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Scarboro United Church
Calgary AB
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“ROOTS AND WINGS”
80TH ANNIVERSARY REFLECTION

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the church at Corinth, reminds the members of all they have received from God and from their spiritual ancestors, to remember those gifts, right now.

He calls them to experience their gratitude, right now.

To experience the healing gratitude can bring, right now.

To feel the energy that gratitude brings, right now.

He challenges them to live out their gratitude right now, and right now and right now. He knows that living out of their generosity will carry them into a future of right relationships, right now. He knows that embracing God’s great and gracious gifts and sharing them with others is the most effective form of saying, “thanks”. Because the word thanks, by itself, is not enough.

If it was all that easy, however, we would all be saints, right now. It is easy to live out your gratitude when you don’t have very much. I know I spent too many years feeling hard done by, believing that life isn’t fair to me or anyone else that isn’t rich or powerful or famous. How long would it be until someone discovered how talented, beautiful and wonderful I am; and hand it all to me on a silver platter? I just wanted to know! How long?

It wasn’t long until I decided to stop doing it the hard way and start doing it the harder way. I responded to the call I had been avoiding from childhood. I started studying those ancient words of people like the Apostle Paul, and Jesus, and Moses, and the prophets and poets. And in those ancient words and the Word within them, I began to realize how much I was selling life short. All that I was waiting for, longing for, hoping for is here, already. Right now.

I began to realize how deep my roots go – not just my parents and my family tree but generation after generation over thousands of years bringing me and you, all of us to right now. This sacred moment where the past ends and the future begins. One remembered, one dreamed, in this moment where God meets us. Where the transcendent God remembered from the past becomes immanent by engaging us now and setting our hearts on fire for a faith-filled future.

We have a memory of grace, right now.

We have a spirit of generosity, right now.

We have a dream of a healthy and vital congregation of God’s people for our children, our grandchildren, our great-grand children, we have that dream, right now.

We have all that it takes to fulfill our memory of grace, right now.

We have all that it takes to fulfill our spirit of generosity, right now.

We have all that it takes to fulfill our dream of a healthy and vital congregation of God's people, right now.

No matter how old and tired we are we know God's grace, right now.

No matter how frustrated and dispirited we are, we still have that spirit of generosity, right now.

No matter how low and stretched our resources are, we still have the dream for our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren, right now.

We are the ones we have been waiting for. We have all we need.

And we begin, right now.

The seeds have been planted, right now.

We can do it, right now.

The roots are deep, right now.

We are not alone, right now.

God is with us, right now.

Green shoots are rising to the sun, right now.

Buds are forming, right now.

The full bloom will be fulfilled in God's own time – which is, for God, **always right now**.

It has been said that the greatest gifts we can give to our children are roots and wings – roots to feed and nourish them and wings to let them soar. Our church at its best (and the church is not always at its best) gives life roots and wings, gives each of us roots and wings. Our church gives us all roots which nourish our spirits and feed our growth and brings us to full bloom.

Our faith in God and God alone sets us free from all in life that would enslave us, right now.

Our faith sets us free to live into the future in ways we can scarce imagine, right now.

Our faith sets us free to soar beyond eagles, right now.

Our faith sets us free to love as we have been loved, right now.

For this service [of generosity] you perform (says the Apostle Paul) not only meets the needs of God's people, but also produces an outpouring of gratitude to God. And because of the proof which this service of yours brings, many will give glory to God for your loyalty to the Gospel of Christ, which you profess, and for your generosity in sharing with them and everyone else. And so with deep affection they will pray for you because of the extraordinary grace God has shown you. Let us thank God for his priceless gift! (2 Corinthians 9:12-15)

Amen