

Packing and Unpacking

FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2020



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"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. ([Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV](#))

When going on a vacation, packing creates anticipation and excitement. When I arrive at my destination, I usually unpack so I don't feel like I am living out of a suitcase but actually staying for a while. Our family just experienced packing up ALL of our belongings to move to a new permanent address. Although there is anticipation and excitement, purging is exhausting. What items are essential? Which items are still relevant in the new home and what should be thrown away? Through this entire process of down-sizing, I have been thankful for where we were headed and for being forced to minimize. However, it was very difficult to let go of some items such as shower and wedding gifts (we have been married 28 years😊), toys from our now adult children's past. Things like cassette tapes, who still has cassette tapes? Emotional attachment and memories can sometimes stop me from letting go.

When COVID began, we were all forced to pack up some things; vacations, schedules, weddings, celebrations, freedoms, convenience shopping, socializing, entertainment and attending church. At the beginning, I knew many people who were excited about the thought of a short vacation with their families, albeit in their homes. However, as news changed daily, realization set in, this was going to be

a long journey. The questions I have been asking are similar to my physical move from Oshawa to Merrickville. What have I held onto that maybe needs to be reassessed? Unforgiveness? Imbalance between work and home? My relationships with neighbours, family, and my community? What has been repacked that needs to stay for me to move forward with Christ? Regular time with Jesus, my prayer life, need for rest, contentment in all circumstances, a grateful attitude.

What about as a church family? Should we reassess what happens when the doors open? (Note: I am not talking about mandatory safety protocol) Have we ordered our church services purely out of tradition or out of listening to the moving of the Holy Spirit? What are the essential, non-negotiable parts of our service? What is the most relevant way to share Jesus with our community? How do our weekly services help us re-align our faith individually and corporately to be the light we were created to be the rest of the week? I do not know the answers, but I am filled with excitement and anticipation as we unpack the plan God has for Arlington Woods Free Methodist Church.

*"If my people, who are called by my name, will **humble** themselves and **pray** and **seek** my face and **turn** from their wicked ways, **then** I will **hear** from heaven, and I will **forgive** their sin and will **heal** their land."* (*2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV*)

By: Karlene Fletcher