

Patterns of Grace and Gratitude Week 5

Sunday, May 9



“Spring Snow”

“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.” 2 Corinthians 4: 8-10

Some thoughts from Pastor Larry today: We think of patterns in our lives and in the natural world as routine expected results, events or images that repeat in ways that are consistent. In other words, we trust the patterns because we can count on them. But there is another kind of pattern that impacts our lives that is nothing like what has just been described. This is the pattern of random struggle and challenge. In other words, the pattern that things will not always stay as they are or be as we expect them to be is a certainty. Experiencing the random pattern of hardship underscores the fact that we can't prepare for everything, but knowing this can help us find another pattern we can trust, the grace that God is always in the midst of what is challenging to strengthen and sustain us.

The picture above was taken very recently on a mid to late April morning following a snowfall. New growth was appearing on the trees. Warm sun had been shining the day before. Most of us have cut our grass a few times and it seemed that winter was long gone. Some of us had even stored our warmer clothing and coats away, but then the snow and cold returned. We didn't expect it and it is likely we didn't want it, but there it was. In this pattern of unpredictability, where is God? The scripture from Paul's writing to the early church makes clear that the power of the resurrection resides in the midst of every challenge. The resurrection is not a “one and done” event. God never ceases to bring new life where there is none. This means that when unexpected hardships come our way, God is ready to call forth from that chaos a new, ordered, and life-giving hope. This is a pattern we can trust. God is raising to life that which was dead. Where is that happening for you today? How are you discovering God's grace in the places where you least expect it? Keep looking. It is there and always will be.