



November 2, 2018

Ministry Jottings

One of my special home-away-from-home places when I was in elementary school was being with Cohen family. Yes, their daughter, Audrey, was in my closest circle of friends. But it was more than that. They made sure this little Gentile girl was treated as a precious child of God, and included in the celebrations of their Jewish faith. There were the grandparents who had been through the Holocaust. There were stories of joy as well as fear shared—about the past and the present. I learned much about the Jewish faith first from its heart – from the family center.

Later, moving into ministry, I readily absorbed the studies of the Old Testament and my understanding of the Jewish faith deepened. Every confirmation class I have led, even if we travelled two hundred miles, has attended a Friday evening synagogue service and met with the Rabbi. It might seem like little, but in this, as in so much, we have the power and the voice to prevent anti-Semitism, and build caring, respectful attitudes and relationships.

When I arrived in Evergreen, it was a joy to discover the close relationship we have with Congregation Beth Evergreen, and Rabbi Jamie Foster was the first clergy to welcome me and take me to lunch. Some of our newer folk might not know that Congregation Beth Evergreen met here for 20 years until they built their synagogue. The painting in our narthex is a gift from them, as is the mezuzah on our front door.

I'm reflecting on this because of the horrifying synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh during Sabbath services this past Saturday. Rev. Tveit of the World Council of Churches said eloquently, "Anti-Semitism is a sin against God and humanity, and this attack upon a Jewish community in a place of prayer and during a moment of celebration of their religious identity is an appalling violation of our shared humanity."

I sent a text reaching out with our love, prayers and support to Rabbi Jamie and their congregation Saturday evening after the details of what had happened came out. He got right back to me in gratitude and grief, even though, as I later learned, he was in London visiting a daughter. I will be at the healing and affirmation service Friday evening, which Congregation Beth Evergreen has opened up to the community. It's at 7 p.m. and I hope some of you will be able to join me. May we continue to offer prayers and support for our Jewish friends and colleagues in this community and beyond.

In Christ's grace,

Pastor Deb