



June 9, 2021



Parable of the Surprised Gardener

For months the weekly TWASA offering has carried my article called "Parable of the Pastor". Of late our scripture readings on Sunday have been focused on parables found in the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and told by none other than Jesus' himself. Jesus was the Master teacher and storyteller with parables as his primary teaching resource. Parables provided a way for Jesus to talk to farmers about farming, fishermen about fishing and treasurers about financial issues. In other words, he told a story with a spiritual point using common themes.

Sunday our gospel lesson will focus on Mark 4:26-34. Why not read it yourself prior to our worship on Sunday! In the parable Jesus uses one of his most common object lessons – seeds. Seeds were frequent illustrations in Jesus' parables. They often were used to illustrate the point, "With seeds, you can usually expect the unexpected!" So it happens that way in Sunday's parable. The seed is scattered by someone who turns in for the night. Upon awakening the seed has sprouted and grows, all without the knowledge of the one who planted the seed.

Seeds and I have experienced a love/hate relationship for many years. I always bought certain seeds that were proven high producers. They often sprouted and died – or were eaten by rabbits. I planted them first in seed cups and started them indoors before the last frost in order to have them begin their transplanted life in the garden having been already established. Most withered and died without even a whimper. Seeds are fickle creations!

I think the point of Jesus' parable from Mark 4 is that what a seed produces is not under our control, try as we might to guarantee a certain outcome. Consequently, God's work within us is best left to God to work out. We learned around the first of the year that our landlords would be moving home to the Island and to the home they had purchased 3 years ago. It was a wonderful arrangement for us to live in their house while they completed their work on the mainland. We knew their arrival in late summer 2021 would mean we needed a new rental.

There are few rentals in Victoria. They are rare, especially the ones that accept a sweet 14-year-old pet. We looked far and wide. We scoured the rental sites. We exhausted our resources. But we had forgotten about the relationship with the family who no longer occupied their family home. It was available exactly when we needed it. The seed planted long ago sprouted and grew without any over-gardening on our part.

What if we trusted that God is working in our lives even when we are not aware of it? What if gave up our beliefs that successful growth has little to do with our maneuverings? I suspect that we might be amazed with what God can and will do totally and completely without our help! Imagine that. Blessings to each of you. -Pastor Mitch

Highlights from General Assembly (Day 1 and Day 2)



You can watch the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada on [YouTube](#).

- This year's Cutting Edge of Mission Award was awarded to the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking.
- A special committee of the 2021 General Assembly will consider two petitions calling for a confession of the mistreatment of ethnic minorities by the dominant culture in the denomination. The committee will report to the 2022 General Assembly.
- The Special Listening Committee re. LGBTQI, also known as Rainbow Communion, was established by the General Assembly in 2017 to respond to the call to repent of the harm caused by homophobia and hypocrisy in the church. A video presentation from the report can be found [here](#) (please be advised that the report and video discuss topics such as self-harm and suicide). All recommendations of the RC report were adopted.
- The Rev. Marijke Strong, Executive Secretary, Regional Synod of Canada, Reformed Church in America, brought a message of welcome and encouragement to commissioners. The PCC and the Reformed Church in America share a deep and rich heritage.
- The moderator introduced the Rev. Amanda Currie, Moderator of the 2019 General Assembly, as the longest-serving moderator in the history of the PCC. He thanked her for her gracious and generous leadership as we figured out how to be God's people during a global pandemic.
- The Presbyterian Church in Canada agreed to make changes to its theology and practice regarding marriage, permitting people to choose to define marriage as either as a covenant relationship between a man and a woman or a covenant relationship between two adult people. The church agreed that LGBTQI people (whether married or single) can be ordained and are welcome to serve as ministers and ruling elders.
- In light of the recent directed attack against a Muslim family in London, Ont., killing four family members and critically injuring a fifth, and understanding it to be a visible sign of underlying evil, the Moderator will write to the National Muslim-Christian Liaison Committee offering condolence and encouraging the committee's ongoing dialogue and work.
- The Rev. Dr. Blair Bertrand, PCC mission staff to Malawi since 2017, introduced the Rev. Dr. Takuze Chitsulo, Principal of Zomba Theological College (ZTC) in Malawi. The Rev. Chitsulo brought [a message](#) of gratitude to commissioners, thanking The Presbyterian Church in Canada for their long-time friendship and partnership.

GA continues today and more information can be found at the [denominational website](#).



Read From Your Bible This Week

- 1 Samuel 15:34–16:13 and Psalm 20
- 2 Corinthians 5:6–10, (11–13), 14–17
- Mark 4:26–34



This week's worship reader is Angus H.