesson for today by clicking here: [Acts 8:26-39](#)