



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 17:8

The most important words to say in Church are “thank you.” Say it often, and mean it, and today we say it to you. ***Thank you for the many gifts that you share with our community.***

As our annual stewardship campaign gets underway, you may have heard about the theme, *Rooted in Abundance*, and its reminder to us that we are inspired to give because so much has been given to us. This is not transactional – we do not give in proportion to how we feel we have benefitted or suffered – rather we give because of the love we have experienced in the story of our faith. We have explored trees, roots, flowers all as metaphors for the way we dig deep into what nourishes us to transform that goodness into work, service, and joy in a world that needs us.

We are particularly excited about this year’s theme as it describes the graceful state of our church community, and how we share our gifts so lovingly with each other. We are grateful that we can share this annual process of telling the story of our abundance and our gratitude. We love hearing the stories that you will tell about what connects you to St. James’ and how your family flourishes where it has been planted. Every gift matters this year, and each gift will be accepted, brought to the altar, and blessed before God and our community.

Our giving tradition at St. James’ has always been focused on how we share all of our gifts – not just our financial gifts. A church needs new ideas, creative people to lead, individuals who know how to solve complex problems, volunteers to keep our ministries focused on our neighbors. We usually talk about this in a three-fold way: wealth, works, and wisdom. If any one of these areas is missing from our community, we are diminished.

Each of us has a gift, some of have many and 2023 has been a year where we have been able to see new gifts in many people. For some of us it is cooking and baking, others might have beautiful singing voices, we praise those who have an administrative gift or counting the collection, we admire those who offer hospitality, who serve at the altar, who help us find a seat as the service begins. Whatever your ministries are, we couldn’t be who we are without you.

In 2023, we have witnessed the ways in which we communicate with each other to get things done. Worship services, Potlucks, community events, pastoral care, it all happens so wonderfully because we are each deeply connected to each other through our roots of faith and service.

St. James’ Episcopal Church, 25 West Street, Danbury, CT 06810 203-748-3561
www.saintjamesdanbury.org, email: welcome@saintjamesdanbury.org

You have heard the familiar expression “can’t see the forest for the trees” before. We most often use it to describe that occasion in which we lose sight of the big picture while focusing on the details. During 2023 we have experienced the blessing of being able to see the big picture of our congregation – the ministry we bring to our neighbors, the impact we have on our community, the ways that week after week we come together to celebrate our faith and praise God. This is the forest.

We have also been able to wander amongst the trees. From the small shoot reaching out from its seed and finding the sunlight, to the mightiest tree, standing tall, showing strength, offering sheltering love to those who need it. We are those trees, each drawing strength from our meal and showering the world with the love and grace we have come to know here. We are truly blessed that at St. James’ we can see both the forest and the trees!

When we walk through a forest, we are 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.

As we fill out our pledge cards, we will notice that one side is about our financial promises for the year, our wealth. The other side is dedicated to how we might want to share our works and our wisdom. Beyond staffing committees, our work of wisdom is about unlocking creativity to grow our mission, collaborating with other people, institutions, and churches to serve more of our neighbors, and how we form generous, grateful hearts through our education programs. Our works bring us opportunities to roll up our sleeves, to volunteer for service, to pitch in to help make things better.

This year, as you pray about your commitment to St. James’, please tap into that nourishing structure of faith and generosity shown to us by an extravagant God, a patient Shepherd, and a gathering Spirit who call us to extend our networks and share our gifts with the world. When you are rooted in abundance, you realize that your giving can be as boundless as the Creation that gave birth to us all. Thank you for your generosity and your prayerful consideration of your pledge to St. James’.

In gratitude,



Senior Warden

P.S. The last Sunday of our campaign is *All Saints Sunday*, November 5, 2023. Please send or submit your gifts by that date so that we may gather them together and bless them.

St. James’ Episcopal Church, 25 West Street, Danbury, CT 06810 203-748-3561
www.saintjamesdanbury.org, email: welcome@saintjamesdanbury.org