

Old South First Congregational Church
Farmington, Maine



Dear Church Family,

As I write to you in mid-December, we are headed into a time of joy for all skiers and snowshoers, sledders and snowboarders! The beauty of our Maine winter is upon us, and as I go from place to place on holiday visits, I hear those who love this time wishing for snow.

There is another voice I hear as well: the voice of those who are hunkering down for the winter, making sure they have the provisions they need in case of a storm, getting wood for the stove into a handy position, going through the closet to find the warmest coat, making sure they have a pile of good books at the ready. Some of our elders are settling in for the duration – for those of us who are out and about, this is a good time to pay a visit, to make a phone call.

This winter, we are also concerned for those in our church community and our wider community who are challenged by the economic downturn we are all experiencing. Our concern is translating into action, as we support the local Fuel Oil Fund (we have a wonderful black offering box shaped like a fuel tank in our assembly room/vestry) and Food Closet (food donations are collected the first Sunday of every month), and prepare to hold a Warming Center in our Newman Wing this March (more on that later in this issue of Telstar!). Jesus has been born among us, and we take on the call of being his hands and feet, caring for our community.

Winter, whether it is a joy to us or a challenge, is also a time of spiritual opportunity. Not only because we recognize the Christ in those we serve, but because this is a meditative time in our church year. The winter hunkering-down days are a time to open our hearts to God's presence. The One whose coming we awaited in Advent is here – now. There's a carol that comes to my mind and heart at this time of year, "In the Bleak Midwinter." Do you remember that last verse?

What can I offer, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

If I were a wise one, I would do my part;

But what can I offer: all my heart.

Wishing you the joy of God's presence and love,
Rev. Cathie

Rev. Cathie will be away for silent retreat and study January 14-17. In her absence, please call the church office with any pastoral care needs (778-0424).

ANNUAL MEETING

Please mark your calendars for **Sunday, February 8, 2009**, for the Annual Meeting of the Church. It will be held after the worship service. Please bring finger foods (appetizers or food items that we can eat without utensils!) to share. Coffee and drinks will be available.



Church Season of Epiphany

The church calendar with its seasons represents hundreds of years of tradition, dating to fifth century Jerusalem. It provides us with a framework for our spiritual life. Beginning with Advent, we are immersed in the stories of our faith – of Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection. Liturgical colors are used for vestments and altar clothes to mark the six seasons.

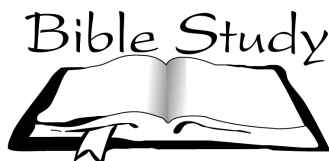
The season of Epiphany is the third season of the church year, after Advent and Christmas. The day of "Epiphany," which means, "making God manifest," occurs January 6 and commemorates Christ's first manifestation as Messiah to the Gentiles, who are symbolized in the visit of the Wise Men to the manger.

The first Sunday after Epiphany is The Baptism of Christ, when we affirm our own baptisms at Old South.

The season of Epiphany lasts six or seven weeks, until Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent; this year Ash Wednesday is on February 25th. On the day of Epiphany, church colors are white – but green is the color thereafter, offering a symbol of hope, life, and growth.

Epiphany has traditionally been a time to meditate on the coming of light to the whole world in Jesus Christ, and a time to rededicate ourselves to our call from God to spread the light of Christ's love.

Bible Study begins again on January 5th! We meet at Holman Parish House from 4:45-6 pm January 5, 12, 19, 26; and February 2 and 9. We take a look at the texts that Rev. Cathie will preach on the next Sunday and think about how they connect to our lives today. Join us!



Lectionary for January

The Revised Common Lectionary is an ecumenical Protestant listing of passages to use for each Sunday in the church year. Reading these passages each week helps us to keep in touch with the flow of our faith. We are now in what is called "Year B," when the primary gospel that is used is Mark (Mark is the shortest gospel, so other gospels are used to fill in the story). In general, Rev. Cathie also chooses her preaching passages from this resource.

For each week there is a passage from the Hebrew Scriptures, a Psalm, a reading from the Epistles or The Acts of the Apostles, and a Gospel reading. Here are the lectionary readings for December:

Epiphany Sunday, 1/4: Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7,10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12.

