**Genesis 18:1-10, New International Version**

18 The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. 2Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

3He said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. 4Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. 5Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant.”

“Very well,” they answered, “do as you say.”

6So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. “Quick,” he said, “get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread.”

7Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. 8He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

9“Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him.

“There, in the tent,” he said.

10Then one of them said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.”

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him.

**Luke 10:38-42, New International Version**

38As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. 40But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

41“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, 42but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Here ends this morning’s lessons. May God add a blessing to our understanding and our living out God’s Word.

“Hospice Care”

The Rev. Lisa J. Durkee

July 20, 2025

Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, Oh Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

There is so much to say about today’s readings; so much to say about the Lord’s presence with Abraham and the fact that he *recognizes* the Lord in the three men who come to his home. Nonetheless, I have known since almost two weeks ago that I wanted to talk a bit about hospitality today, because of the incredible welcome our rowing team received by the Scottish club who loaned us their boat. They also loaned us their oars, their life preservers, their two-way radios and their tent to keep us out of the sun. That theirs was the only purple one on a beach that held 78 boats and their crews was helpful when we sought each other. I have learned to call their town not Troon but Troon, and I have learned to call their rowers generous.

I was most affected by their graciousness not by all that they gave us, but the way that they reacted when we accidentally damaged their craft. To make a more complicated story simple, our boat collided with another boat, resulting in one of our oars breaking off of the boat rather violently. They could have been visibly, audibly angry. They could have decided that they had given more than enough already. Instead, they took from their equipment a spare oar, one that had not yet been used by their team, one fashioned by one of their coxswains. Fitting it to our boat with a new trunnion (old-fangled oarlock), we were able to compete in our final two races. When I expressed by dismay and apology, as well as my thanks for their generosity one more time to one of the three Mikes, he said, “I don’t make a big deal of it, but our motto is “we row as one. You are all one with us now.”

Wow! Hospitality became healing for our coxswain and continued for me some of the teaching I know from scripture.

And let’s think about the way that Abraham and Sarah respond to the stranger in their home. They leap to serve, even offering the choicest parts of their larder, even without knowing that the Lord would reward them in response. Their motivation is to serve the Lord by providing hospitality. This reminds me of friends who shared with me that they leave their door open on the off-chance someone in need of warmth might come to the door when they are not there. This has happened, and they returned to find a grateful note telling the tale.

I want to tell you another story, and I dislike doing so very much. One of the gifts of being connected to Blue Hill Bach has been the opportunity to host guest musicians while they are here. Somehow, I didn’t know that when you plug in my address on Mattson Lane, devices don’t take you to my own driveway off the lane. Instead, they pin the beginning of the road. So, unwittingly, my guest this week arrived while I was out of the house, and entered what he believed to be my home. On entry (which he admits would have startled him, as well, should someone have walked in without knocking), he was greeted by a gun in his face. When he raised his empty hands to explain that he was here for a music festival and clearly had gone into the wrong house, the response was “Damn right you did.”

What determines the way that we receive people into our lives, into our homes and into our countries? How might we look at what it means to be hospitable and move from a reception grounded in fear and distrust to one that looks like welcome with roots in the word for “guest,” “stranger” and “host.” How might our welcome of the so-called other instead be one that looks like offering companionship like what we know from our word hospice?

We know, too, that there are different ways of offering hospitality, which we see in our story from the Gospel of Luke today. We need to remember that we read this story in the context of the previous passage, as well, about which you heard last week. The story of the Good Samaritan, which Derek opened up for you, is also a story about hospitality and generosity, as well as a story that teaches us what is not hospitable behavior, evidenced in those from whom we would most expect it. The story of Mary and Martha and their encounter with Jesus may be a bit confusing, as we can reckon Martha’s clearly hospitable puttering and service to be “the better thing,” but Jesus tells us otherwise. There is a time and a place for everything, we might hear. Sometimes, our attention to the person is more important than our attention to the details.

Our attention to the persons is more important than anything when we choose love first: love over fear, love over wealth, love over ambition, love over power. Yes, there are dangers in this world, but there also is God’s abundant grace and mercy. How may we open our hearts and our lives to our neighbors, to all, in ways such that there might be no need nor want; so that there might be no strife. Let us pray that we will be those who love with abandon so that others may live. Amen