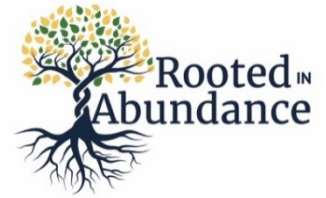


October 4, 2023



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

Dear friends,

The most important words we say in Church are “thank you.” Giving thanks and praise to God, not only with our lips, but in our lives, is like sap moving through a tree. It gives life and expression to everything else we do. Today I say thank you to God for you. And thank you to you for the many gifts that you share with our community here at Grace Episcopal, Lexington.

Our theme this year is Rooted in Abundance. God’s word, spirit, and grace is the ground in which Grace, Lexington is rooted. As you hear in God’s Word the messages and stories of abundance this year, take note of how generosity spreads and widens our root structures of faith and our branches of action.

One of the great blessings of my work is being able to see many of the ways God’s love extends through the members of Grace to bless our neighbors. Grace is very much like a great tree of the Mustard Seed parable, growing large enough to provide a home in its branches for all kinds of birds to nest and sing, sharing fruit in season with any who are hungry or in need, renewing a right spirit within us just as a tree cleanses the air and exudes life-giving oxygen, providing shady rest to the weary, and inspiration and joy to all who take time to pause and connect, whether through worship or some other ministry.

Just as a tree has many parts working together to perform its marvelous works, so does Grace. Some parts are hidden or appear small and insignificant, but today’s flower becomes fruit, seed, and perhaps someday the source of a whole new tree. None of us can rightly estimate the value of our contributions to the whole, or rightly esteem the need we have for the whole.

When I walk through a forest, I am 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.

Rooted in Abundance, we are part of a mighty forest comprised of ancient trunks and sprightly saplings, each of us contributing our gifts from God to a world that needs us.

In gratitude,

Rooted in Abundance Campaign

to support the operating budget of Grace Episcopal Church, Lexington*

Preliminary phase

- Monday, October 9 Rector's Letter and Campaign Calendar mailing
- Sunday, October 15 First Brief Spectacular Moment at 8am and 10:30am
- Sunday, October 22 Second Brief Spectacular Moment at 8am and 10:30am
 - **5:45 pm Reception in the Courtyard following Evensong**
 - Everyone is invited to a reception to celebrate the fellowship and ministry of Grace Church

Rooted in Abundance Campaign October 29-November 26

- **Sunday October 29 Kickoff** – 8 am and 10:30 am Lay Stewardship Sermon
 - Pledge packets containing Wardens' letter, 2024 Stewardship brochure, and pledge cards will be handed out this Sunday. Remaining packets will be mailed.
- Sunday, November 5 Third Brief Spectacular Moment at 8am and 10:30am
- Sunday, November 12 Fourth Brief Spectacular Moment at 8am and 10:30am
- Sunday, November 19 Fifth Brief Spectacular Moment at 8am and 10:30am
- Sunday, November 26 Campaign **Conclusion** Clergy Stewardship Sermon

Final phase

- After November 26 those who have not pledged will receive a phone call to invite them to make a pledge over the phone or indicate their intention to pledge at a later date

*Note –Complete Operating Budget and Actual figures are available from the office.

Basic 2023 operating budget figures:

- 2023 Total Operating Budget \$677,000
- 2023 Pledges - \$480,000
- 2023 Prior year pledges, next year pledges, and income from Diocese - \$70,300
- 2023 Budgeted Transfers from Restricted and Unrestricted Funds - \$91,000
- 2023 Budget Deficit - \$35,700
- 2024 SS COLA est – 3.2%
- 2024 Est Total Operating Budget - \$697,000