Baptism of Christ Sunday, 1/11: Genesis 1:-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11.

Second Sunday after Epiphany: 1 Samuel 3:1-10; Psalm 139:1-6,13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51.

Third Sunday after Epiphany: Jonah 3:1-5,10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It's quite clear that the federal government doesn't understand the dynamics of rural Maine. Their definition of a homeless person is a person who is unable to get into a shelter for two nights in a row because the shelter is full. Well, there are no shelters in Franklin County. Therefore, there are no homeless in Franklin County, and so, none of the federally funded programs for the homeless apply in Franklin County. It is believed that 159 people are presently homeless in our county, and that number is growing with the fuel and economic crisis. The Homeless Coalition is in the process of writing a grant for "Scattered Shelters". This would be a system of small homeless shelters around the county with a staff person to supervise and work on plans for better lives with these families. It is time for the needs of our homeless to be met in a new creative way.

submitted by Betsy Riley, Deacon of the month

Update on Warming Center at Old South – We Need YOU!

As we have heard in worship, there will be a Warming Center in Farmington this January, February and March on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am-4 pm. This is the "brainchild" of a broadly based group in the wider community in answer to community need. While the Warming Center will take place at churches, volunteers will include students and professors from UMF and people from the Franklin County Emergency Management Services, as well as a variety of churches. At Old South, our leadership team as it stands now is Rev. Cathie, Sueli and Betsy Riley; with Lynda Giard as food coordinator.

The Warming Center will be located at Old South Tuesdays and Thursdays during the month of March (March 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, and 26). In January, it will be at Henderson Memorial, and in February at St. Joseph's. By the time it gets to us, the Center will hopefully have the kinks ironed out! Here is what we know about the Center at this point:

- Seniors Plus will deliver a family style meal and a dessert of fruit for people of all ages (we will give them a number ahead of time). They will also give us envelopes for each person to donate what they can (\$3 is what they would really like – but they take what they get).
- In addition, our church will solicit additional food: soup (to supplement the meal – if more people come than expected), cookies,

fruit/veggies, etc.

- There will be activity boxes of puzzles, games, magazines and coloring/craft materials that will travel from church to church as the Center moves. Each church will decide on additional activities such as knitting, drumming, crafts, singing, cooking, yoga, etc. Betsy Riley has also suggested the possibility of running a help group at the Center, if that were needed/desired.
- Rev. Susan Crane is in conversation with Western Maine Transportation and Community Concepts about getting everyone who wants to come to the Center. We will have info soon – they are encouraging us to find additional drivers that they will train. This transportation piece is the moving target in all this – it may not actually work out perfectly this year. We will want to encourage car-pooling.
- If Seniors Plus is closed due to weather, the Center will be closed as well – we will put that info on our telephone answering machines, and on WKTJ and local TV.
- Each church will need to have a volunteer present or at least on call who has counseling experience.
- We will have a master list of potential volunteers from the university, Emergency Management and the churches. We are hoping that there will be teams comprised of all organizations.
- There will be three orientation sessions for all volunteers, one at each church prior to the location of the Center at that church. They will be held on Jan. 5, 2009, 1:00 PM, Henderson Memorial; Jan. 26, 2009, 3:00 PM, St. Joseph's; and Feb. 23, 2009, 3:00 PM, Old South.

Moving forward, will need a variety of volunteers: to be present at the Center; to organize activities; to help with food and set-up and clean-up. If you work during the day, you can also volunteer: to bring food; to come at your lunchtime and help out; to make phone calls and coordinate volunteers. HOWEVER YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS NEEDED OUTREACH, PLEASE CONTACT Rev. Cathie (cathiewallace@aol.com, 778-0424)! There will be an organizational meeting for the Warming Center at Old South in late January – stay tuned!



Being an Angel or Being Visited by One

THIS WINTER WILL BE A HARD ONE FOR SOME OF OUR CHURCH FAMILY. IN RESPONSE TO THIS ANTICIPATED NEED, WE ARE CURRENTLY ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE ANGEL FUND. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE AN ANGEL, PLEASE SEND A CHECK TO THE CHURCH OFFICE ATTENTION "ANGEL FUND."

