

Devotion, Week of November 10, 2024
Rev. Jeanne Simpson

Faith. I preached about that this past Sunday from Hebrews 11. It may me think about my own faith. What kind of faith do I have? Is it steadfast, so that I'm like the Jewish person hiding in a cellar in Cologne, Germany? You have probably heard at least one version of this story, but here's the true one. During World War II, Catholic Scouts in Germany had discovered underground passageways which had been unused for many years under old buildings, and these could now serve as refuges from the Gestapo. At one point, nine Jewish fugitives hid here for four months without ever being caught. The area was fully equipped with a kitchen, bedroom, living room, radio, a small library, and oil lamps. Meals could only be prepared at night so as not to attract the Gestapo's attention, who would have noticed the smoke during the day. Food had to be supplied by friends who willingly gave up a portion of their rations to help those unfortunate people living for weeks in utter darkness. The following inscription is written on the wall of one of these underground rooms: "I believe in the sun, though it be dark; I believe in God, though He be silent; I believe in neighborly love, though it be unable to reveal itself."

I am struck by the thought that God is silent at this horrendous time for Jewish people, but faith that God is still there. And the poignant recognition that they have been helped by loving neighbors, who must remain silent about what they are doing so that those in hiding are not caught and murdered or sent away to concentration camps.

Do I have that kind of faith? I think I have developed that strength over the years. In spite of a number of crises that tested my faith, I've never stopped believing that God is with me – somehow – even when I cannot discern his presence. When I hear the stories of trials those in the congregation have gone through and still are going through, I know that you have developed that kind of faith as well. Ours is not a fly by night faith, that flits away when we are faced with a crisis. Ours is the faith that lets us have hope for today and tomorrow, in spite of the terrible things we have to face at times. I hope you will thank God this week for being there and for holding us up when we are down.

Yours in Christ,

Jeanne