



## Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast November 21, 2021 “Giving Thanks”

### “The Tree of Life”

*On each side of the river stood the Tree of Life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. [Revelation 22:2]*

It is fitting that we end our brief look at trees in the Bible these past weeks with the “The of Life” at the end of the New Testament. We know that trees provide us with many benefits in our world: shade, food, building materials, and so forth. But ultimately what – or who – is the eternal Tree of Life? Christ, of course. Though we have only scratched the surface of the important role trees have in the Bible, my hope is that we will be alert as we read and “inwardly digest” Scripture in the future.



In his book Reforesting Faith, Matthew Sleeth writes: “We can’t begin to imagine how beautiful heaven is going to be, but there’s one thing we can be sure of: it will be a city filled with trees.” What an image! May we be mindful of the full meaning of renewed Creation through Christ and our future as people of God, giving thanks to God always!

### The Blessings of the Natural World

*We now turn our thoughts to the Trees. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty, and other useful things. Many people of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we greet and thank the Tree life. Now our minds are one. [from the “Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address”]*

Indigenous, “first peoples” have a strong sense of their connection to, place in, and appreciation for the natural world. These verses about trees are a part of the larger, central prayer and invocation for the Haudenosaunee (also known as the Iroquois Confederacy), and it reflects their thanks for life and the world around them. The Haudenosaunee open and close social and religious meetings with the Thanksgiving Address. It is also a daily prayer said in appreciation of the natural world and all her inhabitants. Trees, like all wonders of Nature, are truly a gift for which we are thankful. The Thanksgiving Address teaches mutual respect, conservation, love, generosity, and the responsibility to understand that what is done to one part of the Web of Life, is done to all.

**Starting next Sunday Advent begins**, the four weeks of reflection and preparation for the birth of Christ. Our Sunday Blast theme will be “Expectations,” and this is a good time to start thinking about your expectations of Christmas. We leave our journey among the trees with these verses:

*Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator. Now our minds are one. [from the “Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address”] May it be so. Amen.*

**Please keep in your prayers this week**... those suffering from the flooding in the Northwest US and nearby Canada. Please consider using part of the “Thanksgiving Address” at the table on Thanksgiving!