AND COMING AT THIS FROM THE OTHER DIRECTION, IF YOU ARE HAVING A HARD TIME FINANCIALLY, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT YOUR DEACON OR REV. CATHIE TO ACCESS THE ANGEL FUND. WE ALL NEED A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS, NOT TO MENTION OUR CHURCH FAMILY, FROM TIME TO TIME!

Attention!

January Committee Meetings

Pastoral Relations – 1/5, 10:30 am, Holman Parish House

Executive Council – 1/7, 6:30 pm, Holman Parish House

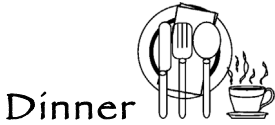
Outreach – 1/13, 4 pm, Holman Parish House

Justice and Witness – 1/13, 7 pm, Newman Wing Chapel

Deacons – 1/11, 11 am, Matthew Room

Trustees – 1/20, 6 pm, Holman Parish House

Honduras Mission Benefit Lobster



Lobster Dinner Honduras Benefit, Sat. Jan 17 at 6 pm, Old South Church. Menu with include corn chowder, whole Maine lobster, coleslaw, roll, homemade dessert, beverage, and homegrown music. Price: Single lobster dinner \$13.50, Twin Lobster dinner \$20.00 Advanced Ticket Sales only with limited seating. Contact Debbie Davis-Robinson, Sherry Jenckes, or Wendy Huish, or the church office for tickets. This would make a great Christmas gift!



Honduras Mission Trips space needs to be filled. 2 seats must be filled for week #1 February 5 to 12, 2009, total trip cost is \$1000.00 plus personal spending money and 4 seats remain for week #2 February 14 to 21, 2009 (school vacation week), total trip cost is \$1175.00 plus personal spending money. Airfare portion of the trip cost is due December 31st with the balance of the trip cost (app \$200.00) payable by January 15, 2009. Marilyn Wegner will be the youth leader for Week #2. Both trips have been opened up to the entire state conference and beyond. A maximum for each trip has been set at 15 people. This is an incredible, life changing experience. Please contact Rev. Marcia Charles at 474-7383



From the Outreach Committee

Thank you for supporting our many winter ministries at Old South. The Fair Trade Sale was once again very successful, and we can feel good about supporting businesses that pay a living wage to workers. In addition, because of your generosity, over \$1,700 was raised for Heifer Project International! A total of \$878.55 was sent to the Christmas Fund UCC Special offering for 2008. The

Christmas Eve offering supported the Heating Fund and the Security Deposit Fund. Thank you, dear Old South Family and Friends, for you support of the work that we are called to do.



Hospitality Corner

It doesn't seem possible that we are already into a new year. My grandmother always told me that the older I get the faster time goes...and she was right! I'm not the only one to experience this phenomenon am I? The Hospitality Committee has continued to serve up refreshments that fellowship circles around. Each Sunday during coffee hour I see the greeting of familiar faces and friends and the meeting of new faces with introductions, all with inquisitiveness, compassion and sincerity. Other than during the time of passing the peace, when is there another weekly opportunity for the congregation to have such special fellowship?

Through the Hospitality Committee "Our Turn," Old South has a better understanding of what the makings of a coffee hour entail and the Committee has a better idea of the expectations of the congregation and what this special time of fellowship circled around food means to us. The members of the committee have worked at presenting a table for sharing with a variety of food as one of the outcomes during the Our Turn. On many Sundays we have been blessed with extra food, assistance from volunteers helping with the coffee hour set-up, serving and clean up. Most of the people attending the Our Turn felt that food made the coffee hour more welcoming, more comfortable, and that the time for fellowship made possible each Sunday after worship was special. The Hospitality Committee wants to embrace that sentiment by offering coffee hour each Sunday but does need your assistance in making that possible.

The committee is still working with only 9 members, 3 members

less than a full committee. Most weeks coffee hour co-hosts are needed to work with designated committee member to prepare, serve and clean up. If you are not able to help with co-hosting, juice, crackers, cheese and other food donations are greatly appreciated. Many of the other church committees have volunteered to help with coffee hour clean up. It is always way more fun to work in a kitchen with others and is a great way to get to know people! The coffee hour sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board in the Vestry/Assembly Room next to the parking lot entrance. There is a place to sign up to be a coffee hour co-host with a member of the committee; a place to sign up to bring food; a place to sign up to help with clean up. Helping out with coffee hour is a great family activity and provides not only a time to do something together but it also offers a gift to the entire Old South family.

