

**Bread for the Journey, Part XXV:
A Shoot Shall Come Out from the Stump**



For our 25th Wedding Anniversary in the summer of 2011, Jane gave us this Japanese maple tree which had a rather troubled beginning on the parsonage grounds. After digging a few inches into the soil where it was to be planted, I realized that the area near the south parking lot, like much of the church grounds, is filled with construction debris left 63 years ago when the church facility was completed---not a great location to plant a tree, I suppose, but where else, I wondered?

With lots of watering during that first summer, the little maple began to take root. However, early that autumn, a deer evidently came sauntering by in the middle of the night from the nearby DesPlaines River and, apparently just for the fun of it (because he didn't eat any of the tree), sheared off the sapling about a foot above the ground, leaving the entire top of the tree drooping on the Maplewood Road parkway.

I made a clean, angled cut just below the splintered trunk and inches above the ground, then waited for the following spring, hoping to see new shoots sprouting from the stump. But there was nothing well into the summer of 2012 which, you may remember, was extremely hot and dry throughout June and July (three weeks with highs above 100 degrees after July 4th). Finally, after giving up hope for any possible sign of life, Jane and I agreed to cut the stump to the ground so that the mowers would not have to go around it.

Then came the August rains and cooler temperatures. One cloudy afternoon, Jane noticed something in the bluegrass that she took to be a dandelion; but no, to our joy and delight, the scrappy, little maple tree still had life in its roots well beneath the surface of the ground, gnarled around the debris, and now was beginning to sprout a year after it was planted in the rubble and left in ruins.

Above is a photo of the tree today, over 9 years later. This is the first autumn that the Japanese maple has shown it's brilliant colors. I take it to be a metaphor of the times. When it seems that history, as we have experienced a brief span of it, is being sheared off in the middle, there is promise for something alive and new just beneath the surface of the present moment.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his root (Isaiah 11:1).

[Earth Song](#)

Composed by Frank Ticheli and performed by VOCES8.

Click on the above link to listen.

I realize that many of you are not big fans of sacred choral music, but this particular composition (as well as many others) has continued to convey profound peace, refuge and hope during these days and nights, even though we cannot sing together. Though you may or may not be moved by the music, there might be something in the poetry that stirs you from lament to praise.

**Sing, Be, Live, See.
This dark stormy hour,
The wind, it stirs.
The scorched earth
cries out in vain:
O war and power,
You blind and blur,
The torn heart
cries out in pain.
But music and singing
Have been my refuge,
And music and singing
Shall be my light.
A light of song
Shining strong: Alleluia!
Through darkness, pain, and strife, I'll
Sing, Be, Live, See...
Peace.**



***For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water...
(Isaiah 35:6b-7a).***

**Join us every Sunday at 10:15 a.m.
for live streaming of the liturgy
accessed through the website by clicking
[HERE](#).**

**Recordings of the services are uploaded to the same site
for viewing at a later date.**

**A Sermon for The Seventeenth Sunday after
Pentecost, September 27th: [HERE](#) (13:35-30:48).**

Preparing a place for you... someday.

Removal and reconstruction of the west parking lot began earlier this month and is approaching completion.





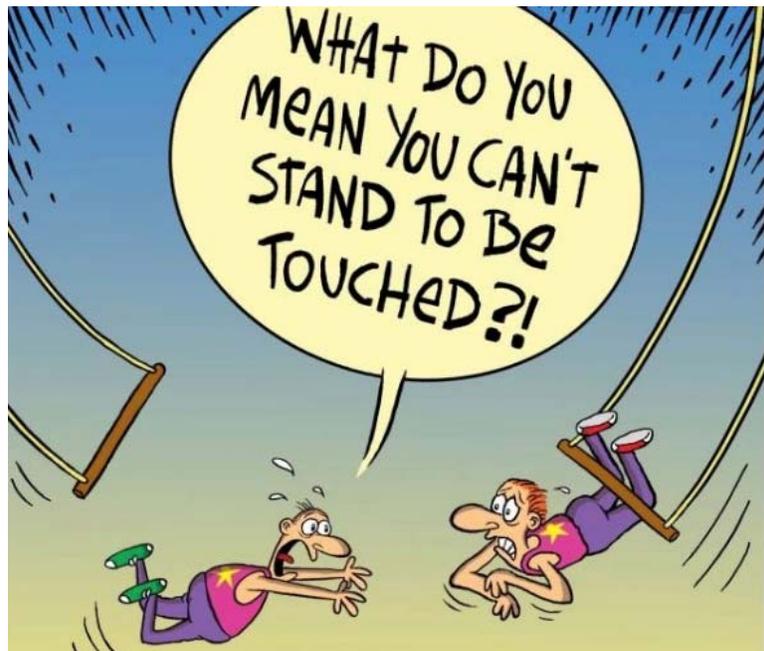


Many thanks to John Kostelny and Rafael Martinez for planning, coordinating and overseeing this big project. Construction by [Budget Paving](#).



[Romans 3:19-28](#)

Happy Reformation Sunday, tomorrow, October 25th.



[Nunc Dimittis](#)

Composed by Paul Smith. Performed by VOCES8.

**Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace
according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of
thy people Israel.**



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