

Thursday, December 18, 2014

*The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.*

***Psalm 16:6***

This fall I lived every mother's dream: two weeks of travel, study and fun in Israel with her two grown sons. What joy!

First Pres has been "family" to me in every sense of the word since 1963. When my first husband was diagnosed with cancer, both of our sons were quite young. From the onset of his illness until his death, and on until my remarriage, the church was there for me. The women (all young moms themselves) turned into my personal daycare! They babysat, cooked, bathed and nurtured a toddler and a baby day after day, freeing me to care for a sick husband. After his death, the men took over: sports, fishing, camping, Indian Guides, all the male-oriented stuff so needed at this time for young boys. Every Thursday night I dropped the boys off at a friend's house so I could go to choir practice. Every Sunday older couples let Jay and Tom sit with them in the pews while I sang in the choir. A prayer group met weekly at my house so I would not have to hire a sitter.

Flash forward fifty years and the circle is complete. To see my sons, now men with families of their own, interacting as adults with Lucky, Jim Martin, and the rest of the group on the trip to Israel was overwhelming. They had such a good time. God is so great!

God's "helping hands" have surely been a constant in my life. I am so grateful these hands have been expressed through so many people, in so many ways, for so many years. Thank you, First Pres, for showing me what it means to be a member of the family of God.

*Oh, God, help me to appreciate the multiple blessings in my life as we look forward to the coming of the greatest gift of all, Your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**Joanna Hogan**