Yes, it does take time to make this special fellowship time happen each week...but I can't imagine a Sunday without it...can you? If you have questions about how you can help out with any part of Coffee Hour please contact one of the upcoming monthly coffee hour coordinators or myself:

January-Joyce and Dick Morton 778-3586

February- Donna Wheeler 778-3642

May you find peace, hope, joy, and love each day in this new year-
Debbie Davis-Robinson, Hospitality Committee Chairperson
Tel 778-5948 or e-mail to debnrich@beeline-online.net





Sunday School News

With all of the flurry of the holidays behind us, we are looking forward to returning to our regular Sunday School classes and schedules. We will be having regular classes on Martin Luther King holiday weekend.

A very heartfelt "thank you" to our teachers this past fall--Karri McCarthy, Anne Charles, Theresa Roberts, and Rebekah Dunham. We are welcoming several new teachers for classes this spring.

Also, a warm "thank you" to members of the congregation who made our Christmas fundraiser a success. With your support, we were able to purchase much more from Heifer International than the sheep, which was our goal.

The kids are preparing for the next Intergenerational Service, as well as for a creative new fundraiser that Amanda has proposed for Super Bowl Sunday. We will provide more details in the near future!

Jodie Gunther and Amanda Hilton

YOUTH CORNER

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.
Matthew 25:35



Our youth will hold soup pots at church doors on "Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday", February 1, 2009. They will join young people in churches across the country to collect money for those who are hungry and hurting. In 2008, over 14,000 groups participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring generating

over \$10 million. All of the money collected is donated to a charity selected by the participant. None of the money is sent to the Souper Bowl of Caring headquarters. Organizers only ask that each participant report their collection so national totals can be determined and announced. Since the Souper Bowl of Caring began in 1990, more than \$50 million has gone to help people in need. Please support the youth of our church in this effort to "love our neighbors" by dropping your dollar in the soup pot on February 1.

On Sunday February 1st, 140 million Americans will tune in to the Super Bowl football game. There will be parties with abundant food, friendship and fellowship. At the same time, there will be people worrying about staying warm, finding shelter and a warm meal. Please join young people around the country as they demonstrate God's love by loving their neighbors through the Souper Bowl of Caring. It's a simple, yet significant act of caring for others. Drop \$1 (or more) in the soup pot as you leave worship on February 1st.

Those who need help may not know that you cared, but God will. And our young people are developing hearts for giving that can last a lifetime. Please support their efforts.

The youth will be serving hot delicious free soup during coffee hour on Feb. 1st.

ALL THE MONEY RECEIVED WILL BE DONATED TO THE FRANKLIN COUNTY ECUMENICAL HEAT FUEL OIL FUND.



51 THANKSGIVING BASKETS REPORT

700 cans of food

750 pound of turkey

51 pound of butter

250 pound of apples

918 dinner rolls

50 fresh apple pies (St. Joseph's youth group)

Total money spent: \$1,058.00 dollars

In addition to the Thanksgiving Baskets that were made and donated,

over 200 coats, hats, gloves, shoes, socks, scarves and blankets were distributed. We had 48 youth involved in this outreach effort including 9 youth from St. Joseph's Catholic Church. I would like to say THANK YOU VERY MUCH to all the youth, adults and the entire congregation for all your help to make this outreach event possible.

A big Thank you to Monique Avery - Catholic Church Youth Minister, the adult volunteers and their youth group for organizing the apple pies baking and volunteering at the coat distribution at the Fair Banks Food Pantry. Together we were able to provide food and warm clothing for those in need in our community.



4th and 5th Grade Youth Group

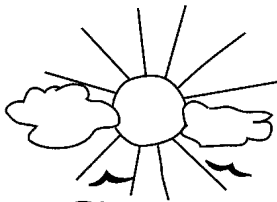
Eleven youth had the opportunity once again to decorate cookies and sing Christmas songs to the ladies at the Pierce House. We had a lot of fun decorating ginger bread houses and eating cookies.

