

“A Space for Planting God’s Presence”
-With Deep and Wide Roots-
April 15, 2018, Foothills Congregational
Psalm 1 & John 15:1-8

On this beautiful Spring Sunday morning my family and I feel warmly welcomed and kindly encouraged as we begin this new chapter in our lives.

And, it is a mutual beginning for the Foothills Congregational family and us, as we plant the initial seeds of our shared new ministry. Our sacred and joint faith journey is one marked by a grounding sense of deep grace and wide love.

A journey of faith is the spirituality of rooting oneself into the liberating love and merciful activity of God. Faith is both a reaching out for God and an opening up of oneself to God and others in vulnerable and courageous ways.

In Psalm 1, the analogy of the people of God (seeking to live in just ways with both God and others) is one of a tree planted by streams of water. The Psalmist sings:

*Happy are those
who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;
but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law they meditate day and night.
They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.*

Trees are a helpful metaphor for a grounded and growing sense of faith. Take a moment, remember and envision a favorite tree in your life.

If I close my eyes I can remember the tree in my neighbor’s backyard that cradled the first ever tree house I had ever seen. It was equipped with a knotted up rope hanging from its narrow entrance. Inside the treehouse was where a few of us plotted how we could take over the surrounding neighborhood and where we discussed girls we had crushes on and where we rehashed the storylines of the Star Wars trilogy— back when Star Wars was first new and cool. This tree was also linked to another tree in the yard via a zip line. Needless to say, I spent many summer days in the backyard and up and down the treehouse. I don’t remember what kind of tree it was, but it must have had roots deep and wide, because my friends and I were rough and tumble.

