

Rooted in Love

Several years ago I went to lunch with a colleague.

At the time we were both research professors at the Mayo Clinic and we got into a conversation about how we had come to that time and place in our lives.

She asked me, "If you hadn't chosen to do scientific research, what would you have done?"

She told me later that she thought I would say "be a doctor or a lawyer" or something like that, but I didn't have to think, I said, "I would have been a gardener".

I should have been a gardener.

I've always been fascinated by how plants grow. It's magic to me that you can put a seed into the ground and in just a few days or weeks it grows into a complete plant. Today we understand a lot about the molecular biology of seed development but that doesn't make it any less magical for me, if anything it just makes it even more so. To this day, every time I put a seed in the ground, there's a tiny voice in the back of my head that says, "Well, that's never going to work". But it always does, and it never ceases to amaze me.

A garden needs some things. It requires fertile soil, and water, and light. Very importantly it needs the care and attention of a loving gardener. But when you put those things together the result is truly miraculous: you get flowers of stunning beauty, and fruit that is a wonder and a delight.

This community, the First Congregational Church of Thetford, is very much a garden.

The seed was planted and we come here each week to be fed by the word of God spoken through Pastor Robin, we receive Living Water in the bread and the wine of the sacrament, and we bask in the love and Light of this fellowship.

I've only been here for about two years. Most of you have been here far longer than I, but I've listened to the stories of the things that this garden has produced. Children who have grown up strong in the faith; adults who have searched for faith their entire lives but only found it once they came here; broken hearts mended by the care and love of you, the gardeners; deaths, deeply grieved, but also celebrated for the precious and faithful lives lived.

So many, many things. There is no flower, no fruit, more beautiful to the eyes of God than these things; and these things have been the work of your hands.

God's work, Our hands.

It's spring. It's time to tend the garden, and I speak to you in support of the Rooted in Love Stewardship campaign. Give generously. Give of your time, your talent, your money, your prayers, whatever you feel called to give. But give generously, so that this garden can continue to produce miracles, for you, for your loved ones, for your children, for your grandchildren. Or maybe, maybe, just for the love of God.