

August 7, 2022

**Ninth Sunday after Pentecost**

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Living into the Promise

Rev. Ann Kansfield, UCC pastor, FDNY chaplain and author of *Be the Brave One: Living Your Spiritual Values Out Loud and Other Life Lessons* shares the courage that led her to write a book about her experiences.

“My wife Jennifer and I serve part-time as co-pastors of the Greenpoint Reformed Church, (a joint UCC and Reformed congregation in Brooklyn, NY). We do our best to love God and neighbor, even though we aren't always sure how to do that.

My other ministry setting is as a chaplain for the fire department of the City of New York. I am one of seven chaplains who serve the department as a whole. I never know what might happen on any given day, but I pray that God can use me in a way to be of service to others. Also, the uniforms are pretty great.”

Although friends encouraged her to share her stories and reflections, Kansfield shied away from the idea of writing a book. “One of the things that really changed the trajectory of the book was connecting with Marty St. George, my co-author...He is really the one who helped take a bunch of stories and thoughts and turn them into a book. I think it's actually a really great story in itself because it shows that sometimes we can do big things when we have friends and fellow travelers who walk alongside us and help us. Sometimes we minister to others and other times they minister to us. Life is really best lived when it's done in mutual ministry with others around us.

For me, bravery is doing things which make us uncomfortable, things which we would rather not do or avoid. And being brave is what allows us to be authentic and vulnerable and have important conversations which we would otherwise want to avoid. Bravery is not just about apologizing for our mistakes but asking ‘how did my mistake impact you?’ and then being quiet and listening.

We can all use some extra bravery these days. It's not always easy to be our most authentic selves. It's certainly difficult to be vulnerable and to share our deepest hopes and fears and listen to the hopes and fears of others. That stuff can be terrifying! But that's the space where God often leads us - to authenticity, vulnerability and bravery.”