Dear Friends,

We're grateful that last Sunday, Rev. Bill and Jenny Seagren came home to be with us! Such a joyful inspirational time together! Bill's preaching and Jenny's singing--such a great combination!

This Sunday, we will welcome Rev. Dr. Kempton Hewitt and his wife Fawn as they return home to be with us and minister to us in presence and Word. What a joy it will be to welcome them home to CUMC! Kempton will teach the 9:00am Bible Class and share the message in our 10:00am Worship service. What a meaningful and inspiring homecoming it will be!

As you know, our daughter Taylor and I went "home" recently to visit my Mum. Australia is not my home (I'm originally from South Africa and my home now is in Oregon), but home truly is where your loved ones are. The homecoming was enriched by the presence of my siblings, Val and Rob. I love them so much!

As little boys living on the mission stations in Uganda and Kenya, Rob and I had a habit of waking up singing! We loved to welcome the day with song. Those are precious memories to me now, and a good reminder of a part of my experience of life that must never be lost.

In the Bible we find lots of encouragement to sing and to carry songs in our heart. Every morning (and all day long) there is an opportunity to celebrate life and grace with fresh, heartfelt praise as we welcome God's love, mercy and ongoing gift of salvation!

Key Bible Verses:

- Psalm 96:1: "Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth."

- Psalm 98:1 & Psalm 33:3: Celebrate God's marvelous salvation and call for skillful, joyful music and shouts of joy!

- Isaiah 42:10 & Revelation 5:9: Extend this call to worship to the ends of the earth, culminating in heavenly praise celebrating Christ's redemption of every nation.

May our lives include God's gift of song!

A "new song" reflects a spontaneous, daily reaction to experiencing God's fresh acts of grace and goodness. Songs with a universal reach call the entire earth, all people, and every nation to join in worship. Revelation's song centers on Christ's triumph and the redemption of humanity.

Music and song helps to nurture our soul and strengthens the divine connection we engage in through faith.

I grew up immersed in a sense of the sacred, optimistic center that can be bruised but never ultimately destroyed by any of the ups and downs of ordinary life. Through song, as with prayer, we can open ourselves to higher dimensions and align ourselves with the goodness and beauty of God and God's creation.

With love to you,

Duff

11-23-26