Reflection for Monday, March 20, 2023

Sanctuary



Home is sanctuary—it is a safe place and maybe even a holy one. Perhaps it is most holy in letting us just rest in who we are, and rest with others whom we love.

This weekend, we were fortunate to have a group of teens and some wonderful pastors at the church for a confirmation retreat so I had the pleasure of seeing a group of young people creating a moving worship service in our chapel, playing games and having conversation in our fellowship hall, and then bedding down for the night in, yes, our sanctuary.

In the safety and community of our life together, we sometimes forget how unsafe the world is for so many others. And churches have served an important function of offering shelter and safety in times of natural disaster or political upheaval. Across the hills, a Berkeley church is offering sanctuary space to an undocumented family. I feel we should pay attention to the power of the spiritual and literal space we have to share.

And the church is sanctuary and home in ways that we can’t anticipate! During the pandemic, we discovered that we were living in close quarters with at least two hives of bees. And now, our cross provides support for a crow’s nest. (It’s visible from the Safeway parking lot!)

At the end of our retreat, one teen, who had described herself as agnostic, said, “I liked being here because I could just be myself.” I think that means that she felt at home, and I’m happy to live in the grace of that welcome and safety with her. May you feel it as well.

In faith,

Elizabeth