A Lament during Pandemic

How long, O God!

A little virus, a tiny part of your creation is killing us,

threatening our lives, our old way of life.

We are lost sheep right now, helpless as new-born lambs,

trapped in our homes, afraid for our lives.

Every step is a risk, every breath is fear.

How long, O God!

We thought normal was our center, our life, our goal;

Back to normal we had hoped before Easter arrived.

But now the resurrection has come and gone and all they talk about are “new normals;”

“Unpredictable, uncertain, unknown,” we hear, each word a nail through a hand.

The paths we once walked with You have become sinking sand,

And there is no going back.

We try standing on the shaking ground alone and we flounder,

Falling rock ahead, a rollercoaster ride of unknowns.

How long, O God!

We are tired! Exhausted! Worn down like ruts on a beaten trail.

We try so hard to be strong.

We try too hard to be all for all; and we fail.

Making decisions is wading through Montana mud.

We work to prove ourselves in a job unprovable…except by You.

We grieve, mourning the loss of what was, weeping for what is lost,

crying for those died.

We’re afraid! Our fear overwhelms us, tears us up to lash out in anger and pain,

drags us down into the pit of sorrow.

We worry…even though You say “don’t.”

Anxiety attacks from within and without.

Our need to be needed, to be there and strong and innovative –

These steal us from you.

Time away from it all, time with you, days off feel like a luxury we can’t afford,

a meal we can’t eat.

Yet we must eat; we must stop and spend time with You, O God or we’ll starve.

We know this.

But it’s hard. We grieve. We’re anxious. We’re afraid…We’re tired.

But You, O God, are our Shepherd.

You lead us by your still waters and through raging storms.

You guard the gate, speak your love, give us abundant life…again and again and again.

You, O Christ, are our Shepherd.

You lead us and guide us and call us by name, knowing each of our names by your heart.

We are your beloved sheep of your very own flock.

You do not abandon us, or leave us orphaned.

You are here. You have been here. You will always be here.

You, O Spirit, are our Shepherd.

You in-spire us, breathing into our lungs your life, filling us with your abiding love;

Joining us in Christ’s community, Jesus’ living flock.

You tie us in harmony so that together we are one song in you.

Help us, O God!!

Lift us and carry us as the shepherd carries the lost sheep,

As a parent carries a weary child.

En-Courage us and fill us with your hope to face the unknown with you…

…always with you.

Em-Power us and fill us with your strength to take the next step,

and then the next into the unknown.

En-Liven us and fill us with your creative love as we discern and discover

The “normal” you want us to live,

One day at a time through this wilderness.

In-Spirit us and fill us with your new life and with wisdom,

So that we and our leaders may follow your lead into wholeness in community.

Be-Calm us and give us permission to rest, to breath, to “waste time with you.”

Heal us and all who suffer in our wounds of body, mind, heart and spirit

Trans-form us into the proclaiming and serving shepherds you call us to be.

You are our Shepherd, O God!

We shall not want.

In you we find rest.

In you we find hope.

In you, though we walk in valleys and mountains of death, we fear no evil.

For you are with us, bearing us up on the wings of your love.

“Hallelujah!” we sing. “Alleluia!”