

Dear friends:

Late September is a beautiful time of year to be at Five Oaks. Even in the rain.

It rained most of the time that we were there with the staff leaders last week, as it did during the same meeting last year. I didn't mind.

Selfishly, I chose a seat in the circle that let me look out at the rain falling through the treetops. I was paying attention to the meeting, but every now and then I could glance out and see that the rain was still coming down. The leaves were still green, we aren't quite far enough into the fall for all the colours in this area, but the green was deeper with the wet.

Tuesday morning, knowing that there was a full day of sitting ahead, I went out for a run. The rain was only a drizzle. You barely notice it once you are out in it. Birds were fluttering here and there in the rain, and singing their morning songs. The smell of the damp earth and plants was beautiful. I would hate to have missed all that.

Rain is the way the earth drinks. It is the stuff of poetry, as in psalm 68:

O God, when you went out before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness,
⁸ the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain
at the presence of God, the God of Sinai,
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
⁹ Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad;
you restored your heritage when it languished;
¹⁰ your flock found a dwelling in it;
in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.

Later in the week, on a conference call, a participant from Manitoba mentioned what a desperate time this is for many of the farmers. Persistent rains are delaying the harvest..... in fact they will spoil the harvest if there isn't a stretch of dry weather very soon.

The same thing, viewed from a different perspective, can feel very different.

When we hear the stories of others, we're reminded that there are many different ways of experiencing the world. Actually I sometimes think that it is perfectly natural to have opposite feelings about the same thing..... at different times, or even at the same time. Most of us try to avoid this reality, because of a fear of seeming inconsistent.

After a weekend of rain in Port Stanley, with eight muddy paws tracking wet clay into the house over and over again, I'm a little less inclined to celebrate rain. But just saying that reminds me of how much I have to be grateful for. Muddy pawprints in the house are pretty low on the scale of life's problems.

Maybe one of the great benefits of rain is that after a few rainy days, there will be a moment when the sunlight comes, instantly lightening our outlooks.

We know that no matter how much it rains, the sunshine will come back.

At Thanksgiving, may we be thankful for all that God has given us....."the breezes and the sunshine and soft refreshing rain", to quote a favourite hymn of the season.

Peace and blessings.

Nora