

## Memorial Day

Monday is Memorial Day, and we think about those who have given their lives for our freedom. I was looking through pictures the other day and came upon one of three of my uncles. All six had served in the war, and three of them were not in the picture, but all returned home with no problems. They were fortunate, they were stationed all over the world from Europe to New Guinea. One aunt also served as a WAVE and worked in the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, D.C. and continued there after the war. Both my brothers were in the army but for short periods. One was released to come home because he had a wife and child and was needed at home the other one died of a kidney disease in Balboa, Panama after serving six months. My sister-in-law's cousin had died at Iwo Jima. I remember much about the war, the second "world war." It was in the news reels when we went to the show and on the radio newscasts. The films on the news reels were especially daunting. We were asked to buy war bonds everywhere we went, including school. We bought stamps weekly, when we could afford it, which we put in a folder and when it was full, we could turn it in and receive a "war bond." People had flags with stars on them, one star for every relative that served, and this was hung in the window. If someone died in the war a Gold Star flag was given to the relatives to hang in their window. We had air-raid drills in school and at home. We had to turn off all the lights at home and sit and wait for all for the all-clear to sound. Everything was rationed from food to gasoline and required ration stamps to obtain. It was a time when we all pulled together to win a war that was to have peace. It seems that peace never lasted for long back when then as we went to the "Cold War" to Korea, and then Vietnam, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the threat of nuclear war, and then the wars in the Middle East and the attacks on the World Trade Center which forever changed us and finally Afghanistan. Now we bear witness to what is happening in Ukraine, and in Israel and Palestine and it seems our world will never know peace. After World War II soldiers came home with "Shell shock" which is known now as PTSD or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Genesis 1:29-2;1 then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it "They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground- everything that has breath of life in it- I give every green plant for food." And it was so. Thus, the heavens and the earth were completed in their vast array.

Lord, the world you gave us is so beautiful, may we treat it as the treasure it is. Forgive us for not living in a world of peace. May we do better with what you have given us. May we love our neighbor as ourselves even when that neighbor is far away or right next door, even when that neighbor thinks differently, looks different or doesn't speak our language. May we love as Jesus called us to love. Be with those that suffer illness and those that are grieving the loss of loved ones. Be with those that hunger for your word, may we feed them. Be with those who have no food, may we give them food. Be with those who hurt and suffer the wounds of wars, may they find your peace and comfort. Be with our pastor and bless his ministry. Be with our staff and leaders, bless their work and their efforts. In the name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.

Grace Epperson