May a Song Remain Among Us
Communal Song: Hold On

One of the things that connects us in worship and other aspects of church life is communal song. As sound waves from voice or instruments connect each of us ear-to-ear, we experience an instant and physical connection. During this time of social distancing, I am offering this column to encourage and minister through music until that wonderful day when we can once again raise our song together.

Many of you asked about the hymn that closed our first livestreamed worship on March 15. “When Pain or Sorrow is Too Much to Bear” is a deeply meaningful hymn poem by Mennonite hymnist, Adam Tice, that expresses the support of the community to individuals in distress. The melodic tune that accompanies it is by Sally Ann Morris, friend to several Pullen folk, and a gifted composer who resides in North Carolina. The words are below and you can also listen to it as expressed in last week’s livestream (at 44:25). Listen, feel the support of your community, and learn a new hymn for us to sing.

When Pain or Sorrow Are Too Much to Bear
When pain or sorrow are too much to bear;
when your heart feels numb, unable to care,
when faith seems so pointless that you cannot pray,
when no-one knows quite what to say, then
If God is silent when you need to hear
that you’re not alone, that comfort is near;
if you are abandoned when you need a friend,
when all good things come to an end, then
And when it looks like there’s no end in sight,
know all that is wrong can still be made right.
You’re never alone; God has promised to be
with us even when we can’t see, so

hold on, hold on,
to find a way to get through.
and when your hope is gone
and you can’t hold on,
we will hold on to you.

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You may recognize the title of this column from a portion of a benediction anthem we are learning at Pullen. I was privileged to compose the words and music for the Youth and Adult Festivals by the Sea in which our choirs participate. The words were inspired by how we speak at Pullen of the divine that is “in, among and through us.” *May the refrain of “May a Song Remain” be our prayer for these days.* You can hear the Adult Festival by the Sea sing it via the following link (at 43:50) and you may see a few of your friends! [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IegxSMrDy80](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IegxSMrDy80)

*May a song remain within you,*  
*ever-singing in your heart.*  
*M May a song remain among us,*  
*whether near or far apart.*  
*And through our song may others hear*  
*the harmony of peace.*  
*M May a song of love remain in all;*  
*and may it never cease!*  

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*Larry E. Schultz, Minister of Music*