

## Notes from the Clergy...

Jesus sent out the twelve disciples with the following instructions: “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons...” (Matthew 10:8) From the letter of James we read these instructions to the faithful. “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.” (James 5:14)

Many years ago when I worked with the Iona Community in Scotland I participated in weekly healing services. I attended the first of those services with some trepidation...mainly because my only knowledge of “healing services” came from hearing evangelists tell their listeners to put their hand on the radio, close their eyes, and be healed. That sort of healing struck me as chicanery.

What I discovered through the healing services on Iona was a deeper and, to my way of thinking, a more authentic understanding of healing. By joining with others for a weekly service of healing I came to understand that God’s purpose for us all is a life of wholeness...and that a ministry of healing is an integral part of our Christian witness. I came to see we all stand in need of healing: the healing of broken bodies, hurt minds, wounded hearts, divisions within ourselves, divided communities, and creation itself groaning in travail.

The more I have thought about the biblical passages referred to above, the experience of the early church, the experience of folks I trust, and my own experience, the more I feel led to offer a service of wholeness and healing. I intend to offer a service on the first Sunday of the month. The first of these services will take place on Sunday, February 7, at 5:00 PM, in the sanctuary. (I know this is Super Bowl Sunday, but you’ll be home before the kickoff.) I anticipate these services will last no longer than 45 minutes.

The services will include prayers both general and specific, scripture reading, singing, and silence. For those who may be so inclined, there will be opportunity for the laying on of hands...and, upon request, anointing with oil.

Whether you participate in these worship services or not, let me encourage you to be bearers of hope by being in prayer for the healing of the world.

L’Chiam (*To Life*),

Bill