

“Holding Space for Others”

Sermon by Dan Harrison, pastor, Church of the Covenant, 8/22/2021

Isaiah 58:10/Matthew 10:8

There is a common phrase used among people who are trying to create a “safe space” for sharing honestly with one another, engage in sincere dialogue; it’s often referred to as “holding space” for another. I love this concept. It resonates with my own thinking of how God creates sacred space in general. We see how God created sacred space when God created the Garden of Eden. A place where God could walk alongside humans. Or later when God visited Moses and told him to remove his sandals because he was walking on “holy ground.” There is a sacredness to space historically, places where God has interacted with human beings. Where are those holy spaces for you? For many of us it is right here, on these grounds. We have encountered God in many ways in community with this sacred space and the people who occupy it. Some of us can literally point to a bench or a rock or a tree where God has spoken to us in some way. Some of us can point to a chair where we encountered God’s presence while speaking to another right here at the Lodge or feeling God’s presence up here in the chapel.

However, when we take what we know is a specific space, any space, and we “hold” it for another, we have done something greater than anything else: We have taken what was a sacred encounter for us personally and now have extended it to another. When you hold space for someone else, you are safeguarding that space, preparing that space, protecting that space, and giving it to another as if it is theirs now. You are handing it over to them. It isn’t just physical space, it’s spiritual space, mental space, emotional space.

Jesus commanded his disciples in Matthew 10:8 to “Heal the sick, raise the dead, drive out demons.” To heal the sick requires us to do all we can humanly to safeguard the health of one another (caring for one another) and praying for God to intervene when everything else fails. Raising the dead is the act of breathing life into one another, feeding hope into each other constantly, drawing each other closer to God and to one another. And “driving out demons” is a very old way of saying that we ensure each other’s mental/emotional health by holding space to work through those things deep within us, the trauma’s and most of all, the healing of those internal parts of our minds. Let us hold space for one another. Let us find a way to do that which is healthy for everyone. AND let us hold space for others, those we haven’t even met yet, but let us hold space for them as well BECAUSE God has been holding space for us since the beginning.

Shalom