



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast for September 26, 2021

“The Woods is my Church”

What can trees teach us about the nature of God and his love for us? ... Trees grow older, taller, and bigger than anything else on earth. They have been with us since the beginning of time. We humans owe our very lives to the sap, bark, wood, flowers, and fruit of trees. We are their masters, yet they are our stake in the future. (from Reforesting Faith by Matthew Sleeth)

An NBC news story this week reported that the lush, green cedar forests along the Atlantic coast are dying. The once-green cedars are now white, having become dead “ghost forests.” Valuable to the environment, coastal woodlands filter pollutants, act as natural barriers to storms from the sea, and store carbon in the ground and replace it in the air with oxygen. We are losing these coastal woodlands at an increasing rate. The cause of this distressing environmental change? Rising sea levels. And the same trend can be seen in the Gulf Coast states, like Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

What is being done? In New Jersey, the Audubon Society is teaming up with farmers and hunters, who have a natural attachment to the land, to create stewardship plans to manage wildlife, including cedar trees, on private land. What is our stewardship plan for our local forests?

Trees and the Nature of God

The land produced vegetation – all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:12, NLT)

No one will disagree that a walk through a wild forest is breathtaking. Many people are gifted with spiritual insights while walking in the woods. When I spent summers as a chaplain at an Adirondack Boy Scout camp, one of the leaders confided in me: “I’m not really a churchy person – the woods is my church.” Many people will agree that time in woods is a chance to break away from the artificial human world and luxuriate in the beauty and richness of God’s creation.

For the next several weeks our “Sunday Blast” will be an unhurried stroll through Scripture as we ponder nature, especially trees, and what God intends for them and for us as caretakers.

*I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree,
A tree that looks at God all day and lifts her leafy arms to pray... (Joyce Kilmer)*

Please offer prayers for . . . the people of Afghanistan and Haiti; those suffering from severe weather, from wildfires, and those with COVID; Harry, Wanda, Jerry, Pete. (if you have special prayer requests, please let me know)