

FROM THE PASTOR



I've been thinking a lot about gardening lately. Not because I'm any good at it—I've been branded a "black" thumb on more than one occasion—but because Jesus talked about it so much. Vines and branches. Seeds and soil. Fruit and pruning. There's something about growing things that helps us understand how God grows us.

That's what this Lenten season is about for us. We began on Ash Wednesday by acknowledging an honest truth: we are dust. Fragile. Finite. Mortal. But here's what I keep coming back to—we are God's dust. And the God who formed dust into humanity can take our dust and do something miraculous.

So let me ask you a question I've been wrestling with myself: What would you like God to grow in you over these forty days?

I'm not asking what you're giving up for Lent. That's fine if you're doing it, but I'm more interested in how you're opening up to God. What area of your life feels a little barren right now? Where do you sense God might want to do some cultivating?

Over the next few weeks, we'll explore what it takes to bear spiritual fruit. We'll talk about pruning—how the cuts that hurt can also heal. We'll dig into what makes good soil and why deep roots matter more than what we can see on the surface. We'll wrestle with John the Baptist's challenge to bear fruit worthy of repentance—not just feeling sorry, but actually living differently.

Here's what I'm inviting you to do this Lent: pick one practice that helps you stay connected to Christ. Maybe it's five minutes of quiet with Scripture each morning. Maybe it's praying the Lord's Prayer at noon. Maybe it's a weekly Sabbath rest. It doesn't have to be complicated. Branches don't work hard to produce fruit—they just stay connected to the vine, and fruit happens.

That's the good news of Lent. You don't have to manufacture your own transformation. You just have to position yourself to receive it. Stay close. Abide. And watch what God grows.

I'll be walking this road with you, asking the same questions, doing the same wrestling. That's what I love about this season—we're in it together.

Rev. Denise Haskins

P.S. If you're looking for a place to start, try reading Psalm 1 this week. It's only six verses, but it paints a beautiful picture of the fruitful life. Let me know what you discover.