

December 8, 2013

Service – Standing on Holy Ground

I bet you are wondering why we have asked you to remove your shoes. When Moses was walking in the wilderness, and he encountered the burning bush, God's told Moses to remove his shoes because he was standing on Holy Ground, he was standing in a place set apart, a place in which God is uniquely present.

In our lesson today, we will read Ezekiel's vision of a valley filled with dry bones, and how God brings, these bones, which are beyond hope, back to life. It is a story of hope when there is no hope, it is a story of resurrection and it is a story of renewal.

What renews us? What gives us new life when our bones feel dry? Often a community of God's people, we find new life by remembering, remember what we are about and why we do what we do. So we have begun by reminding all of us why we come here each week to worship. This is holy ground, a place set apart, where we come, expecting to encounter God, the creator of the universe, your creator. Often we forget how incredible this is. The creator of Galaxies is here, the source of life, is here, to be with you. God has made an appointment, asked you out on a date and invited you to God's place. Will we show up? Or will we stand up God, or be here but wish we were somewhere else? Do we remember why we gather? We gather to be in the presence of God, to stand on Holy Ground.

Confession

Do we remember what we are doing? Or why we do what we do? We begin with confession. We are in God's presence. We stand before God. When the prophet Isaiah stood before God he confessed "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5) When Peter first realized who Jesus was, he fell down at Jesus' feet saying "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For when we come into God's presence, sometimes God's light shines right through us, revealing what is good and what is broken. So we bring our whole self before God, and we confess, we sing Kyrie, Lord

have mercy, placing all that we are before God. So let us now place before God our whole self as we silently confess before God the sin in our life, the ways that we have missed the mark of what God has intended for us.

Silence

God responded to Isaiah's confession by cleansing his lips and calling him to be his messenger. Jesus responded to Peter's confession with these words "do not be afraid;" then he called him "from now on you will be catching people" We bring our whole self before the holiness of God, and God responds by completely forgiving us so that we may be fully with God. And God does not just forgive us, but invites us to journey with God, and to work with God as a friend and co-worker. So, as a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ I tell you, you are forgiven, there is nothing to separate you from God, God's love for you is complete, as you are. Come let us continue our journey together with God. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Word *(After lighting the candles)*

Do we remember what we come here for? We come to hear God's Word. God's Word is what brought order and life in creation. God's Word has the power to gently restore a broken soul. God's Word can be a guide to our life and as we will read today it can bring life, even to dry bones. Every week God's Word is spoken here, but do we have ears to hear it? Let us listen and rise to sing Alleluia, for God comes to speak to us.

Meal *(Before the Peace)*

Do you remember what God gives us? As we come to the meal, God is here, to forgive us, to fill us with grace, to feed us with God's presence, to be with us around a table. God comes to us, and is present in bread and wine, ordinary things, to remind us that God is in everything, not just this place, but all places are Holy. In this place though we receive this bread and wine, because God is in it, and by this food, God feeds us and God is united with us. In this we fulfill the very purpose of life, union with God, becoming one with God's love: loved and loving. So let us now eat and drink God's presence.

Sending

Do you remember why we have come to this Holy place, this place where the veil between God and us has been thinned? It is so that we can learn to see though the veil everywhere, we are renewed here by God's Word, we are given God's life by God's Spirit, why – so that we may be Gods love in the world. So after we feed you, we bless you, to remind you that God is with you, and then we quickly send you out. The acolytes will go first, with a flame in hand, for God goes out before us, to be with us and active in the world, but then you go out, blessed to be a blessing, sent so that all might know Jesus, so that all might know God's love. So let us be on our way.