

8/23/20 Adult Chapel Service - Thoughts on Isolation

As the other speakers have described, we've all experienced feelings of isolation the last four or five months - perhaps felt most keenly by single or widowed individuals living alone, but also by couples and members of family groups.

Thinking about this, I realized that we have not only missed the company of others in general, but other people in groups and in group activities in particular: the gym or the team, choral singing and social dancing, going to dinner or the movies or a concert. As a result, at times even the best of us have been depressed, or cranky, or have had cabin fever. It even explains why a few have thrown caution to the winds and have pushed for a large family wedding, or have clustered on a beach, or have gathered in large numbers and lingered at a neighborhood beer party.

What we've all been sensing is the loss of community - whether in a town, a neighborhood or a social group - that has common interests and shared values, allows for individuality, but also protects its weakest members or assists those in need. During this pandemic, our first thought was naturally for our own safety, but we came to realize that both the spread of the virus, AND containing it, depends on all of us. We have washed our hands; we have checked ourselves for symptoms; we have socially distanced; and we have worn masks inside enclosed spaces or when we couldn't distance. In the states in the Northeast that were hit early and hit hard, the slogan has been: "It's not about ME; it's about WE."

Eventually, with our diligence, COVID will recede, but it is my hope that we won't forget the lessons we've learned: about the value of having others in our lives, and about the importance of community. And it is my prayer that our current concern for others, and our experiences of helping them through the pandemic, will foster, in each of us, a spirit of service that we carry forward and apply to all our future relationships and organizations.