



Wednesday Prayer

23rd Sunday after Pentecost – Let justice roll down

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Amos 5:21-24

Two weeks ago, I wrote about a texting prayer group that formed in 2017, a group of law enforcement officers, social service providers, and others working for protection and justice for victims of trafficking. I asked that you join in prayer for a female who was in court that day, that her next step would be protection and healing in a safe treatment program. This week, a follow up text came through, *“Court went well, she is now safely in out-of-state restoration & rehab program. Pray for her continued healing journey.”*

Thank you for praying and for your continued prayers that she will come to know herself as a survivor and a beloved member of a safe community.

This passage from Amos is challenging – God is rejecting, even hating, our worship practices. And it seems especially challenging for us today, when so many of us are deeply missing the beautiful music, the singing, the festivals with little ones running around laughing. How we worship looks very different right now. Some churches are engaging more deeply in studying systemic racism, identifying how we as the Church have been complicit and how we can work toward justice. Others may be identifying how to build partnerships in their neighborhoods as a form of worship in our daily lives. Your work with Cherish All Children is a form of worship. Your prayers for the female entering a restoration and rehab program is a form of worship. Terence E. Fretheim, Professor Emeritus of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, states, “The disjunction of worship and daily life has become deeply problematic. [Amos] 5:24 constitutes a call for the people to exercise justice and righteousness. Indeed, they are to flood the community with acts of justice and righteousness, like a stream that never stops flowing.”

So while we miss the hymns and sounds of little children running up and down the aisles of the church sanctuary – the care we offer now to our neighbors, the prayers we offer to those in need, our long-term work to dismantle systems of oppression, and our commitment to prevent child sexual exploitation and trafficking – all these bring worship and life together.

God, guide us in our daily lives to work for justice that rolls like a stream that never stops flowing. Help us to use this time to blend together worship and service to those in our communities. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director, and community advocate for racial justice.