A special Thank You goes to:

Jody Gunther, Karri McCarthy, Jeanette Rzek, Tracy Ladd and Rebekah Dunham for all your help with the youth group.

The next Early Release Day is January 14th. Join us for a Sledding Party from after school until 3:00pm. If you have any question please call Sueli at 778-0424

See you there...Sueli



Retreat

Women's Retreat 2009 – Are you interested?

Right now, Old South has a "hold" on July 24-26 at Rockcraft. Are there women interested in being on the committee and shepherding this wonderful annual event? We need five folks willing to serve in order to have the

retreat! Please contact Rev. Cathie if this means you (cathiewallace@aol.com, 778-0424)!

Getting to Know You: Elaine Wing *by Rev. Cathie*

“I feel like I’ve lived three lives,” Elaine shared at the end of our interview. “There was childhood, 45 years of marriage and children, and 21 years since then.”

Born in 1922, Elaine grew up in the “beautiful little town” of Barre, Massachusetts, on an in-town farm. Her mother was a “born teacher,” chosen to represent one of five U.S. Women’s Extension Groups at the 1939 World’s Fair on Rural Women’s Day, speaking over the radio from the fair and lunching with Eleanor Roosevelt. “My mother was an artist and a beautiful seamstress; she could do anything.” Those of us who know Elaine will not be surprised that her mother marched with the suffragettes in Worcester, Massachusetts; strong and independent women run in Elaine’s family (I want to meet her grand-daughter Rachel!).

In high school, Elaine was in the 4-H Club, chosen to go to the 4-H Congress in Chicago, a great honor. Like her mother, she was a seamstress – later, she would sew evening gowns for herself and her daughters. She was a drummer in her high school and college bands, and was part of a co-ed dance band as well. “Nothing scruffy for us,” she said. “We wore white ‘sharkskin’ jackets!” When she graduated, Elaine went to Colby College. She was working at Moosehead Lake for the summer when she met her husband-to-be, Morris, who was attending University of Maine.

Then the war hit like “an explosion.” Elaine and Morris were married; Morris served in the Engineer Corps, and the couple lived in Louisiana for three years. When they came back to Maine, they had two daughters with them. “In wartime, boys and girls left their hometowns one person and came back someone else, usually married and with one or more child,” Elaine said. “They had no place to live, no job. We were all scrambling to find our place.” The Wings tried several jobs and towns, living in Dixfield, at the beach one summer, in Bingham, in Ashland, and finally, in Farmington.

It was 1954, and Elaine and Morris had six children: Lanis, Jane, Ted, Emily, Robin and Libby. Chrystal and Rebecca came later. Morris was IP Woodlands Manager for Maine. The family lived first on Main Street, in a house torn down by the college next to where Ferro Alumni House is currently located. Eight years later, the family moved to a house next to the Fairgrounds on High Street. “Dick Gould’s parents owned the house, and Mrs. Gould said to me, ‘You really need this house!’” Elaine shared. Morris’ hobby was harness racing, and so the location couldn’t be beat.

This was not the only Old South connection in Elaine’s story. When the family moved to town, they were visited by nurse Muriel Bigelow, who wanted the children’s immunization histories!

Elaine and her family lived in that house near the Fairgrounds for 25 years. Morris died in 1987, and in 1997 Elaine and her son Robin designed the wonderful house she now lives in – perfect for her.

Old South entered Elaine’s life when her children were young. When they lived on Main Street, her children could walk to Sunday School. “One Sunday, we heard a child wailing – it later turned out to be my son! Alden Mitchell knew where we lived, and he just walked him home.” Elaine loved singing in the choir, with people like Lester and Gina Hood, Roger and Karyl Condit, Mimi and Ralph Swanson, Don Peterson, and DeeDee Ramsey. She played a number of other roles in the church, including serving as deacon for a partial and later an entire term; helping Florence and Claude Taylor with the Telstar (Elaine still helps fold the newsletter every month!); serving several terms on the Music and Worship Committee; and playing a variety of roles in the Women’s Fellowship, including serving as president. The Fellowship put on fairs and suppers to fundraise (does this sound familiar?!) for a variety of purposes, like buying new hymnals, and supporting Bangor Theological Seminary. Elaine remembers enjoying Old South Friends, a group for newcomers, because “we didn’t have to raise money for anything!” Ironic, since the old Treasurers’ ledgers from the Women’s Fellowship are housed under Elaine’s eaves! Another volunteer opportunity that Elaine enjoyed was helping with the school children visiting at Norlands, for over ten years.

