

Good beautiful morning in Maine!

Well, all our worldly goods (most of them still in boxes!) and our hearts are now in Walpole, Maine! Once we are out of boxes we will plan a Coffee Hour at our house! And yesterday we were happy to welcome Roger and Jane Sandler back too!

It appears that we may not have internet or phone service until the end of the week. My cell is [207-837-1620](tel:207-837-1620). And I will drop into the office frequently to check emails.

Our pile of diapers is growing, but we still have another week so feel free to add to the pile until we take them to Women's Health!

We are looking for volunteers for the Church Fair July 9! And we have several dressers, tables etc. in our new garage to put in the Yard Sale .

We are going to do a Book Study this summer on how the Church can by Church. You have heard me quote David Ray several times "a church without a mission is a club." And the events of the past week demonstrate the necessity of taking God's love and Jesus' Way beyond our pews. The two books I propose are "Mission: the Small Church Reaches Out" by Anthony Pappas and Scott Planting (this can be found for under \$1 [atamazon.com](http://amazon.com)) and "Saving Jesus From the Church" by Robin R. Myers. Once I know who and how many are interested, I will be happy to order the books. Last year some people preferred meeting in the morning. Now that we are up here, I am very flexible on time so let me know morning or afternoon or one of each and the day that is best for you. We can meet in my office or at my home!

The steadfast love of God is evident throughout the passages for this day. Elijah becomes the expression of resolute and determined faith, an example rewarded by God carrying him to safety. The psalmist reminds us that throughout times of distress and dark nights of the soul, God is ever present. The Epistle passage proclaims that we are justified by faith in Christ, who claims us all as children of God. The promise of belonging to Christ is echoed in the healing of the Gerasene demoniac who Jesus instructs to share how much God has done for him.

OLD TESTAMENT

1 Kings 19:1-15

EPISTLE

Galatians 3:23-29

GOSPEL

Luke 8:26-39

MESSAGE

Pastor Beth Hood

Our old house sat on Rte. 209, not a highway by San Diego or DC standards, but fairly busy. Our new home is on a quiet back road and you can't even see the house from the road. It is tempting to retreat into that beautiful and safe environment.

I have learned two things this week. 1) To simplify and not to hold on to things; and 2) almost as important as giving help is knowing when to ask for help. So I am borrowing liberally for this morning's message from people who have put things more beautifully than I could.

Whenever I have been asked to draw a picture of my idea of safety, or to call one up in a visualization exercise, it has been a picture of a little girl-me with her hand in her father's hand. That is my idea of safety. The world has not been a safe or comfortable place this week.

But now, I listen to pain, to vulnerability, to those with broken hearts. The following is the personal reflection of Leanne McCall Tigert. Leanne's thoughts are based on a reading of Wendell Berry's poem which you may know.

"The Peace of Wild Things". Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

The 1970's were wonderful and horrible for me

I was raised in a southern, moderately evangelical church, I figured out I was a lesbian, after I finally heard the word, I spent many nights in a hidden away, gay, and drag bar that was a great sanctuary and safe harbor, I discovered the mountains and wilderness as my other safe harbor and sanctuary. I still like dancing in gay bars, but I frequent the mountains much more often.

I'd like to share with you an event in my life from 1979, one of those pivotal moments. I wrote about it in one of my books, so this might be familiar to a few of you...maybe...

I had come out to my family—who were horrified and ashamed, and basically stopped talking to me. I came out to the minister of the church in which I was working as a youth minister—he packed up my office and escorted me out the door on the spot. Then.. I gathered up the nerve to come out to my close friend, with whom I was madly infatuated, or in love, or whatever it is at that point in life. She basically said, "thanks but no thanks"—which wasn't bad for the 70's.

My heart was broken. I went with my friends to the gay bar and danced until the club closed. I went back to my dorm room, and grabbed my guitar and drove to a park, by our standards today—a large wild park, out in the country. By then it was about 4 am. I sat on a picnic table ,playing my guitar, hearing the early morning sounds in the woods, feeling about as alone as I imagined I could feel, and having no clue what was next, or where to turn. So, I'm just playing my guitar as the sun comes up. Next thing I notice—a beautiful big yellow monarch butterfly lands on my shoulder, and then another

and another, I'm thinking, "this is cool", and I keep playing, and they keep landing, until I am covered head to toe, with butterflies. They stay for a few minutes, and then they fly off. I look around, nobody's there. I quietly pack up my guitar, get back in my car, and head home, still with no clue of what's next, but it seemed okay.

In my 21 year old theology, I believed that God had sent me those butterflies as a sign of love and hope for new life. In my looking on the horizon of 60 year old theology, I am aware that this extraordinary event may have been quite ordinary, and probably wasn't so much about me, because it was much larger than me. I now know that it was migration season and monarch butterflies do this kind of thing. I now know that beauty and love and hope are built into the natural order of life--- that's the miracle.

Cocoons get shed, beauty is everywhere, love is outpoured, resurrection happens, hope survives every act of violence.

So, whatever brokenness you may feel—for yourself, for our world, there is healing, there is hope. "I come into the peace of wild things...I rest in the grace of the world, and I am free."