**Bearing Fruit – March 21, 2021**

**Prayer of Memory: a prayer for the past year**

One year ago last Sunday our regular in-person worship was “shut down” due to Covid-19.

One year on, it seems important to pause, to give space to notice not only where we have come from, but where we are and where we are going. We pause to name our losses and griefs. We pause to acknowledge our anger, our fatigue, our frustration, and our fear. We pause to remember what is missing, what has been altered, the things we long for. Below is a prayer by Rev. Edie Lenz, adapted from *The Worship Sourcebook* that many Presbyterian congregations are using around the country. We will use this edited prayer during Prayers of the People today, but it is preserved for you to use as you are led.

**Let us pray. Lord, one year ago, we gathered together to worship and pray. We gathered vaguely aware of the changes and fears happening around us. We gathered as carefully as we could, clinging to our usual ways of being together, ignorant of the rapidity of change, ignorant of the fragility of our lives. One year ago, pandemic swept across the globe. Little could we have imagined what would change, how fast it would change, how strange it would feel, and just how long it would go on.**

(Silence)

**O God, where can we hide when all lies in shadow? Have mercy on us, O God. Our eyes are swollen from tears; our bones are cold with fear; our souls ache. Save us! According to your steadfast love, answer us! Do not hide your face, but draw near and redeem us!**

(Silence)

**We pause to name the lessons we have learned, the new skills, values, and abilities that have come with adaptability. We pause to look around, to be reminded of what is most precious, the values that we have recovered, the spaces we have found anew, the reminders of what really matters most in this life. We are reminded how far we have come by faith alone. Through our tired trudging, our cheeks damp with tears, we catch a glimpse of your presence, your love, and your hope. Now we pause to catch our breath and to rest a moment before continuing the journey. While we grieve, we are grateful; while we weep, we may also dance as we look to the promises of your Son. Today, as we pause, give us the strength that we need to continue the journey together in faith.**

(Silence)

**Gracious God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the Promised Land. So guide us that, following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come. Guide and strengthen our steps as we lean upon you. As we walk through the valley, we lift our eyes to you, Lord; unite us, connect us, strengthen us, and guide our footsteps, we pray. Through it all, may we bear the fruit of your love. Amen.**