

October Prayer Letter

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.
~ Jeremiah 29:11



In my corner of the world, (the Pacific Northwest, Washington State, USA) Fall has arrived. The abundant glory of summer is beginning to die back, leaves are falling, the perennial plants are dying down, the gardeners are busy putting the beds to rest for the winter. It can feel like a dreary time of year.

This picture from our backyard reflects some of the way I have been feeling after nineteen months of COVID-19 isolation, lockdowns, mask wearing, and social distancing. I feel like one of those leaves, falling singly to the ground, disconnected from the community of the tree.

I long for the day when we can meet face-to-face, missing my diaconal colleagues from around the world. It is easy to feel disconnected, and a bit weary. Yes, there is work to be done, but I just don't feel like doing it. It's very easy to begin to think "What's the point?" How can anything I do help against so large, yet so very small an opponent?"

Then I look out the window and see that the Fall cyclamen have arrived! First appearing over bare earth and beautiful pink flowers, like tiny fairies flying over the ground, then followed by their leaves, anchoring them to the earth. They are so full of promise, such a reminder of God's continued presence in our lives, the promise of resurrection, the hope that we will one day, meet again. It reminds me of the words of this new hymn, found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.



In Deepest Night

- 1 In deepest night, in darkest days,
when harps are hung, no songs we raise,
when silence must suffice as praise,
yet sounding in us quietly
there is the song of God.
- 2 When friend was lost, when love deceived,
dear Jesus wept, God was bereaved;
so with us in our grief God grieves,
and round about us mournfully
there are the tears of God.
- 3 When through the waters winds our path,
around us pain, around us death:
deep calls to deep, a saving breath,
and found beside us faithfully
there is the love of God.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953. Text © 1995 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Deacon Jan Cherry, Deacons for Ecumenical Engagement, USA