

Communion meditation

By Rev. Debbie Shields, M.Div., BCC, hospital chaplain

My grandfather was a farmer, and I remember, as a very little girl being able to help him in his apple orchard. On one of those occasions he lifted me up into his arms, gave me the pruning shears and taught me how to cut off the suckers that rob the energy that should be going to the fruit. I remember commenting on how small and somewhat ugly his apple trees were. “Ah!” he said, “But these trees grow the biggest, sweetest fruit.” I knew this to be true, because I had the apple pies and the applesauce that those apples made. They were indeed delicious.



Jesus says he is the vine and God is the gardener. I imagine God pruning us like my grandfather pruned his prized apple trees-with the deepest of care, and gentleness in order to encourage our spiritual growth. I see my sin as the suckers that need pruning by God, my father. And in God’s great and loving wisdom, a table is set. A table that invites us to examine ourselves, like Grandpa examined his trees. A table that welcomes us, like my grandpa welcomed me – uplifted, upheld and embraced in the arms of our loving God. A table where we can abide in Christ and he in us.

The beautiful and generous love that we remember at this table, is that Christ’s body was broken for us that our sins might be forgiven. His blood was shed for us, that we might bear fruit for the Kingdom of God. As we receive this bread and drink this cup, may we rejoice in the knowledge that we belong to Christ. And the promise of John 15: 1-5 is that when we abide in Christ and Christ abides in us, the fruit that we bear will be beautiful and sweet in the eyes of God.

Debbie is one of many Chaplains endorsed and served by Disciples Home Missions. Your gifts to the Easter offering support DHM, which makes Debbie’s ministry possible.