

Devotion Memorial Day Week 2021

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

This past Sunday we celebrated the lives of our veterans. A number of us walked through the cemetery later to see the flags and flowers placed by church members. I had the privilege of listening to many a story about the folks buried there, and how a number of you are related to these people. It was an honor to be in that sacred space as we remembered those who have gone before us.

We sang in worship for the first time, and I got teary as we sang “America the Beautiful.” It wasn’t just the wonderful words, it was the ability to sing together as a congregation, finally. As we gradually open up the service with singing, no masks, passing the offering plate, and passing communion, I am still a little startled every time we do something like we used to. Sitting in Sunday School, gathering outside after the service for refreshments, getting ready to have our first church picnic, planning for Homecoming, and restarting session meetings in person – it all sounds fairly mundane, in terms of traditional church activities. But after 15 months, it’s not mundane at all. It’s a miracle of science, with vaccines developed in record time to help us be safe. I’m so thankful that we can do the “ordinary” now. It has become extraordinary, and I hope we will cherish these events with new attitudes and appreciation of simple traditions that keep us connected.

If you haven’t been back yet, please come join us. We are excited and there is much energy in the church. We are so grateful for a time where we can reconnect as a family of faith. God is indeed good all the time, as we say every Sunday at the beginning of the service. And we will EAT. If it rains, we’ll gather for refreshments after church in the conference room, with the Sunday School room across the hall for spillover. We’ll have monthly luncheons in Fellowship Hall to enjoy each other’s food and to spend time together. So get out your favorite recipes!

I leave you with one of my favorite patriotic hymns, “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee.” Samuel Francis Smith wrote the lyrics in 1831 while a student at the Andover Theological Seminary in Andover, Massachusetts.

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From every mountainside
Let freedom ring!

Our fathers' God to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright,
With freedom's holy light,
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God our King!

Jeanne