

## *The Reverend's Ruminations - October 2021*

One year ago in this very space, I was “ruminating” about how we had already been dealing with seemingly-constant adjustments to our worship and other church activities for *six whole months*...oh, the horror!?! As you may recall, my refrain throughout the spring and summer of 2020 had been “stay tuned”—a call for all of you to be alert to various changes in not only health guidance, but ways of safely being the church. In the year since, I’m happy to say that our congregation has indeed “stayed tuned.” We have enjoyed (endured?) streaming worship services, Zoom meetings, outdoor Bible studies, and drive-thru community meals, some of which have been able to return to their normal practices over the course of the last year.

Now eighteen-plus months into this ongoing worldwide pandemic, we had certainly hoped that everything would be better. But while many overarching restrictions have been eased or lifted entirely, we are painfully aware that infection rates are NOT trending the right direction. COVID has taken the lives of friends or relatives; it has altered graduations, weddings, funerals, and other social gatherings; recently it has even touched the lives of members here in our church—although we pray that there will be no long-term health effects. The signs on our church doors have changed a couple times already to reflect vaccination rates and policy changes, but they will likely see further changes as fall leads into winter and cold/flu season adds additional uncertainty to community activities. “Stay tuned” will likely be my rallying cry yet for months to come!

But fear not. We serve an awesome and powerful God, the one who created heaven and earth, and rules evermore in grace and power. The Apostle Peter assures us that despite the constancy of change—and even public health threats—in our human world, God is still on the throne:

*“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.”* (1 Peter 5:6-11, NRSV)

As September somehow already winds to a close and the vibrant colors of October begin to pop, let us all remember to hold our area farmers in our prayers for a safe, successful, and timely harvest. This has been an uncertain growing year with a summer of drought, and even though we’ve received rains recently, they may not have been enough to help every field. There is bound to be much variation in crop yields among varying soil types, field terrain, and natural or man-made drainage, so let us pray that the averages still come out positive. Agriculture is the backbone of this region and directly impacts our church in countless ways, from the availability of church volunteers to the financial support that keeps our church running. May God continue to grant favor upon this land as we all seek to be good stewards of this planet we call home!

Yours in Christ,

*Rev. Cory Germain*