

*“It seemed to me a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God” (Psalm 73:16-17).*

I had to turn off the computer last night, overwhelmed and fearful of what I was hearing and seeing in the news. The Covid pandemic is needlessly on the rise in almost every state; wild fires rage with no end in sight; 8 million Americans have dropped below the federal poverty line since March; racial tensions continue to build; domestic terrorists have reared their ugly heads as plots of unspeakable horror have been revealed; and all hopes of a peaceful election have been shattered. Add to that our own fatigue of social distancing and an unknown future, and life indeed can feel wearisome.

Then I turned on my computer this morning, and there was our Sunday worship service of healing staring me in the face. From the opening hymn where voices sang of God’s liberating light breaking the darkness, to Bruce’s sharing Isaiah’s image of waters breaking forth in the wilderness a refreshing narrative emerged. From prayers of healing and wholeness offered by Tom, to Thatcher’s incredible video of our choir offering music proclaiming God’s beauty, the good news of God’s presence and love enveloped me.

A year ago, I would have had to be in the sanctuary at 597 East Avenue to experience this kind of healing from word, prayer, and song, but now in this socially distanced time, the healing of being in God’s unmistakable presence happened in the comforts of my home. This morning God’s extraordinary sanctuary of healing and peace relocated itself to the ordinary walls of my home and the thirsty grounds of my life became springs of water. Then, as if that were not enough, a dozen of us came together for Fellowship by Zoom reminding me that I am not alone; reminding me that though we are socially distanced, we are still together. Don’t get me wrong, I yearn for the day when you and I can safely come back together again in person; nothing can replace the joys as well as the tears shared in our face to face gatherings. But for now, I am tremendously thankful that the place where I live out my ordinary life, has been transformed by God’s extraordinary love, to be a place of healing and peace. Oh, and by the way, you have been a part of that. I am tremendously thankful for you; for your continued commitment to our community; for the ways in which you reach out to those who are feeling particularly isolated right now; for your continued sharing of time, talent, and treasure ensuring our ability to bring about God’s Beloved Community in our city and in the world.

The times in which we live are truly wearisome, but through you I have seen and experienced the healing love of God. Through you, I have experienced the sanctuary of God right here in my own home. Through God working in you, I have experienced healing and peace; and for that I say, thanks be to God!

Peace and Love,  
Pastor Doug