

**Devotion, Week of JULY 14, 2024**  
**Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

***Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.***                      **James 5:14-15**

We are studying Practicing Our Faith, A Way of Life for a Searching People, edited by Dorothy Bass, in Sunday School. We spent this past Sunday discussing healing, especially the connection between physical illness and spiritual wholeness. Modern science has proven that when people receive prayer and physical touch, they recover from illness faster. This was a big issue at the height of Covid, when people were isolated in hospital rooms and could not even receive visitors. I can't imagine the horror of being so sick or dying alone.

We pray for those in our congregation and families who are ill every Sunday, and we keep them on our prayer list in the bulletin and newsletter. I am sure that our shepherds call and visit and take food when necessary. The concept of wholeness is an old Jewish one, called *shalom*. In Middle Eastern cultures, this is a central part of community life. In Arabic, it is called *salaam*. In these cultures, everyone is responsible for everyone else in the local community, and the goal is for everyone to have *shalom* – to be healthy, well fed, housed, employed, and loved. When there is *shalom*, the community thrives.

We have a number of people on our prayer list, and I hope you will remember to pray for them as they heal. Prayer works – James knew this when he wrote his Epistle – and physical touch and hugs help as well. Thank you for all you do for others and I hope you are receiving support if you are ailing. When we care for each other, we are stronger.

*Jeanne*