

What a wonderful morning! Linda Brunner's three granddaughters, Hannah and Mady played the violin and Cameron played the trumpet in three solos for our prelude! Penny Mardoian played Pie Jesu on the piano for the offertory. Savhana and Madison sang in the choir.

Linda repeated her invitation to the Brunner Annual Lobsterbake next Saturday, July 16.

The Church Fair on Saturday was a huge success! Thank you all for all the work!

In faith that I will finish going through boxes this week (Jack's not so sure!), Coffee Hour next Sunday, July 17, will be at our new home. No matter who you are or where you are going to church, we would love to have you join us! About 11:30. The address is 248 Clarks Cove Road. For you natives, I understand it's the 'old Dean place'.

Mark your calendars for the Annual Meeting July 31 after the service. The Open and Affirming Committee has prepared a covenant statement for a vote at the meeting.

LIGHTING THE PEACE AND JUSTICE CANDLE

Lament for America, Weeping for Dallas by Maren

We light candles, we grieve.
and we are afraid.
The cross rises in this land,
when two pieces of sorrow come together --
The loss of black lives
and the violent reprisal
against the innocent
always the innocent,
this time law enforcement officers.
We do not put out our candles
and we cannot dry our tears.
But we pray –
that fear does not become
anger and hatred,
a birthplace to more violence,
but our reminder of the
resurrection.

Readings:

Luke 10:25-37

Amos 7:7-17

Colossians 1:1-14

Thank you Charlie for reading!

MESSAGE The Circle of Concern Pastor Beth Hood

The road to Jericho doesn't run through comfortable, familiar territory. Instead, travelers there find themselves on dangerous ground, uncertain and often, alone. Much better to stay home in Jerusalem, with one's own kind, surrounded by the temple and the walls of the city and the institutions and community that provide what's needed, including a safety net if anything goes wrong. At home, we know who we are: we are 'somebody' in the web of relationships that we've wrapped around ourselves, and that identity gives us a lot of comfort and assurance.

In the reading from LUKE, we hear again the familiar story of the Good Samaritan, which has lost the "shock value" as it would have in Jesus'

time. A “good Samaritan”? For Jews of Jesus’ time, this was an appalling conflict in terms. Samaritans were a despised people. While they shared a common heritage with the Jews, a number of legal and religious disputes over ritual purity laws and the appropriate location of the Temple rendered them bitter enemies. To make such a person the hero of a story (instead of the priest or Levite) would have been difficult to hear.

When Jesus began his, “A priest, a Levite and a... walked into a bar”, you can bet his audience thought surely the third person, the hero of the story would be one of ‘them’, an Israelite.

The familiar story of the good Samaritan sounds a wake-up call to a culture characterized by selfishness, materialism and the survival of the fittest.

Jesus reminds would-be disciples that Christ-centered compassion extends beyond one’s comfort zone and requires a degree of risk. For Christians, the circle of concern should include all people.

The legal expert knew the answer to the question he asked of Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” He knew the law. He knew that he had to love God with his entire being, and love his neighbor as himself.

But like a child who only wants to fulfill the minimal requirement of his chore, he sought to validate his interpretation. He wanted to justify the number of people he was comfortable with in his circle of concern.

But Jesus shattered that sense of restricted love by telling of the Samaritan’s inclusive compassion.

The Samaritan did not know the victim: his nationality, his occupation, his income, his religion, his education or his diseases. He merely saw someone in need, took pity on him, and provided for his restoration.

The first step in broadening your circle of concern is to view people, all people with the eyes of Christ; to see them as human beings in need. Not only when someone is brutally victimized, but also when they are lonely, alienated, or hurting on the inside.

Recognizing a person in need is not enough. One must do something about it.

How many of you remember the story of Kitty Genovese? In 1964, a 28 year old woman named Kitty Genovese was raped and killed in two separate latenight attacks near her home in Kew Gardens, Queens. At least 38 people had seen the attacks or heard Kitty scream, but no one intervened. And only one woman called the police. How many of those people do you suppose considered themselves Christians?

In April 2010, a homeless man named Hugo Alfredo Tale-Yax died on a street after being stabbed while intervening in an argument. A number of people walked by him as he lay dying on the street. One even took a picture. How many of them went to church Sunday?

Unfortunately, many Christians pattern their behavior after the priest and the Levite. They ‘practice’ religion when it is convenient, sitting in their pew on a Sunday morning. But when Monday comes they neglect obvious needs and pass by on the other side.

Jesus included the cost of compassion in his answer. The Samaritan relinquished his time, medicine, transportation, and money as well as the promised follow-up visit to reimburse the innkeeper.

In addition, the Samaritan risked his reputation (religious defilement) by touching a bloody body; his safety, because it could have been a trap or the robbers might still have been in the area; and his health, because the man might have had a contagious disease. Despite the price, the Samaritan used his personal resources to provide total restoration without expecting anything in return.

The Samaritan, unencumbered by shoulds and oughts and rational arguments, sees only a human being in need and responds to that need.

This is the real message – the simple message (although not an easy message) of the gospel.

There is a part of the story that is not often examined. Last week I ended with a quote from C.S. Lewis in his last book of the Narnia story. “Love England as God loves England.” Love America as God loves America.

The law that the lawyer knew was “love your neighbor as yourself.” Love your neighbor as God loves you. That opens the portal to all that is good and beautiful.

So, the part of the story not often told is that the Samaritan loved himself. The Samaritan represents love of self and neighbor, with love of God understood in the parable.

The Samaritan did not submerge himself in caring for the beaten man. The Samaritan finished his journey while meeting the need of a wounded and marginal person. The Samaritan did not give everything away; he did not injure, hurt or neglect himself. He loved himself and he loved his neighbor. He relied on community in the inn and the innkeeper.

And this is the part I hope many of you will take away this morning. In genuine caretaking the caretaker is not submerged. You cannot slake another’s thirst from an empty cup.

The loved self is a self in relation. We have absolute value because we have been created to receive God’s presence. Only then can we truly be open to others.