



*They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not
fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay
green; in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit. - Jeremiah
17:8*

We are pleased this year to talk about the theme of our annual stewardship campaign, *Rooted in Abundance*. We are particularly excited about it because it describes the graceful state of our church community, and how we share our gifts with each other.

Our giving tradition at Messiah has always been focused on how we share all of our gifts – not just our financial gifts. A church needs new ideas, creative people to lead, individuals who know how to solve complex problems, volunteers to keep our ministries focused on our neighbors. We usually talk about this in a three-fold way: wealth, works, and wisdom. If any one of these areas is missing from our community, we are diminished.

Each of us has a gift, some have many. For some it is organizing and manning the thrift shop, others might have beautiful singing voices, we praise those who have the gift of balancing our books, making budgets or counting the collection, we appreciate those who set up and provide coffee hour, who prepare and serve at the altar, who help us find a seat as the service begins, who make it possible to live stream our service on Facebook for those who cannot join us in person and all others who quietly do what they do behind the scenes. Whatever your ministries are, we couldn't be who we are without you.

In our recent letter, we talked about how trees are connected via their root structures, and how they share information and resources with each other through those underground networks. In this year of being in leadership ministry with you, we have witnessed the ways in which you communicate with each other to get things done. Special coffee hours and barbecues, serving meals at Homeless Solutions, community events, pastoral care, special services, donations of Christmas gifts, food for the food banks or backpacks for school children and delivery of those items, it all happens so wonderfully because you are each deeply connected to each other through your roots of faith and service.

We thank you this year for the ways you have shared your gifts with us – your wealth, works, and your wisdom. In the coming days you will hear more information about this year's campaign and will receive an invitation to let us know what gifts you would like to share with us for next year's ministry. Thank you for your generosity, once again.

In gratitude,
Debbie and Merica