

It was frigid outside Sunday, but inside it was the Deacons' Gifts of Love Sunday and there was warm fellowship. Donations were made to important ministries in our community: The Carpenter's Boatshop

Elder Care Network: Round Pond Green
Healthy Kids
Lincoln County Dental
Coastal Kids
CHP

Last week I visited with Janet Claar and Earl Wright and Betty House. Janet and Earl are both in the hospital. Please keep them as well as Geri Kelsey and Maude Olsen in your prayers. We lit the memorial candle for Grace Redfield.

There will be no Lent Study this week. But we will get together again Friday, Feb. 26 from 4:00 to 5:00. I am using David Ray's books on 'small church' as a guide looking back at who we are, where we are going and how to get there together. David has said, "small church without mission is a club." We had some exciting thoughts last week on going forward. It would be wonderful if some of you who know more of the church's past could join us!

MESSAGE

We are His hands...

Pastor Beth Hood

Our Hebrew Scripture this morning suggests that as each individual makes his or her own way to worship, the journey and the experience are wrapped in the story of the community, and shrouded in the presence of God. The call for each individual to act, for each individual to participate in this liturgy of affirmation and hope, offers words of instruction for communities of faith.

The verses are grounded in a spirit of gratitude. Seven times in these eleven verses the author uses the word 'to give'. In the first three usages, the verb refers to God's giving of the land and the final three refer to the good gifts provided by God. In the opening lines, the author asks that the individual recognize all that has been given by God, while the final verse suggests that such gratitude is expressed appropriately when it is done so in community. The individual act then shapes the life of the community.

Gratitude is rarely confined to the present moment. More often than not the present moment is the culmination of 'givings' all along the way—sometimes being delivered to something and sometimes from something. The entire confession found in verses 5-10 seems to root the fruitfulness of the present with the faithfulness of God all along. As we read this text, we are asked to do no less. We are to celebrate the richness of the present moment, while recalling that we are part of a community that has basked in the faithfulness of God all along. For such celebration to remain individualized is to miss the power of story, our story—our shared story. The individualized gift of gratitude is only properly understood when rooted in the life of our community. Gratitude only finally reaches its proper end when it manifests itself within the life of the community.

Last night was another shining example of people across this community coming together for fellowship and to give to one of our own. The first Sunday of every month there is an envelope in your bulletins for an offering to the Deacons' fund. Through your generous gifts, we are able to give to ministries in our community. We are able to help them make a difference in lives of our friends and neighbors. This Valentine's Day the Deacons give those gifts of love to important ministries in our communities.