



The Holy Ground Where God Appears

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“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Exodus 3:5

Scripture names many places as holy. Yet my heart resonates most with Moses’ encounter with the burning bush in Exodus. God appears in the flames of a burning bush that is not consumed. Yet what matters most to me in this text is not where or to whom God appears, but why God appears.

God appears in response to the cries of God’s people who are being treated unjustly. God appears because of the people’s cries, and wherever God appears is holy ground.

I often have the privilege of standing on holy ground as I travel the breadth of our beloved Church. These are places where God shows up through the work of God’s people to treat other’s needs as holy.

Plymouth UCC in Des Moines is holy ground, a church that removed the

stairs to the pulpit and replaced them with circular ramps, honoring a God who still speaks through preachers and laity who do not stand.

Plymouth Congregational in Kansas is holy ground, a church where one of our unhoused siblings welcomed me to “their church” after worship, before heading back outside by choice with his bags and dog. This reminds us that those unhoused should still have a home with us.

Saint John’s UCC in St. Louis is holy ground, a church that partners with the community to feed and clothe those in need of help, and whose members take communion to their surrounding neighbors as an extension of Christ’s table of grace.

Trinity UCC in Chicago is holy ground, partnering with the food security network to import organic fruit and vegetables in a neighborhood robbed of access to healthy food options.

Wherever you are this morning, take the time to see how God is moving through the work and witness of those who gather and know that you are, we all are, on holy ground.

The Strengthen the Church Offering reflects the commitment of all settings of the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations as we work to become a multi-cultural/ multi-racial, accessible to all Christian movement.

