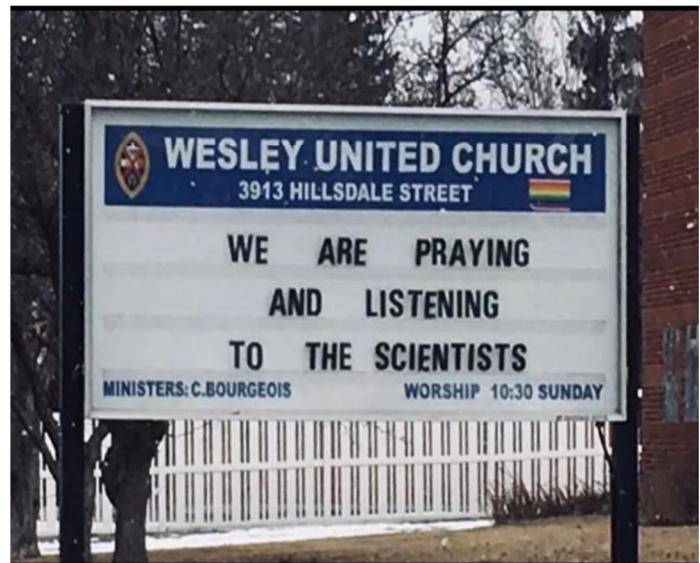




**Message from Rev. Jenni**

**Good day to you and happy long weekend!**

Gardeners in Ottawa, myself included, are looking at our green tomatoes and wondering, "when, O God?" as people of faith throughout the ages have wondered. Perhaps you, too, have beautiful, plump green beauties in your garden, weighing down your vines? Once back from my part week of camping and cottage, some of my indeterminate variety beefsteak tomatoes had fallen over from the weight of the tomatoes and in trying to tie them back up, all the stocks snapped in my hands. I picked them all and gave the majority of them to a friend who had asked me to keep an eye out at Farmer's Markets for green tomatoes as she wanted to make green tomato relish. And, just like that, green tomatoes transformed into something delicious to add to fish! The wait, one might say, is over.



The Global Pandemic has us asking this same question that our foremothers and fathers asked - "when, O God?" When will our lives go back to the way they were? When will we be able to host dinner parties inside our homes? When will we be able to meet for coffee and cookies again in the Church Hall? When will we be able to give hugs to those outside our bubble? When will we be able to sing our hearts out in church? When will we be able to see and hear our glorious choir singing in person again? When, O God?

As a process theologian, I bristle when I hear an answer to this question: 'in God's time'. While the speaker believes this to be true, it leaves me cold. It leaves me cold for a few reasons. First, for me, it promotes mystery over faith (and even, dare I say, science?). Second, it means everything is out of our hands: we are abdicated of responsibility. Finally, and this relates to the first - how are we to know and understand God's time?

Let's take my tomatoes, for example? There are actually some scientific/environmental reasons for their unripened state. Temperatures over 29 degrees will inhibit the tomato from ripening. We've had a hot summer, so this could be one reason. Apparently, you can prune tomato plants so that the focus becomes the fruit (user error here, gardening newbie), this is another reason. That my tomatoes have not succumbed to beetles, caterpillars, squirrels, chipmunks, blossom end rot, is, this year, a miracle, as many Ottawa gardeners have experienced one or all of these blights. When, O God? While I couldn't do anything

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about the soaring temperatures this summer (besides imagine I was in Barbados in March or jump in the nearest lake or river), I could have given my tomatoes some better care. I did try to nip the suckers in the bud, but the branches reaching to the sky were beyond my abilities, this year. Next year, I will know better: I will take what I have learned to promote growth while protecting the fruit.

The Pandemic has been challenging in so many ways - and each of us has our own risk thresholds, tolerances and anxiety levels to be aware of and to process. The question 'When, O God?' has us turning to medical professionals for science based advice, as we continue to turn to God and pray for patience, wisdom, and grace. As far as I know, there is no mystery to science: it is trial and error, hypothesis and answer, or back to hypothesis. New information in science leads to new hypotheses. When, O God, allows us to open up a dialogue with God, about our inner struggles, our church's short term future (reopening), our city's progress, and the health of our children as they go back to school next week. THIS DIALOGUE IS CRUCIAL. We have responsibility and we have agency in the pandemic and in our relationship with God. (This bears out in our use of masks, good hand hygiene and self-isolation: the covid cases are better here than places where these practices are not followed.) Together - all of us together - we will discover an answer to the question 'when, O God'. The scientists, neighbours far and wide, you and I and God, together, will come to an answer. As with all of our faithful forbearers, the answer might be protracted, not what we are hoping for, frustrating/enraging, calling us to a higher purpose or something else? Maybe the answer will be full of wisdom and grace, like manna in the desert?

Our faithful agency will be to listen, to process, to pray, to listen for God's still, small voice (or God's loud voice) in our prayers/dialogue with God. Mystery abdicates our responsibility, faith in God rebuilds it. We are, at all times, co-creating with God for a better moment, a better life/church/country/world, a better future: all rich in possibilities for wisdom, grace and love.

May we continue to ask the question 'when, O God' and may we wait, listen and discern the answers together.

**Blessings to you as you question, pray, listen, intuit,  
Jenni**

This – became .... this ! 





**KUC Prayer Circle continues..**



**Greetings!**

I want to remind everyone about our Prayer Circle here at Kitchissippi. If you or your family or anyone you know needs or wants prayer, we would be only too glad to add them to our prayer list. **We pray every Tuesday and Saturday at 9am.**

The circle members are Janis Anderson, Jane Craig, Diane Kayrouz, Marilyn Sierolaski, and myself, Eleanor Anderson. If you need prayer you can e mail me or any of the other members. Prayer is a big part of our faith and is especially important at this time of uncertainty, fear or stress. I wish you all peace, joy and love. Eleanor Anderson

**We are here for you! Please reach out!**

**Kitchissippi United Church**

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**CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED  
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE DUE  
TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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