**Reflection for Monday,**

**February 27, 2023**

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Welcome to the season of Lent which began last week with Ash Wednesday. Our theme for Lent this year is “home.” This might sound contradictory, given we traditionally remember Jesus spending forty days wandering in the wilderness as we begin Lent. But what is Lent if not an opportunity to center ourselves and find our spiritual home in God’s love and justice?

In the coming weeks, we will be thinking about home in all its dimensions, whether as spiritual haven or as the catastrophe of homelessness that has befallen so many on our planet—from Ukraine to Turkey and Syria to our own community, as the current Winter Nights residents in our fellowship hall make clear. With partner churches, we will be thinking about the entrenched problem of redlining and discrimination in housing---now there is a project called the Black Wealth Builders Fund that helps Black families finance a deposit so that they can purchase homes.

Home. It is an endlessly rich topic. The United Church of Christ celebrates the ministry of Jesus as offering a radical welcome. So let’s make a point in our life together to open our home in the radical welcome that Jesus taught us.

I’m honored to begin our Lenten reflections with this poem by Lee Cruise.

In faith,

Elizabeth

**Home**

Feel the push and pull of ocean waters.

Nature’s balance drives their forces.

Brace for the swelling waves,

  aiming for earth while

  shoving, crashing on their way.

Behold the pull of dying waves,

   dragging sand and plankton shreds,

   ebbing slowly home.

Beware the chaos in the swash

   where wave tails form into lost unknowns

   in tangled kelp and crab shell ends.

Renewal’s hiding in the folds where

    life is found and hope returns;

    keel-like rocks will steady things.

Consider this on bended knee:

Mercy sails the journey home.

—Lee Cruise