

Dear Ones,

At the end of my sermon last Sunday I quoted something my friend RJ Owles had written. Several people asked me to share it in *Keeping the Faith*, so here it is:

Knowledge of God is useless if you do not know you are loved by God.

Knowledge of self is useless if you do not know yourself as loved unconditionally.

Faith is not believing that God exists, but it is believing that your existence matters to God -- that you are uniquely valuable. God does not simply love you, but desires to love you, and wants you to be loved. For that alone is why we were created: to love God and to be loved by God.

Until you dare to believe that NOTHING can separate you from the love of God, then nothing that you do, or nothing that is done to you, no success or failure, no good intention, will ever transform you in any significant and permanent way.

Genuine transformation comes through vulnerability. Love is risky and it exposes us in ways that we often do not like. Love confronts us with who we are -- even those parts of ourselves we do not like and seek to ignore or deny.

It is not the fact that we are loved unconditionally that changes us. It is not the knowledge that God is love and that we are loved that transforms us. It is the EXPERIENCE of being loved unconditionally that changes us. It is the EXPERIENCE of God as love and EXPERIENCING ourselves as loved that transforms us.

Grace is not embracing an idea that we expect will "save" us. Grace is not reserving a place for ourselves in heaven. Grace is experiencing God as love. Grace is experiencing ourselves as loved in such a manner that we can no longer deny it, and allowing ourselves to be changed by that love.

In the meantime....*keep the faith*,

Nancy+

THIS SUNDAY'S READINGS

Genesis 32: 22-31 * Psalm 17: 1-7, 16 * Romans 9:1-5 * Matthew 14:13-21

BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

Mary Crane 8/2; Walter & Kim Perry 8/2; Nancy Mering 8/4; Nancy Moore 8/5;
Tom Whitney 8/6; Doug & Jan Wall 8/7; Evie Lehr 8/8

CREATION CARE TIPS

Fire, fire, burning bright, in the forests of the night *With apologies to poet William Blake*

The confession in Rite Two in the Book of Common Prayer begins, "Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone." And the creation prayer we will hear Sunday begins, "For your wondrous creation and all the bounty it provides, that your creatures are fed and nourished."

What is the connection? The fires that are burning groves of olive trees, vineyards , and fields of fruits and vegetables outside Madrid, Spain, and vineyards, fields of fruits, grains and vegetables in Bordeaux, France are the result of the hot weather that has plagued Europe this spring and summer. The hot weather is a result of global warming, and global warming is a direct result of the overabundance of fossil fuel mining, drilling, and burning to keep our societies running. What have we done and left undone? Perhaps we have become too

dependent on comfort. Perhaps we have not given enough effort to finding alternatives to fossil fuel consumption. Perhaps we have become lazy, driving where we could walk, and ordering products online instead of buying similar things that we could find locally.

Perhaps we can change. May it be so.

– Patty Watts, Christ Church Earth Keeper

Hurt not the earth—neither the sea—nor the trees. Revelation 7:3

VESTRY MINUTES SUMMARY

Check-in: Gardens look very well; the building continues to be frequently used by the community.

Treasurer's Report: Pledge income is close to the budgeted amount; part of the cashed CD was used to pre-buy heating oil for the coming season.

Sabbatical: Teams have been formed and functional descriptions are being worked on; still working on a laptop solution for streaming; all procedure manuals are being brought up-to-date; coverage for the Wednesday eucharist and pastoral care has been arranged.

AC in Church: Still working on estimates – have received one of two.

Other: We have received an offer to cover the cost of carpet in the church; Jen will make necessary contacts.

CALENDAR

SUN: 10:15 AM Eucharist/In-person and online

WED: 9:00 AM Eucharist/Bible Study

THU: Office closing early

THU: 7:15 PM Zoom Compline

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A/C in church is not functioning. Vestry is reviewing proposals for new heat pump units for church, offices and guild room.

Ministries We need additional ushers and eucharistic ministers. Please talk with Nancy if you're interested in either of these positions.

The rector will be on sabbatical August 17 through November 17. Please contact wardens Jen Lehr and/or Nancy Mering with pastoral concerns during that time.

United Thank Offering I'm going to guess that, if asked, a lot of us could list some things we DON'T like about summer, e.g., temps in the 90s, ticks, deer eating our plants. However, I bet we would all have longer lists of what we love and are grateful for in summer. My list includes Maine's hundreds of lakes, including a large one right in Norway, summer fruits, cookouts, July 4th celebrations, etc. Take a few moments to remind yourself of what you love about summer—then drop a quarter or dollar bill in your UTO box for each one. *Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Psalm 107:1*

The Committee on Indian Relations for the Diocese of Maine is seeking new members. Interested? Be in touch with the chair, The Rev. Annette Joseph, revarjoseph@gmail.com.

Sunday School is on hiatus for the summer.

Nametags Please wear your nametag while you're here. You can leave it in the basket outside Nancy's office as you leave and it will be returned it to the board. ***If you are one of our regular summer visitors, please sign up for a nametag you can wear when you are with us.***

For ongoing and up-to-date information about diocesan activities and news, as well as news from other congregations, sign up for **the DioLog**. <https://episcopalmaine.org/newsletter/>

MINISTRIES LIST

	<u>This week:</u>	<u>Next week:</u>
Lector 1:	Patty Watts	Thelma Cunningham
Psalmist:	Peter Hammond	Tom Knight
Lector 2:	Rosemary Laban	Allison Long
Acolyte:	Doug Wall	Bella Long
Euch. Minister:	Michelle Christoph	Jim Christoph
Usher:	Tom Knight	Peter Hammond
Altar Guild:	Jan & Doug Wall	Jen Lehr
Coffee Hour:	Janet Harvey	Rosemary Laban
Counter:	Marg Means	Tom Knight
Closer:	David Mering	Jason Long