

**April 29, 2018**

**In the Interim...**

In recent weeks, several individuals and families in our church family have experienced the deaths of loved ones. Our church has even experienced the death of a former associate pastor, the Rev. Susan Rice.

No matter the age of the one who dies or the circumstances, expected or unexpected, I have known very few deaths that came at a good time for those left behind. Indeed, scripture reminds us that death often comes as a thief in the night, shocking and disrupting our lives. When individuals we love die, our lives are forever altered. We can no longer laugh or cry with them or seek their counsel or share our lives in so many ways.

But as the Apostle Paul reminds us in Thessalonians, we do not grieve as others do who have no hope. While our mortal bodies are wasting away, Paul says, our spiritual bodies grow stronger day by day. If the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, he reminds us, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

So even in our pain and sadness, we can know that death has moved the ones we love from the land of the dying to the land of the living. "The world will no longer see me," our Lord said, "but you will see me; and because I live, you also will live." (John 14:19)

My prayer is that in the days of your grief and loss, you will find comfort and peace in the knowledge that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. May that sustaining love be with you.

Wanda Neely