

## Reflection & Prayertime – Christ is Rising Indeed!

April 19, 2021

I want to share the Call to Worship from my own church service yesterday: In this world of Never-Good-Enough, We choose to remember that we are Beloved! When our voices are trembly and our knees are knocking, We choose to “fear not!” Though tempted to focus on me and mine, We choose each other! From out of our comfort zones, in spite of the warnings, We choose the other! Looking beyond the evidence toward the promises, We choose hope! Moving beyond our carefully set boundaries, We choose to loosen our lives! Concentrating on our inner hearts and our outer world, We choose to celebrate as the Risen Christ calls us by name!

In the poem “Wounded Garden” by Steven Garnaas-Holmes he says: “Even as the golden dust of the resurrection falls, settling on our shoes like heaven's pollen, as we look up at angels receding, as the exuberant news echoes in our hearts, even now, stepping into new lives of joy and gratitude, our hearts are broken, we lament... we are silent... we scream. Injustice continues its hungry rounds, death is granted permission to hunt on our grounds. Another shot rings out. We cry out. How long, O Lord? But we don't cry alone. The song rises—the sorrowful, courageous song, the hymn of gentle defiance, still flows through the throats of the faithful. This, this wounded garden, this is the very place of resurrection. We who have died and been raised are not afraid to cry out, to be silent, to listen, to act, to sing. We will do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with God. We will no longer be afraid to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with God. Even in the lingering darkness we are not afraid. For Christ is rising. Christ is rising indeed.”

I don't know about you but it feels easy to feel completely pummeled lately or at least to feel like you are watching others being pummeled. I watch the news 3 times a day and as I watched I saw Minneapolis and other cities boarding up their windows in anticipation of possible reaction to the soon to be determined verdict of the Derek Chauvin trial and saw the pain in a community following the shootings of Adam Toledo and Daunte Wright. I want to encourage you as you have one eye on all that is amiss in our world and falling short of the realm of God to keep another eye on Christ rising in all the ways that we can see if we keep our eyes peeled for it. We can rise with Christ (and I won't say rise above because it could be misconstrued as not truly looking at all that is happening in our world – we fail if we stick our heads in the sand and don't fully see all that is happening in our world)!

It's easy to say this is the most difficult time period we can remember and maybe it is, but it helps to think about all that has been encountered before and the tenacity of people to push through and keep going. Truly, what other avenue do we have?! We are not entitled to easy times and low stress. We are tenacious people who care deeply enough about each other so much that we will continue to put one foot in front of the other, to look carefully around us at all the ways that we can express our deep commitment to God, and to faithfully say that each day we will support Christ's continuing rising. We will elevate all the fruits of the spirit and we will continue to love God and to love neighbor and to follow what we know to be the right path, while shining a bright light to others and encouraging their steps forward. We will recognize that we do not have all the answers but we are willing to be led by God's love. Christ's resurrection and rising is a process and we play a huge part. May we be faithful in the process and in bringing God's realm on earth. May we be the foot soldiers that move it forward. May we continue to grow in the graced knowledge of God. May the rising continue unencumbered and may we usher it in, thanks be to God! May we look back and be proud of our role in it and hear “well done.”