I was asked to talk to you about the Prayer Vigil that we hold every year at the conclusion of Holy Week. It starts immediately after the Good Friday Service and ends on Easter Sunday morning. People sign up to spend an hour (or more) in the sanctuary in prayer and meditation.

As a lot of you know, I believe in the power of prayer. I always feel calmer after my communion with God, even if outer circumstances remain unchanged. Prayer has turned around my thinking and changed my emotions. And I have prayed for some things that, when they happen, can only be by the power of God.

I pray daily in a room at home. So why commit to an hour of the Prayer Vigil? Here in the sanctuary, stripped of color and decorations, I feel the death of Jesus and the despair of his followers, in a way I don’t feel it elsewhere. My senses are heightened.

I pray, I read Scripture and some of the inspirational books on the table. I journal. I sit quietly. I pray some more.

It is an hour unlike any other. For that one hour, I feel close to God and like the child He loves.

--Kathy Beth Stavinoha

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