

This morning we wished Judy Falconer a Happy Birthday and happily welcomed Steve Busch with news of Sally's progress. We held in prayer: Jean Turner, June Bourne, Sally Loughridge, Bobby Eugley, Kathy Norwood, Allison Kelsey Bryant, Amy Lincoln Sykes, Sheila, Janet Claar and Nick Thibodeau.

We were delighted to have the new heaters working this morning! Thank you Norman and Don Maunz for all of your work!

Mark your calendars: Tentatively, we will have a Fall Grubby Day Saturday, October 15. After getting the grounds ready for winter, we will dedicate two apple trees-one to replace the hawthorn tree and another in memory of those we have lost. The Hospitality Committee will provide coffee, cider and muffins.

The Midcoast Association Annual Meeting is next Saturday, Oct. 8 in Boothbay and I would love to have anyone join me!

Gerry Kelsey's service is Sunday at 2:00. If you are coming, the Hospitality Committee would appreciate cookies or fruit for the reception.

Julia Myers' service is Oct. 16 at 1:30 at 2nd Congregational Church in Newcastle.

Saturday, October 22 is the Maine Conference UCC Annual Meeting at Husson.

The Harvest Fair is November 19.

PLEASE let me know your thoughts on the music we have had last week and this week and your preference going forward.

I spoke to Jean Turner and her daughter, Cindy, tonight. Jean is home. Cindy is staying with her, but has to leave her Mondays and Tuesdays for her job as a nurse. Cindy suggested that phone calls and visits would be appreciated by her mother. I also wonder if any of you would give me your phone numbers for Cindy. There was an occasion last week when Cindy couldn't get hold of her mother and drove home to check on her only to find out that the phone was off the hook. I am happy to run over, but this week I will be down helping with the twins.

LIGHTING THE PEACE AND JUSTICE CANDLE Wednesday Shimon Perez died. He began as a proponent of war and evolved into being one of the great peace-makers of this world. His life is a testament to how one's strong conviction can be tremendously influential...and how his heart for peace worked untiringly for everyone involved in conflict. Dear God, we pray for peace and a connection to all life...a connection to the divine perfection in us all, to the creative acknowledgment of all needs, to reliance on the inherent, interdependent progression of creation...to the emergence of divinely ordered pathways, to the knowledge that all we need is within our grasp, if we are willing to step out to receive and share it...to the ongoing interconnectedness of all life, to harmony as a natural state of being...and to the innate giving nature and empathy within creation. For if we are re-connected to these, we will have the peace You will...and be the peace You ordain. We pray for these gifts because on our own, Dear God, we cannot reach them, even though You created them within us. Amen

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING	Lamentations 1:1-6
EPISTLE READING	2 Timothy 1:1-14
GOSPEL READING	Luke 17:5-10

MESSAGE	Guarding the Treasure	Beth Hood
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Lamentations speaks this morning of the reversal of fortune. It speaks of a people who have lived in comfort and wealth but who must now endure poverty and displacement in exile.

In many places in the world today, war and natural disaster have brought many people accustomed to the good life face-to-face with the reality that no human institution can guarantee either safety or security.

Nothing can guard our earthly treasures, and no person can promise world peace.

Paul tells Timothy that he has been entrusted with a treasure. As a minister of the gospel, Timothy has been charged with guarding the treasure entrusted to him. He was to guard it, defend it, protect it.

If we take Paul's challenge to Timothy to be God's challenge to us, then two questions must be answered.

Number 1: What is the treasure?

Number 2: And how do we guard it?

What is the treasure? A couple of weeks ago, I suggested we remember September 12th. We were not obsessed with political parties and differences like skin color or religion. We were united by common values. I cannot think of Sept. 12th without seeing front porches, a simpler time. Flags flying from front stoops. We went back to a time of caring for each other. Children were watched over by everyone in the neighborhood. It was a time of being good to each other. It was a time when we found the best in ourselves and looked for the best in others. It was a time that reminded us of our mothers and our grandmothers, like Lois and Eunice who taught Timothy his faith. Lois, Eunice and our own mothers and grandmothers taught us how to treat each other.

It was a day when we became the world's front porch.

World events are background noise, cause for an occasional quick prayer for those affected, a prayer of change, a prayer for things as they used to be. A prayer for front porches.

The news is background noise until the national story or the international story becomes your story. Until you are touched by the news.

That happened to us this week. News of police shootings and the ensuing protests and violence have become all too commonplace.

One night this week as I was talking to our youngest son, William, who is living in San Diego. He interrupted the conversation to tell me that there was a police shooting in El Cajon, a suburb of San Diego. El Cajon is where our oldest son lives and he is a part of law enforcement there. And suddenly, the news hit home. I sent up a more fervent prayer for peace, for life as we think of it in the time of our mothers and grandmothers. A prayer for front porches. What touches one, touches us all.

That, I believe is our great treasure. A nation, a world, a time of peace, a time of caring, His kingdom on earth.

And so, the second question, how do we guard it?

I had a lot of time in the car with Savhana this week. The gift of having a captive audience. She bemoaned the world as she and her friends see it. I asked what she and her friends could do to change it.

I might have told her as Paul told Timothy of all the gospel can do. The power of the gospel is this—a relationship with Jesus is able to take any person from where they are and bring them to where God wants them to be.

Paul told Timothy to guard the 'good treasure' with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

We guard the treasure when we spread the gospel. We guard the treasure by living the gospel each day. When we walk with personal integrity as Christians. We guard the treasure one person, one act of kindness, one step at a time. A Shimon Perez, Anwar Sadat, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Teresa. Each of us has the power to change, to make better.

And as a stone thrown into a pond may not cause a tidal wave, the ripples from that stone will spread and continue farther into the pond. A single act of compassion will not change the world, but it will change the people it touches and spread out into the world.

That is what World Communion Sunday is about. The whole church gathered at the table. Each one loved and valued and accepted.

We celebrate World Communion Sunday as a recollection of the universal church gathered at the table in celebration of the presence of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. When we gather at the table, we celebrate the components manifest in the Eucharist. Eucharist is a Greek word of 'giving thanks'. Holy Communion is an act of God's grace. It is an act of thanks for all God has done in creating and saving. It prompts our remembering, our thanking, and our hoping. It is a family meal of nourishment, justice-seeking, and inclusion. It is an act that makes visible our future hope with God and all of God's children.

At this table, we rekindle this vision, God's dream of love and grace for all of us, and then pass it on to our children. Let all our children's children hear the story one day that on this World Communion Sunday, we dreamed of that vision for them and gathered here around this table to break bread and to share the cup, just as our ancestors did so long ago. Let us guard the good treasure entrusted to us, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, and then pass it on.