

## *How can we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land?*

(Ps 137:4)

Beloved

In exile, their captors in Babylon taunted them to sing a song to their God. Their captors say, "OK, we got you now. We've captured your land. You are under our thumb. Where is your God now? Sing to your God, now." And the people answer, "How can we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land?"

If the throws of being carried off to a strange land, having lost their king, their culture, their temple, those who had inhabited Judah wonder, how can we worship now? They are not in their temple, not in their home land, things are not as they were and would never be the same.

We lament over how it was. We can't imagine it being any other way. How can we worship differently? We refuse to gather again until it is the way it used to be. We lose sight of what worship truly is - giving praise and thanksgiving to God. God doesn't care if we gather by the seaside, in a home, in our Sunday go to meeting clothes or in our pajamas, while in a car, on a horse, in the forest, or inside a church building while sitting on a pew or outside in our folding chairs.

God longs to hear our worship and doesn't care if we wear a mask while we do. God hears our praises if we reflect on the words of our hymns silently or sing them out loud. God deserves our worship, and we need to give God our worship, especially now. God's people need to come together to lift up each other, to show compassion, to stand together during these uncertain times.

No one is forcing us to sing to God, or doubting we can, during this season of Covid19 - we are asking it of ourselves. Does gathering to worship God mean enough to me I can do it when Governor Bullock tells me I have to wear a mask? Am I going to bow to the government and let them stop me from singing to God in a strange land? Can I worship God from behind a mask? God asks of us the sacrifice of praise. These masks may be the first sacrifice many of us have had to make for the joy of worshipping God.

Can we let the circumstances of the day, keep us from gathering as church or from living as Church in our community?

In the throes of Covid, during days and nights of civil unrest, we lament, "How can we sing the Lord's songs now?" How can we serve others? How can we be in fellowship? How can we give our tithes and offerings? How can we go on? How can we be church? Thinking it has defeated us, the virus seems to shout to us, "Sing to your God, now."

Let us stand together, be in the presence of Jesus and let us sing and shout the victory. People of God, let us lift our voices and sing the Lord's songs in a strange land.

I bid you peace,

*Pastor Tonia*