



## Trees

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*“Those whose delight is in the law of the LORD ... are like trees planted by streams of water,  
which yield their fruit in its season”*

Psalm 1:2-3

As the fall leaves begin displaying their beautiful colors, the tree as a metaphor for our churches is playing in my mind.

This presbytery and its congregations have deep roots. Again and again, I heard session members share their pride and love of their churches' histories. There is the historical timeline on wall of the Ottawa Fellowship Hall and the history display in the hallway of West Granville. There is the apocryphal story of a famous previous member of the Calvary congregation crashing thru an interior stained glass window as a teen. There are the quiet stories of faith that built buildings and have welcomed people into the fellowship of Jesus Christ.

The tree trunk and branches of our present are strong with faithful souls following Jesus Christ. Acts of compassion overflow in what we call missions. Without exception, all of our congregations work to feed the hungry. Some have their own food pantries, others support community food and meal distributions, and Food for the Journey plus the Tippecanoe and Covenant churches grow food for those living in food deserts. More than just hunger is eased, tho. Clothing is provided, the homeless and those coming out of prison are supported, Christmas presents are given to children and the elderly, school students receive supplies, missionaries are partners, rummage sales offer much needed articles at far below reasonable prices.

In recent weeks we've seen how raging hurricanes can damage and even uproot trees. Our tree of faith is similarly subjected to the winds of change and the storms of our culture. We need to hold onto our deep roots and continue to be faithful to our calling as followers of Jesus Christ. More than that, tho, as we look to the future, we need to be able to bend, to be flexible, to be able to lean in new directions. May our deep roots anchor us, but not hold us back. May they ground us in what we believe, while enabling new ways of stretching out in ministries we can't even now imagine. If we are going to grow, we have to branch out. Like a tree, the Church is a living entity that needs adapt to its ever changing environment in order to thrive. And I believe it is Christ's intention for his church to thrive indeed!

As you move thru these Autumn days, perhaps hiking or driving thru woods full of colorful trees, may you see God all around you and be inspired in new ways to stretch out in faith. Then may we together yield the fruit of Jesus Christ.

Grace and Peace.

*Lisa*

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