



Beloved,

If it's good to be together, it must be bad to be apart.

And yet: the truth is that life has always been a rhythm of separation and togetherness, exile and return. We may prefer the "return" bit, the "bring you back to this place" bit, but that doesn't mean separation isn't part of the story. Experiences of separation are at least as old as the ancient stories of the Garden of Eden, the Israelites' exile in Babylon, and the parable of the Prodigal Son. Jesus and his followers were separated by betrayal and death, and then reunited by forgiveness and newness of life. Even on our most "normal" days, our lives are a rhythm of gathering and dispersing, coming together and going apart, calls to worship and benedictions.

This past year has been another profound experience of this ancient pattern, and as challenging as it's been, we can take solace in the knowledge that our ancestors, too, experienced seasons of exile. And here's the point: thanks to this history, over time our faith — and our church — has been built to help us live through such seasons with grace and hope.

At our core, Resurrection is a community of reunion, homecoming, and return. Now more than ever, in a world full of exile, our congregation stands as a beacon of hope, welcome, and radical hospitality. With all of this in mind, we invite you to join us in giving thanks for all the resources — spiritual, theological, physical, and financial — that support this indispensable work.

During the month of October, you will hear more from us during worship and in the time of fellowship and adult education. We will consider together the passage in Jeremiah that reads:

For thus says our God: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ***For surely I know the plans I have for you, says God, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.*** Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says God, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

We invite you to read this passage daily over the coming weeks and to bring your contribution card to in-person or online worship on Giving Sunday, October 31, 2021. Together, we'll turn in our intent for the coming year and celebrate God's beautiful gift of "a future with hope."

Blessings,

Pastor Kelly K. Faulstich

on behalf of the RLC Stewardship Team