

Dear Trinity,

Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

That 'Alleluia' has been absent from our worship throughout Lent. It's a funny practice to remove the language of celebration, but it seems to make the return much more joyful. Alleluia! Say it out loud. Listen to the sound of joy it makes. It lifts my heart to say it.

Alleluia means, "Praise the Lord!" During this time of physical distancing, when we're longing to be together, to hug friends and loved ones, to share a meal, to celebrate communion, our praise may be dampened. It may feel strange to shout, 'Alleluia' when we're fervently praying for doctors, nurses, nursing assistants, janitors, everyone involved in the ministry of healing those with COVID-19. It may feel hollow to shout, 'Alleluia' as we pray that our loved ones and ourselves will stay healthy.

But 'alleluia' gives us strength even when we feel weak. Why? Because our shouts of 'alleluia' are directed to the One who created us, upholds us, and redeems us. 'Alleluia' is another prayer, another communication with God. I urge you to look for reasons to praise God even if you're feeling disappointed by all the missed activities, even if you're feeling afraid, even if you're lonely. Its hard to do, I know from experience, but it also reshapes our hearts, our vision, our understanding of the present moment.

When lift our praises to God, God responds with presence and love. I urge you to keep praying, even saying Alleluia! Take heart from Romans 5: 3-5:

³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.



When we return to Trinity, you'll see our Alleluias bound together. I'm speaking of the ones we wrote on strips of fabric at the start of Lent. Suzi George made us an altar banner of our alleluias. It's beautiful.

With perseverance,

Pastor Amy