



Rev. Dr. Daris S. Bultena, Pastor
Minister of Word and Sacrament

November 20, 2009

Fresh

Dear Readers,

I was driving up (or is it down?) Rt. 40 just today and noticed that the grey of the leafless trees has arrived. There is something about this time of the year after those leaves come off the trees that just is blah... I love the bursting color of the spring and then the deep lushness of greens that is the summer. Ah, then comes the autumn in all of its finery. The hues are spectacular.

But at the last of autumn, after those leaves have come off the trees—well, it just is not my favorite view of the world. I love the spectrum of colors that is the fall, but mourn those few remaining leaves that are on the trees.

There is a particular view that I have in my chair in the chancel of Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church. Sitting in that chair as I look up I can see the tops of the trees that are on our church property. Those trees show me the year as time passes by. I noticed the other day that there were only a few leaves left. Just a week ago the whole tree was covered in gold. Now it is mainly branches of lifelessness.



So it is... or is it? One of my passions is visual icons. Not icons in the sense of traditional icons—depictions of saints or heavenly beings. No, the icons I'm into are anything visual that somehow shows what I like to think of as "the texture of God's good creation." It is not uncommon for folks to enter our sanctuary only to discover that among the candles there are these "icons" of sorts that somehow reveal that "texture of God's good creation."

Last Sunday morning I decided that I needed one of those leafless branches as an icon on the table in the Sanctuary. When I carried it inside and propped it up I could not help but notice



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something. I had to take that fresh look to see it, but there it was very clearly. While there were no leaves, on the tips of those branches there were buds.

On the tips of all those branches there was still growing life. There were buds. They were not lifeless at all. There was life growing bit by bit and bud by bud. It took a fresh look for me to see beyond the greyness of it all and to recognize that was truly still growing.

I think we are often those branches—a quick glance and it does not seem there is much happening. But, oh take a closer look. Lean in. Take a fresh look. Behold. Behold that God is alive and well in you. God is growing you. Moving in you. Loving you. Bursting forward with life in you. Even now...even here! Grow with us!

Blessings,
Rev. Dr. Daris S. Bultena, Pastor
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www.holy411.org