



# Simple Gifts

Words to Inspire the Spirit

IMMANUEL CHURCH-ON-THE-HILL

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## Cicadas and the Joy of Resurrection

By The Rev. Susan D. Parsons

Apparently, I am in a minority in my love for cicadas. I'm utterly delighted that this year they will be even louder and more prevalent than usual.

It's no question they do not have much to recommend them – their ungraceful flight, the red and bulbous eyes, and their crispy bodies are the stuff of a horror movie. And, as if to create more dismay, they slip out of their fat, crunchy selves leaving a mere ghost of themselves behind.

But for me, they are the sound of the long, languid days of summer. When I hear them sing – or, scream, if you wish – it takes me back to childhood, to the heat and sprinklers, and green grass and playing into the night with the neighborhood kids.



Being someone who liked cicadas, even back then, made me immune to the boys who liked to torment the more sensitive by placing cicadas – dead or alive – into their hair. This may also explain my love for snakes and frogs, but I digress.

Last summer, when Immanuel was just beginning to worship outside, you may remember one Sunday in particular when it was hard to hear the service because of the cicada chorus in the trees above us in the Grove. It didn't matter whether you were attending outside or online, their buzzing was louder than we were.

As a solution to the noise of the cicadas, some of us suggested doing what the father of the bride did in the comedy-drama film *Steel Magnolias* to drive chirping birds out of trees. He fired shots at them. On the other hand, Randy thought we should give the cicadas pledge cards. But really, there was something fabulous about them we couldn't see at the time.

Up there above our heads, the cicadas were celebrating, singing happy love songs after having left behind their old selves. They had left the dark of the earth, shed their old clothes, and were now reveling in their new life.

At that time in the midst of the pandemic, in the midst of the death and turmoil, and the uncertainty about when and what would be the end of it all, it would have been good if we had been able to recognize what the cicadas must know – that there is always resurrection.

It's hard to remember this, though, because so much has slipped away from us – our sense of comfort, our certainties. But we have also come to know our resilience in the midst of it all. We are figuring out how to be a church in the midst of chaos, figuring out how to listen to other voices, and we are figuring out for ourselves how to “be” in a whole new world. Because those old clothes don't fit anymore – the shell we left behind is empty.

At this time of year, it's easy to see transformation all around us. The world is awash with signs of resurrection, and yet, maybe it's hard to think of celebrating just yet. But here we are, with new awareness of the frailty of certainty, and a new appreciation for our call to listen to a multitude of voices. And, if we are brave enough, to allow ourselves to be changed.

We're always in the middle of resurrection, and the calling of the cicadas tells us all about it, tells us of the joy of it.

We people are a resilient bunch, and in our best moments, when we can remember that, then that realization can become our hope. Hope because we know we have each other, and best of all, Jesus.