

July 7, 2020

Dear Saints,

Greetings! Hope you are doing well as we continue on in faith in God. The Psalmist teaches us that God's help is a very present in time of trouble. These are odd and troubling times. I am fond of saying, "God never leaves a place without a witness." Never. I like to think of myself as hopeful rather than optimistic. I find optimism to be mercurial. It is driven by circumstance and prone to the kind of disappointment that can give way to resentment.

All of us have experienced disappointment. It hurts but you can move through it. I move through it with prayer and the support of friends who listen without judgement. I am reminded that Jesus, our ultimate hope, will lead me out of disappointment. If I am mindful, I will see where God is working in my life and to my highest good. Hope carries opportunities for new discoveries and creativity—even in a global pandemic. The Psalmist's mantra, "I believe I shall see the goodness of God in the land of the living" has become my own.

Prior to the pandemic, on Sunday mornings I would get to church at about 7:30 am to offer morning prayers. Jim would arrive shortly to make the coffee. Then comes Hyojin, ever focused, she heads straight to the piano. The assisting minister would come then we would say a short prayer prior to worship. I miss that Sunday morning ritual. These days, our routine and ritual has changed. The production team and worship leaders meet at 10:00 am on "the Zoom" to make sure that worship is the best we can offer to God and those who tune in. We have become a solid team. It is quite a thing of beauty. The synchronicity we share feels sacred. It is a work of the Holy Spirit.

God continues to fashion us as new creations. While I miss the rhythms of coming to church and seeing each of you, I am thankful that God has shown us how we can be together in virtual space. I look forward to the time when we are able to return. The same congregation that left the building and went into the world, will return very differently. God is stretching and strengthening us for service in a world that has been forever changed. It is exciting. There will be challenges but Christ will help us rise to meet them in service to the Gospel in our congregation, the city of Bowie and beyond.

Separately, together in God's care,

Pastor