Dear Park Avenue,

Due to the weather conditions, we determined we would not gather for worship Sunday, April 15.

Were we together, at the beginning of worship we would sing the hymn, [*God, Whose Love is Reigning O’er Us*](http://whitmill.net/descants/pdf/GodWhoseLoveIsReigning)*.* The first verse of this beautiful hymn reminds us that we join our voices across time and space as witnesses to God’s faithfulness:

God, whose love is reigning over us,

Source of all, the ending true;

Hear the universal chorus raised in joyful praise to you:

Alleluia, Alleluia, worship ancient, worship new.

Continuing in our service we would have shared in the Call to Worship that anticipates our text from Luke 24:

One: Peace be with you

**Many: And also with you.**

One: Come and see the love God has given to us.

**Many: Come and see what it means to be children of God.**

One: Come with this hope, that Christ’s presence is real.

**Many: With joy, we come to see the Lord**

Following praise and worship we would have watched *The Month That Was* (Ann can you embed the link to the video presentation you put together?) reviewing our ministry during the month of March including retreats for the men and confirmation students, our friends from Joyce delivering a special package and our Holy Week services.

Next in our service we would have shared in the Responsive Reading of [Psalm 4](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+4&version=NRSV), which concludes with this reassurance, “I will both lie down and sleep in peace: for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.” And as we have done every Sunday, after the reading we would cheerfully sing *Glory Be.*

Our Spirit of David youth choir planned to offer a very special music selection. We will hear from them soon and we will be tremendously blessed.

The service would continue with intercessory prayer for the range of concerns we bring to worship. We continue to believe God hears and answers our prayers. Please consider joining in prayer during the 10 am hour.

We would continue our worship through giving. We collect two offerings; the first supports our ministry and operations and the second, the Change for Change (C4C) offering, supports a program or ministry benefiting our neighbors. This week Freedom School was designated for the C4C. Our offering scripture, [Malachi 3:10](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Malachi+3%3A10&version=NRSV), would be familiar to man of us.

The sermon text for Sunday, April 15 is [Luke 24:36-48](file://localhost/luke%2024/36-48) and the sermon title, “We Are Witnesses.” In these verses we read Luke’s account of Jesus appearing to the disciples as they were gathered in a room discussing the unbelievable news of the risen Lord. According to the women who went to the tomb early Sunday morning, and Simone Peter and the two travelers on the road to Emmaus Jesus who died now lived again.

As they tried to remember together Jesus’ teaching and attempted to make sense of their experiences, Jesus showed up in the room and his first words to his frightened followers were, “Peace be with you.”

…

They were caught off guard and frightened to see Jesus. To reassure them he invited them to examine his body. He said, “touch me and see,” so that they would experience for themselves that he was really present with them. The disciples were caught between joy and disbelief.

After sharing a meal with his followers Jesus taught them in an in-depth way--in the way that only Jesus could—making connections between his teachings and the earliest sacred texts. Before he left them Jesus told his followers, “You are witnesses of these things.” That is to say, you have been called to remember and tell the story.

…

I have previously expressed appreciation for the poetry of Ann Weems. The last stanza of her poem, “Holy Communion” is a succinct summary of that which witnesses of Jesus Christ are called to do:

Eat. Drink. Remember

who I am

so you can remember

who you are

and tell the others

so that all God’s people

can live

in communion…

in holy communion.[[1]](#footnote-1)

…

Park Avenue we are witnesses:

- Sometimes with joy and sometimes in disbelief that God is stronger than death

- Who trust God to continue to show up in our world when we need and least expect God

- Called to actively work for justice here and now as an expression of our faith and

- So that all God’s people can live in communion. Amen.

Until we are together again, please remember:

You can do…all things…through Jesus Christ…who strengthens you

We can do…all things…through Jesus Christ…who strengthens us

Sending peace, Pastor Alanna

1. From *Kneeling in Jerusalem*, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1992 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)