

Writer Sue Monk Kidd, author of such works as “*The Secret Life of Bees*” and “*The Mermaid’s Chair*,” says that “unless stories are told, we forget who we are. And if we forget who we are, then we lose all sense of direction.”

And so we come together tonight to tell the stories – so we don’t forget who we are. . .

Since we just heard the stories, only a recap is in order. Even though we are created in the image and likeness of God and so are good, we often times lose our way, and don’t live up to our potential.

And sometimes in our lives when things look their bleakest, God makes a way where there was no way, and responds to our needs.

Because even though we may turn our backs to God – God never turns from us – and God’s love will never leave us.

So we need to seek the Lord while God may be found, call upon God while God is near. And God will sprinkle clean water upon us – new hearts can be placed within us – and we will once again be made whole. For if we are buried in Christ, we will also rise with him to newness of life.

But sooner or later, even though we are enjoying new life in the Lord, we will once again lose our way, and not live up to our potential

– this was the way of our ancestors in the faith – and our lives, our journeys – are no different.

But no matter what direction we may choose to stray – God never turns from us – and God’s love will never leave us. . .

So we gather tonight to tell the stories – so we will not forget who we are. Because if we forget who we are, then we will lose all sense of direction.

And so, Arielle, Tracey, Jennifer, Kristin, Don, Natalie and Brandon: Welcome to the family. Don’t be embarrassed by our family tree. It just places you in good company.