

## **A Message from Jean Hall**

I would like to tell you a little more about my presentation, “The Sacred in the Here and Now,” scheduled for April. We will reflect on an unusual group of scriptural personalities. Beginning with Jonah, we will see how he emerged from his **NOW** threshold – the belly of the great fish. Then we will ponder three women, Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth, and how, living in their cocoons of barrenness, they emerged from their **NOW** thresholds into celebrations of birth.

Next, we will consider Job and his friends. Job, a blameless and upright man, suffered incredible pain with the loss of all his family and possessions and then being afflicted with an agonizing physical condition. However, his far greater pain came from his struggle with the current religious understanding that if one suffers, it is because that person is a sinner. Job’s friends, firmly established in that belief, offered a great deal of advice but provided no real help for the beleaguered Job. How Job and these friends emerged from their **NOW** thresholds provides a true scriptural picture – filled with mystery.

Finally, we will reflect on Jesus and two of the major thresholds in his life – the temptation at the beginning of his public life and the painful struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane. Emerging from both of these thresholds, Jesus faced conflict with his religious authorities who were bound by the rigid laws of the purity system. Refusing to follow this system of separation, Jesus placed himself in opposition to the religious leaders. Reinterpreting the Law, reaching out with compassion to the poor and the sick, welcoming the so-called sinners, Jesus followed the teaching of the prophets. The Servant Songs, from Second Isaiah served as a pattern for Jesus’ public life.

**“A bruised reed he did not break, nor a smoldering wick did he extinguish.”**

**“The Lord has given me a well-trained tongue that I might speak to the weary a word  
that will rouse them.”**

Reflecting on these scriptural figures, we hope to learn a pattern for emerging from our own thresholds, our own here and now, often filled with darkness, uncertainty and anxiety. May we learn to see, as Jesus did, that our **NOW** is sacred.

