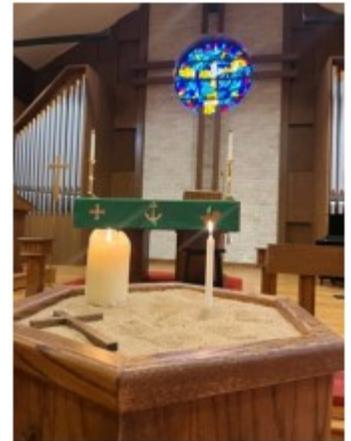


From the Pastor's Desk

There is so much going on in our lives, our community, our country, our world ... COVID continues to be a concern for far too many; the war rages on in the Ukraine with all the trickle down consequences ... overwhelming loss and grief, millions of refugees, food shortages, crazy gas prices; gun violence continues to be a reality for too many; the Supreme Court has made decisions that some have celebrated, while some have lamented; inflation is at an all time high, and the financial struggle is real in many households and here at United. Where do we turn? What do we do? Each week Augsburg Fortress (our church publishing house and source of weekly liturgical options) provides an inspirational devotion based on the text. Wanda includes these in the liturgy she sends out on Friday. Often they introduce a profound thought or insight. Let me share from a previous devotional: Each of us knows busyness. There are days when we wake up harried by the errands that need doing and problems that need solving, and nights when rather than sleep we turn over all those tasks still pending. Sometimes our anxieties impinge upon our health and productivity, for it is hard to be effective when our minds are agitated and our spirits weighed down by responsibilities. In such moments, we should look to the example set by Jesus. He has been teaching for hours. "Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there," teaching through parables while the crowd remains nearby on land. As darkness falls, he tells his disciples, "Let us go across to the other side." He chooses to leave the hubbub behind him and find rest. Then "a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat." But rather than rising in agitation, Jesus sleeps on. His disciples are not so sanguine. Made anxious by the turbulence, they awaken Jesus, crying out: "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" Jesus takes in the confusion and replies simply: "Peace! Be still!" He knows that chaos all around us need not make us chaotic within. "Why are you afraid?" Jesus chides. "Have you still no faith?" In tumultuous times when we feel overwhelmed, we need to find that same place of peace in which Jesus slept. He had much to do in his limited time. Even so, he didn't lose himself in urgency but drew inward to restore himself. The same tasks will be there in the morning. Have we no faith? Let us pray and rest. Reprinted from Words for Worship, Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission. There's so much going on ... I said to a colleague last week, "I always thought summer slowed down." It doesn't. It's just a different kind of busy. Perhaps Jesus can model for all of us, in the midst of our daily lives, in the midst of all that's going on, in the midst of our busyness, whatever that might look like, there can be peace and rest. Remember to pray, daily and often. Open your bible, I am suggesting the Psalms for summer. (If you've



done this before, you might want to pick a different translation. Two or three psalms a day, and you will be through all 150 by Labor Day.) It is a holy habit, and worth the time. Rest, renewal, and re-creation is my prayer for each of us.



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Blessings and joy!

Pastor Karen