



*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*

Three very important words to say are “please” and “thank you.” My 6 year old grandson told me one day “Grandma I get tired of hearing you tell me to say please and thank you!” I told him that once he starts using them automatically I won’t have to tell him anymore. So yes, I believe those words should always be used and you should mean them when you use them. With this letter Merica and I would like to say “thank you”. Thank you for your support and thank you for the many gifts that you each share with our community.

You have heard the familiar expression “can’t see the forest for the trees” before. We most often use it to describe that occasion in which we lose sight of the big picture while focusing on the details. From our position, we can often experience the blessing of being able to see the big picture of our congregation – the ministry we bring to our neighbors, the impact we have on our community, the ways that week after week we come together to celebrate our faith and praise God. This is the forest.

And we get to wander amongst the trees. From the small shoot reaching out from its seed and finding the sunlight, to the mightiest tree, standing tall, showing strength, offering sheltering love to those who need it. You are those trees, each drawing strength from our meal and showering the world with the love and grace you have come to know here. We are blessed in that here in our congregation, we can see both the forest and the trees!

When we walk through a forest, we are aware of the tangle of roots, how one tree is connected to another. Trees use these networks, secretly talking to each other through their roots, passing information along. Adult trees share their sugars with young saplings, a dying tree can send its remaining resources back out to help the community. These networks, these roots of abundance, keep trees in place just as much as they free them to grow and share.

The theme of our annual pledge campaign this year is *Rooted in Abundance*, and we are reminded that we are a mighty forest comprised of ancient trunks and sprightly saplings, each of us contributing our gifts to a world that needs us. As you hear the messages and stories of abundance this year, take note of how generosity spreads and widens our root structures of faith and action.

In gratitude,

Debbie and Merica