As many of us know, Elaine eventually found her way onto the Outreach Committee, which she continues to serve – thankfully! She became Secretary of the Food Closet when it started, at the request of then Old South pastor, Rev. Dick Waddell, and found it a great way to get to know people from other churches. And she is the longest serving volunteer at Franklin Memorial Hospital! She has a wonderful memory of 90-year-old Jane Addicott, who volunteered every summer, sitting down and directing hospital traffic.

Travel is another of Elaine's loves. She and Morris took a few trips after he retired, one particularly memorable weeklong horseback exploration of the Teton wilderness in Wyoming, and a trip to England, Wales and Scotland. Since Morris' death, Elaine has continued to travel, to Holland, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Canada, the West Coast of the U.S., Florida (where one of her daughters lives) and most recently, a cruise in the Caribbean with Polly Howatt last winter. Elaine and Polly have done a lot of traveling together!

Elaine enjoys her life in Farmington – it has been 54 years, and she knows she is home. She also continues to enjoy her growing family: 15 grandchildren (10 girls, 5 boys) and 14 great-grandchildren (11 boys, 3 girls). She looks back on her life and knows she has everything that matters. It has been and continues to be a wonderful life!

Church Cancellation Info

It is that time of year again! Snow season has arrived. If for any reason snow or ice prevents us from holding worship, there will be an announcement on the answering machine and on WKTJ (if we can arrange it). If Sunday School is cancelled and worship is not, that will also be announced on the answering machine. So do call if you have any doubts!

Church Office Hours

Please note that the office will be closed on days that SAD 9 cancels school. Weather permitting, the office will be open Tuesday to Thursday, 9 to noon.



Lent reflection booklet

Submissions need to be sent to Stu Cameron by January 25. You can either email Stu at stu_cameron@beeline-online.net or mail your articles to him at 70 Geronimo Drive, Sedona, AZ 86336.



The Open Door: A Lenten Study

This Lent, Rev. Cathie will be leading an exploration of self and God using Joyce Rupp's book The Open Door. It will meet for six weeks on Thursday evenings, from 5:15-6:45 pm, and will be limited to fifteen participants. There will be a sign-up sheet in the assembly room at the beginning of the month.

In the introduction of the book, Rupp poses some of the questions that guided her writing: "What needs to be unlocked in me? How can I release the strongholds of my mind and heart to discover more of my potential to be my best self? What doors had I opened in the past? What closed doors were helpful, which ones held me back?"

Rupp uses the image of the open door in exploring our relationship with God. She quotes Esther de Waal on the power of delving into a single image over time: "The longer we stay with an image and dialogue with it, the more it will yield up. 'A symbol should go on deepening,' as Flannery O'Connor says. We have to wait for the image to find us. Sometimes it may come unbidden but more often we must expect to stay with it, and to be ready to go deeper, layer upon layer, always waiting expectantly."

The Open Door is \$17.95 (help for books is available – just let Rev. Cathie know). Please sign up in the assembly room/vestry or by leaving a message or e-mail (778-0424, cathiewallace@aol.com) by February 6th, so that the order for books can be placed. The group will have its first gathering on Thursday, February 26. We will also meet on March 5, 12, 19, and 26, and on April 2nd. If you have any questions about this group, please call or e-mail Rev. Cathie.

A thought to take with you

Each part of life provides a door to our heart, revealing the path to spiritual growth. Countless doors open for us through myriad possibilities such as a profession of love, a meaningful prayer, a

startling thought, a comforting emotion, a challenging dream, a pressing intuition, a peace-filled stillness, a provocative book, a glimpse of nature's beauty, or the voice of someone we encounter. The Holy One is forever startling us with the prospect of further growth. Every moment invites us to discovery.

Joyce Rupp, The Open Door