

October 11, 2020

Living into new ways of being Church

*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil; for you are with me. – PSALM 23*

BY THE REV. MELANIE S. DONAHOE



The comforting words of Psalm 23 have taken on new meaning as together we have walked through the “valley of the shadow of death” created by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic.

It has not been an easy time, yet God’s “goodness and mercy” have been abundantly reflected as God’s people have faithfully cared for strangers and for one another.

You have reached out to help bear the pain of those who have lost loved ones. Through simple acts of kindness — picking up groceries for elderly neighbors, regularly calling those who live alone in fearful isolation, sewing masks, serving in food pantries — God’s Holy Spirit has inspired you to be Christ’s daily loving, healing presence in the world. Our physical church doors may have necessarily been shuttered, but “the Church” has never been closed.

And God has never been absent. God has shepherded us, leading and guiding us along us pathways we could not have imagined a year ago. Perhaps it is in the hardest times when we most clearly recognize how God continues, always, always to sustain us.

Even when we could not gather together for Holy Communion, God continued to feed us — with God’s Holy Word, with live-streamed services and “virtual” coffee hours.

And now as some of us slowly, carefully begin to gather again inside our churches, we will learn new ways of including those who still need to “shelter in place” — and innovative ways of welcoming those who have never been “inside’ our church buildings, but joyfully discovered Church on the internet in a time of pandemic.

As we live into new, exciting (yes, exciting!) ways of being Church, God will continue to reveal opportunities for us to welcome everyone so that, together, we may “dwell in the house of the Lord our whole lives long.”

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