

Holy One, open our eyes and our ears to your presence, in this scripture, in these words and in our lives. Amen

Back in January, when I was planning our Lenten worship services, I didn't even consider preaching on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, despite the fact that it is a recommended reading for this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent.

I didn't consider it because, well, it's one of the best-known biblical texts in the world. It's been read at innumerable funeral and memorial services, preached on for generations. We know it inside out and backwards. What new thing could I possibly have to say about it?

When I read it, I have no aha moments, no point at which I think, "Wow! I've never noticed that before! I could really dig into that perspective!"

No, it's just too familiar to preach on.

But now, as we find ourselves traversing a land we've never been in before, journeying ever so cautiously into uncharted territory, wondering what is to come and what shall be and how far will we be tested; in these tumultuous times of uncertainty for

our health, our finances, our economy and the well-being of the whole world, I realize that this familiar, comforting psalm of trust, might be exactly what we need to hear.

I still don't have any great ahas about it, nothing new to say. But I don't think that matters today. I think, perhaps it is enough to hear the words, and to be reminded that we are not alone.

As we self-isolate, practice physical distancing and wonder and worry about the spread of this virus - if we will get it; if our loved ones will contract it; if friends and family will make it back to Canada safely; if the government is doing all it can; if others are doing all they can; and God forbid, will we run out of toilet paper!! ...

In consideration of all of this, maybe, just maybe, it is enough to know that even in the midst of this dark valley, God is with us – walking into the unknown, right here beside us, right here within us, right here, surrounding us, preparing for us a table of grace, allowing us to see in how many ways, despite enforced restrictions, our cups overflow – with generosity, with comfort, with strength, with love and above all with hope.

Maybe, just maybe, it is enough to know that we are not alone, we live in God's world and whether in life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.  
Thanks be to God! Amen