

We're all likely aware that our days are getting noticeably longer now; daylight comes earlier and supper can be enjoyed before the night becomes totally dark, and just as we all begin to adjust to the routine of it all, we hit daylight savings time! Maybe you've already marked your calendars so you're ready! It's on mine—just three weeks away now, set for March 12, when we “spring ahead!”

There's a lot more riding on that “spring” than when we “fall back” in the Fall, because we'll be late for worship if we don't set our clocks ahead the night before! It's one of those adjustments in life that can be the subject matter of a bad dream, a nightmare, in the life of a preacher; waking up an hour late on a Sunday morning and knowing there was absolutely no redemption in sight—no amending that error! Haven't done it yet, folks, but offering no guarantee it will never happen either!

Sunday, March 12, we'll all “lose” an hour in our sunrising time, and “gain” that hour on the other end of the day as the sun sets later. Saturday, March 11, we turn our clocks ahead, that is if you have such a relic in your life as a mechanical clock! Most of us now march to the beat of digital time which has a life of its own and will “spring ahead” all by itself. Here at church, we have to physically set our clocks ahead. It's actually a ritual I embrace, as it helps “set” in my mind that the time is changing!

So here at church on a Saturday, we diligently go around upstairs and down and re-set 12 clocks, and by Sunday, they will all carry that hour ahead or hour back, but defiantly resist

agreeing on the exact time! You may have noticed the exact time is a mystery here at the church, unless you pull out your cell phone! Yet even though we lack a precise consistency among our many church clocks, the physical re-setting of the time on all 12 of them every 6 months is a bit of a “rite of passage” within the routine kept here in this place, because it always creates that bit of “space for reflection” within it, as time carries us along together here.

Past and present, all the richness of our lives, the joys and the sadness, bits and pieces of what we’ve experienced together to think on, as you take each clock in your hands, surrounded by the memories that live in the room there with each particular one, and then dial the hour hand past all the hours that have flown by and then set it back up on the wall to mark the time of whatever the next 6 months have yet to reveal.

There’s a lot in hand as well as in mind there with 11 of our 12 clocks, and then there’s even more with clock Number 12, which stands apart from all the others—our sanctuary clock. You don’t take that clock down and hold it in your hands. *You go to “It,”* almost as if “It” summons you, this grand old clock bolted high on the wall that has commanded the respect of every preacher who has stood in the pulpit distanced from it since it was put up there on the wall! Depending on the season—Spring or Fall, you very carefully advance the hour hand, careful not to disturb the minute hand as you let it follow the other’s “lead” around the dial. You spend less time with that clock in the Spring, only carefully pushing the hour hand ahead, one blissful

turn! It's the Fall ritual that really holds your attention, as you cannot just simply bring the hour hand "back" an hour.

In the Fall, you carefully attend to pushing that commanding hour hand around 11 times, stopping on the golden 1-hour-short-of where you started! Either season, that clock demands your focus, your total focus. It's when the task is completed that the re-setting ritual gives 'way to reflection of Biblical proportions and that's expressed with no pun intended, as it involves our faith and all the faith shared in this sanctuary space, all that this clock has wound its hours around for over 100 years!

Somehow our Gospel text this morning which is known as the "Transfiguration" because of an incident where Jesus' human face changed as it "*shone like the sun and his clothes became dazzling white*" reminded me of this clock setting ritual. Somehow the inexplicable experience witnessed by his disciples, Peter, James and John, where they not only saw Elijah and Moses standing with Jesus, but also felt the shadow of an incredibly bright cloud fall upon them, and then heard a voice claim Jesus as "my Beloved Son," a voice that then spoke directly to them with a command to "*listen to him;*" that text became ever so clear as we will soon be tinkering with our clocks, changing the hour.

We all need time to "re-set;" all need to take time at times to process what's going on in our lives, process what we experience, or have experienced and in the midst of it all have just gotten through whatever it was. We all have life-changing experiences; we move, we have surgery, we lose our loved ones, we start a

new job, we retire from one, we get ill, we take on new challenges or new challenges take us on, and what sounds like being about just the singular you or me, multiplies times over and over as we're all connected to others; our children, our parents, our siblings, our friends; connected to situations in others' lives that we are ever a part of.

Jesus told those three disciples to keep what they'd witnessed and been through all to themselves until after his own death on the cross and the miracle when God would raise him from the dead. That would be the time for them to "re-set" their clock and remember what they witnessed with him on that mountain. That incredible experience would send their lives on a mission that no human doubt or fear or despair could ever stop! Their steadfast resolve to follow him was restored, there in the wake of Easter;; the bond they had known with him renewed and alive.

Maybe now it's a bit clearer how this Transfiguration text led the way into telling you more about re-setting clocks than you ever thought you needed to know! We're headed right into the Lent this week with an Ash Wednesday service opening the way into this special season in our faith lives. We purposefully keep the next six weeks that lead us all to another celebration of Easter, focusing our attention on our relationship with God, with Christ. The Worship Committee will have a special part in our service each of the following six Sundays. We will have a 7 pm service here in the sanctuary this Wednesday to dedicate our Lenten journey. We will eat a meal together after worship throughout

this season and join in a study on Peter. And there are devotional booklets available on the table in the Quilt Room for those who wish to have a guided 40 day keeping of Lent.

Lent brings more ritual into our lives. It provides us with that “rite of passage” within the routine we all keep, as it creates that bit of “space for reflection” within us, a place that becomes more and more precious as time carries us along with it. Can we see Lent being a time to re-set our lives, our faith lives? It brings us all the opportunity to reflect on our relationship with Christ and how that affects our relationships with each other and the way we live in our world.

Time slips away so quickly. It is good to take it in our hands, hold it and consider where we spend it and what we use it for and whether we “spend it” or it *spends us!* It’s good to remember the steadfast faith of the past, and be open to renewal, to growth; open to hope; open to discovering new understanding. How often do we stop and think about God’s purpose being worked out day-by-day through our lives? How often do we find rituals in the routine, and kneel on holy ground? *Amen!*

“finding rituals in the routine” Matthew 17:1-9 021923 Mkh