

Dear Beloved of St. John's

*"What is wrong with our church?"* is a question we often ask. It is a good and honest question to ask. No church is perfect and all have shortcomings, blind spots and room for improvement. But as good and honest this question is to ask, so important it is that it should be asked at the right time.. By that I mean the question of what is wrong and could be improved should be asked only after an even better and more important question is asked. This question is:

"What is good and right about our church?"

Today in what I hope will be a series of weekly letters from my heart as Interim Moderator to you, I want to pause and reflect on this more important question. See, what is right and good about our church goes much deeper than a beautiful sanctuary, a good location or even wonderful people. All these things are blessings as well, but they fade in comparison to this fact:

Jesus loves us

He loves us so much that He paid with his life for us. He loves us so much that He sent us His Holy Spirit to guide, help, comfort and equip us. He loves us so much that death itself cannot tear us from Him.

As I start this journey with you and your leadership it is my prayer that through long meetings, difficult conversations and yes even through joyful moments, achievements and victories we will be carried and constantly aware of this life-giving fact: That we are loved truly and deeply by none other than the Lord above all. Jesus, the Christ.

I believe there is nothing wrong or lacking with us that cannot be overcome, healed and put right by the fact that we are God's beloved. I believe that whatever we might gain or lose in this life, the fact that Jesus loves us is what makes life feel worth living even in difficult times.

I ask you to pray for our church and the people in our surrounding community. Pray that they will know Christ's love for them deeply. Pray that we might be part of how God engraves it on people's hearts. Pray with me and feel how God's peace and hope in you rise as you do wait prayerfully and expectantly and contribute selflessly to the glory of God's kingdom where He has placed you.

I wish you all a great Thanksgiving weekend. May you have a blessed time with loved ones.

In Christ

Gabriel J Snyman

October 6<sup>th</sup> 2022