

## **“Because of You”**

We’ve been doing some spring cleaning lately, but not the house where we live. We take care of a rental house, and before the new renters moved in, we had to clean it top to bottom. At first, it didn’t look that dirty. But once I got up close and personal with a bucket and sponge, dirt and grime become much more apparent.

One expects corners to be dirty, and grime to build up under the refrigerator and behind the stove. But what struck me was the dirtiness of the doorways. The white front door was smudged to gray where people had shoved it closed with hands, feet, hips, etc. The doorway to the kitchen showed handprints from people rounding the corner in a hurry. The small hallway with doors to the bathroom and bedrooms was filthy.

We have lots of contact with the doorways in our houses. We lean against them, pause in them, cling to them for balance as we rush through. When our hands are full, we use our feet to kick a door open, and then to kick it back closed.

Doorways are very messy things in a house, and metaphorically they are messy parts of our lives as well. Leaving one thing and starting another can be a very dirty business. Sometimes we rush through those doorways. Sometimes we turn around in them, wondering why we have chosen that direction. Sometimes we pause and rest. Sometimes we pause and brace ourselves for what comes next.

We all know people who seem to go gracefully through life’s transitions, whose doorways seem spotless. But we need not burden ourselves with expectations that our doorways be pristine. Nor should we be disappointed to see some accumulated grime during those occasions. When a child leaves home, a friend or spouse passes away, a relationship ends – that’s a messy time. Likewise, when a new child arrives, a new life together begins, a new friendship is forged, a new home is inhabited – those are messy times, too. Experts say the “good” transitions in life – marriage, birth, new job, new home, etc., -- are just as stressful as “bad” transitions, such as death or divorce.

Most of our life transitions will be messy. As a church we are very good about helping each other through. As we cut each other some slack during those times, I’d encourage to cut ourselves some slack as well. And if the doorways of our houses aren’t exactly pristine, well, that’s OK, too!

Springtime Blessings,

Rev. Amy Lignitz Harken