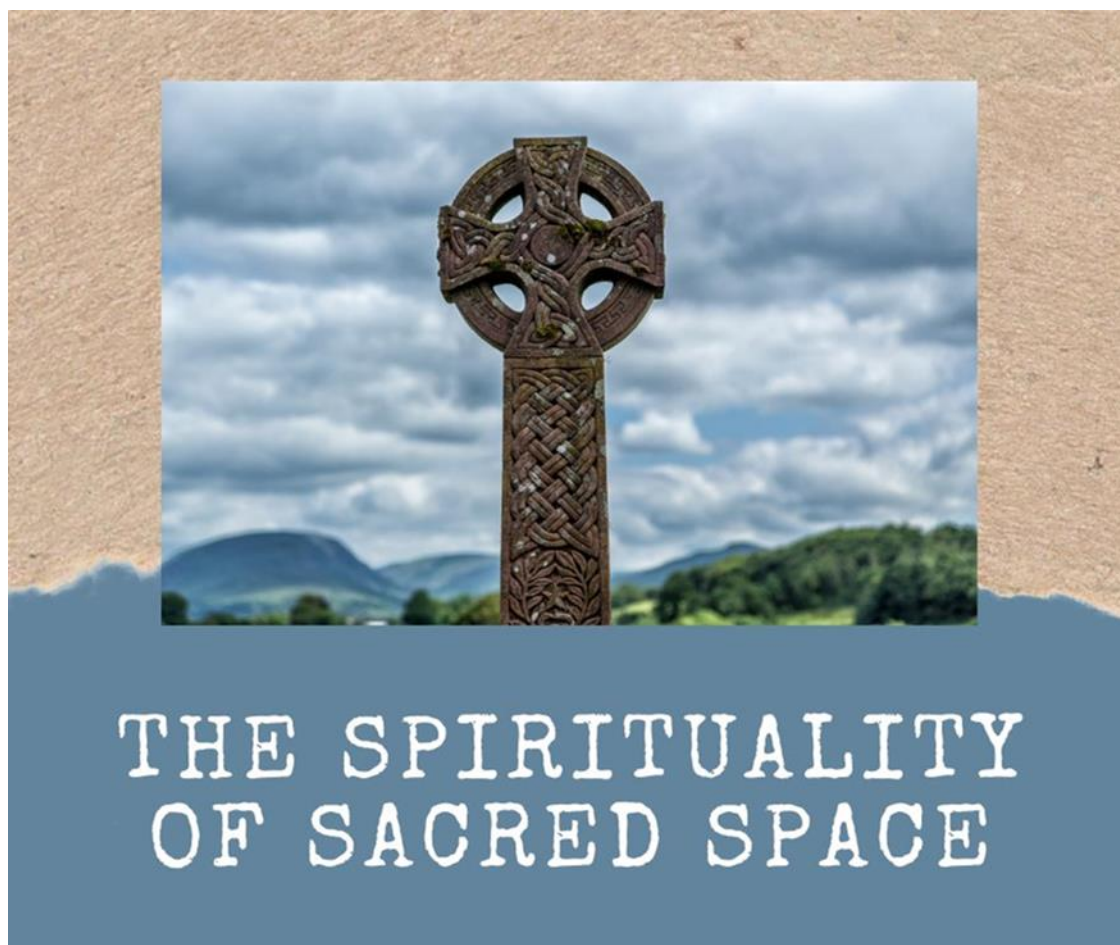




The Spirituality of Sacred Space
 Rev. Dr. Glenda Hollingshead; August 18, 2024
 13th Sunday after Pentecost
 Exodus 3:1-6; Exodus 13:17-22

Today we continue our sermon series on spirituality with “The Spirituality of Sacred Space.” Although sacred space is not something we often talk about, it is important to our spirituality. Why? Because sacred space provides a threshold into a deeper way of seeing, hearing, and knowing the power of God that summons us into fullness of life. Whenever we enter sacred space, we sense it in our hearts—in our bodies—in our spirits. Often, our reaction is to fall silent. Other times, we find ourselves whispering for no apparent reason. Sacred space can be as varied as a labyrinth, a backyard garden, or a vast outdoor area adorned with sacred art and icons. It may be present in our homes through candlelight as we pray, meditate, or during worship – in person or online – with other believers.

Friends, you are in for quite a treat this morning because I have enlisted 4 of our precious saints to speak about a time or place when they have experienced the Holy in a sacred space. So, I

welcome John Zirkle to the pulpit. He will be followed by Carol Antoniewicz, Troy Evans, and then, Libby Moser.

(John spoke of holy ground being everywhere since God is everywhere. Then he shared how special hiking Charlie's Bunion has always been to him—particularly a little known, undeveloped trail leading up to it. Carol recounted singing with a choir in glorious, soaring spaces and her awareness of sacred space when she first saw redwood trees near San Francisco. Troy highlighted the importance of service and community and then shared how Holston Presbytery Camp is sacred space for him and for his family. Finally, Libby recounted a “holy ground” experience by a pool of water at Red Clay State Park that left us all wanting to go there.)

In the Celtic tradition, another way to describe a sacred space is a “thin place.” In thin places, the boundary between heaven and earth becomes more permeable, becomes paper-thin. We encounter God in fresh ways that startle us, that grab our attention, and we are often transformed by the experience. For those of us who routinely gather in this place to worship God, surely this sanctuary is a thin place, a sacred space for us. Here, we meet as sisters and brothers in Christ to honor and worship God our Mother and Father, Jesus our Brother, and Spirit our Guide. Here, we come to face the reality of what it means to be human. And, we come in sure and certain hope of the future that can be ours when we work together to bring God's kingdom upon the earth.

From this sacred space, we are called forth to be a living sanctuary for others. We are called forth to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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