

Letter from Harry Daniel, Interim Pastor - Oct 2011

Dear Friends,

Dr. Howard Thurman was a great black preacher two generations back. He tells a wonderful story about an old man planting pecan trees in LaGrange, GA. Out of intense curiosity, Dr. Thurman asked the man why he was planting the trees since he would never personally enjoy the nuts they would produce. The old man replied, "Is that important? All my life I have eaten fruit from trees that I did not plant, why should I not plant trees to bear fruit for those who may enjoy them long after I am gone? Besides, the man who plants because he will reap the harvest has no faith in life."

The old man was very wise. Much of life is made up of reaping where we have not sown and planting where we shall never reap. None of us stands alone. We are immersed in a vast network of other

human beings,
institutions,
churches,
places and
times, all
given by
the God
who
created,
redeemed,
and loves us
all. I find the old
man's wisdom
certainly true for my
life. I have been the

beneficiary of so many gifts that have nurtured and shaped me in profound ways I have only begun to grasp and understand. And I have said, taught, and done many things the impact of which I will never see. But that is part of the glory and risk of living life in God's world. The reality that I

will not reap what I sow has in no way discouraged me from doing what God has called me to do. As you move into your 150th year, Betty and I will have moved on to another, perhaps final, interim. While we will not be here to celebrate with you, we will certainly be thinking of you and 1st Pres. You are a permanent part of us, and I hope we of you.

So you, too, must heed the old man's rich wisdom. You must continue to plant so that others may reap here at 1st Pres. 2012 promises to be a grand year in the life of this congregation: the celebration of your 150th year of existence in the same place, and exciting new challenges in mission and ministry. Thanks be to God! You all are called by God to such a time and place. Rejoice in the gifts he has given you, and in the spirit of those who have gone before you plant, and plant, and plant, so that others may reap.

Think of all those people who worshipped, served, and nurtured this congregation fashioning for you the legacy that is this church. It is their gift to you and to all who come after you. You have reaped much from so many wonderful sowings.

To make 2012 a flourishing year will require the best giving of which you are capable—giving of yourself, your time, talents, and resources. There is much to be done. I know you can do this because I have observed you doing just that.

Betty and I count it a privilege to have been a part of your story here at 1st Pres. May God continue to bless you.

And those pecan trees in LaGrange? I have tasted their fruit and it was wonderful, especially in a pecan pie!

Shalom,
Harry