

Message from the Samish Island Reunion Director

Well - we all assumed it was coming, but we are officially cancelling CWM Samish Island Reunion this summer. With the ongoing uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic, and particularly the cross-border nature of our Samish Island Reunion experience, it is undoubtedly the correct choice to cancel, but being the correct choice does not make it hurt less.

This sucks! There is no more clear way to say it than that! I know that there are many people out there suffering bigger losses than this, but losing Reunion will cause emotional pain for many of us.

For many people, Reunion is their key connection to our church community. It is a time to reconnect with family and friends, and a time to remind ourselves how best our lives can be lived. It is a chance to recommit to living a chosen life, to being proactive rather than reactive to the challenges in our lives and environments. For many it is a time to ask for or find help in dealing with other struggles that they may be facing in other parts of their lives. For some, it is a chance to connect with joy in ways that are hard to find through the rest of the year.

It is important to have things to look forward to in these difficult times, and Reunion is always one of the times that I look forward to throughout the year. I am sorry that this summer will be so dramatically different than our past and future together.

It is my hope that as we get closer to the summer, we will look at some ways that we may be able to gather either physically or virtually depending on our societal circumstances at the time. There is not much point in looking at what the possibilities might look like just yet, but by mid-June, I will start the process and find a way to spend some time together during what would have been Reunion week. When we get to June, if you have ideas of things that may help meet the needs of our community, please contact me to discuss them - but please wait until then as things are changing so constantly. Our realities in the summer may be very different than they are right now.

I was particularly looking forward to Reunion this summer because Katie and Zac Harmon-McLaughlin were to be our guest ministers, and I know that they would both fit in very well with our Reunion congregation, and that they would challenge us in new ways to be better versions of ourselves. I will reach to out Katie and Zac over the next months in the hopes that whatever plans we create for the week of Reunion, they may be able to join us in some way.

The BC Community of Christ has been gathering online on Sunday mornings for the past few weeks. It is not really the Vancouver congregation, although it seems we have been leading the sessions so far. Our gatherings have included much of our Reunion congregation. It has been wonderful to connect with people from Colorado, Independence, Portland, Vancouver - WA, Lethbridge, Prince George, and all over the lower mainland in an online forum for discussion, visiting, music, and worship. In these challenging times, it seems we need community more than

ever, and our Sunday mornings together are an important connection for the many people who can make it.

If you would like to join with our online community, once or regularly, and you have not been receiving the invitations, please contact me by email at chrisinlangley@gmail.com and I will make sure you get the information you need.

I will miss you all deeply, and look forward to Reunion 2021 at Samish Island when we find our new normal. It will be engaging to explore and discover together what the new normal is and how our community will live within it.

Blessings,

Chris Phelps
Samish Island Reunion Director