



# Kitchissippi

UNITED CHURCH

**Sunday, Aug 2, 2020**  
**Season of Pentecost**

Greeting from Rev. Jenni  
Good Friday to you!

I hope this finds you well and enjoying the beautiful weather! The lack of humidity is such a blessing, isn't it? It reminds me of 6 years and being in Penticton, BC for an Affirm United Conference. Hot, beautiful weather with no humidity - it was a wonder for this Ontario girl! (Don't get me wrong, I also love humidity and think it's a blessing too.)

As a parent, there is not much else I can think about right now than Ontario's back to school plan (announced yesterday). I'm worried for kids, parents and teachers. If you are a parent too, with school aged children, and you are struggling and need to talk, please give me a call or send me an email.

One coping mechanism I've developed when the pandemic seems like too much, is that I go to my backyard to see the new life that persists despite the death and sickness, fear and worry around me. Nothing growing in my backyard knows there is a pandemic. Nothing growing back there cares there is a pandemic. The innate movement from seed to bud to plant to fruit or vegetable is relentless, inevitable, beautiful. Seeds know what they are doing, it is in their genetic material to do what they are doing in my backyard.

What is innate to you, as a human on this earth? We all know the trajectory from egg and sperm, but what next? We grow to adulthood and then what? What is innate for us? Producing fruit or vegetables? Producing love and kindness? Providing for those who have less? Loving the outcast? Worry?

My tomato plants are giving me a hard time right now. They have become unruly. They are so full of life, they are falling over. Literally, branches are on the ground. I need to rearrange the stakes to prop them up, but also need some patience and maybe wisdom. Innately, the tomatoes are doing what they are doing: growing, thriving, making fruit, sending out branches, falling over, getting propped up again and repeat.

Maybe this is part of our innate experience as well? We grow, thrive, make fruit (not sure if that continues the metaphor, disrupts it, or is exactly right), branch out, fall over...and God helps prop us up again. I've never gone very deep with the idea of God as the divine gardener before, but I think this fits: God plants and grows, we thrive and fall over, God plants and grows, we thrive and fall over. For some reason, this is really comforting to me. Sometimes when we are anxious or worried, we can feel as though the outcome might be the worst thing that could happen to us. Often, it feels like we are alone in what we are going through. Maybe what needs to happen

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when we are in that space is to lie down, like my tomato plants? Lie down, look up at the sky (for that is the only view from down there) and think/pray 'God, please help me get up? Please help me cope with this situation I find myself in? Please remind me what we can do together? Your work is my work is your work...help me work with you, to do our work?' If I can just remember the pattern: God plants and grows, I thrive and fall over, I feel like I might be better equipped each time a trial comes my way. I will thrive. I will fall down. God will always be present as I lie there. God will always help me thrive again.

May we all turn to God when we fall down, trusting in God's presence, knowing God wants us to thrive, knowing God loves us and wants us to grow, and will help prop us up again.

May you all experience God's presence wherever you are in this metaphor.

Summer Blessings to you all,  
Jenni

Attaching some pictures of my garden fruit as a reminder of the innate growing abilities of living things.



## Faith Formation

We are in tumultuous times!

I love the word tumultuous. It's so satisfying to say. It can mean disorderly, confusing or confused, noisy, and uproarious (that's also a great word). I like the word turbulent, too, which has a similar meaning of being full of commotion; not controlled or calm.

I feel like these words describe my summer, the state of my living room, the weather, and even the world right now... and , sometimes, my own thoughts and feelings. Oh, and did I mention I have a toddler?

A tumultuous time can be irritating or scary or worrisome. But like a big storm, if we change our mindset, it can also be kind of exciting, a change from the everyday routine. Sometimes a big storm is exactly what is needed. A good breeze can bring fresh air and we often have nicer weather after a storm. When I was younger I used to sometimes wish some magic breeze would come clean my room (I would still welcome that tbh). I find that a strong breeze can help my mood, too, as if it's clearing away unhappy or grumpy thoughts that were stuck.

My dear friend Nicole and I have been talking about these stormy feelings and how sometimes negative thoughts really seem to stick. Nicole describes this as "having your grumpy pants on" - when nothing seems to be going right and you're just in a bad mood. We can notice our grumpy thoughts and try to understand them, and be kind to ourselves. We can watch our stormy feelings and let them pass, or try something to "break state" and get into a better space inside. Maybe dancing, or jogging, exercising, or singing helps you shake it off. (I say shake it off, thinking of the Taylor Swift song, because we can try to shake off other people's negativity - but we also need to shake off our own unkind thoughts too, right?)

I had planned to share the song Spirit of Gentleness with you this week. It's a hymn I really like, imagining God's spirit as a gentle but energizing wind that motivates us. The opening says "blow through the wilderness..." which usually I hear as being something free and breezy, but today I was thinking of it as "spirit, blow through the wilderness (of the world/my thoughts/my feelings). That's why it's in the opening of my message -- but, see, I changed my mind. This week, I'd like to share Nicole's song Grumpy Pants with you. You can hear about those sticky grumpy thoughts and maybe you can sing and dance them out - or just notice how you are feeling.

I live with a toddler. There are lots of turbulent, tumultuous times here with big feelings that come and go like storms. As a mom, I'm trying to remember that these little storms (which are very big to such a small person) are important and that they will pass. And I'm trying to remember that he's looking to me, watching to see how I react so he can learn about stormy feelings. I'm still learning how to notice and calm my own grumpy storms inside so that I can show him how, too.

I hope you are making the best out of super hot, sticky days, and jumping in lakes, sprinklers, a pool, or just the tub to cool off. If the heat is getting to you, I hope the storms help you feel better!

Diana

Diana's video message this week:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySAcHmEJex4&feature=youtu.be>

Diana's [storms and rainbows prayer](#)

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The full newsletter archive is available [at this link](#). It has some more videos of Diana and Ro-Ro, and other resources.

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For this week - or for Monday, if today's message is too full, please add:

If you've been feeling grumpy lately because you're tired of this virus, or don't like the weather, or any other reason, here's a song for helping you when you are feeling really cranky or quick to anger. [Grumpy Pants](#): by Nicole Edwards

This song is a good one for when you're really irked. It's also good for when you're feeling happy and calm, because that's a better time to think about how you can change your mood when you get well and truly peeved.

The song is about a few things, including chronic illness. That's when people live with a condition or disease that doesn't go away. It can affect how they feel physically, emotionally, and mentally. Her song says that the grumpy pants feeling can happen a lot - to any of us (and especially for people living with conditions like that).

The lyrics are fun and helpful. She names how she feels, and what she can do about it: "I am in a foul mood. I feel lethargic, I don't know what to do. I've got these aches & pains, In my body and in my brain. You bet it's real! It's also a state of mind Take time to unwind..."

Nicole told me that if she were re-writing the song today, she would change some words from: "I've got my grumpy pants on. I don't recommend it, I hope it won't last long." to "I've got my grumpy pants on. I just noticed and hope it won't last long." We can be kind to ourselves by being mindful and noticing those grumpy pants times.

### Links from this week - Familiar Voices

## WIDER CHURCH

The Kitchissippi Times News is Back!

(taken from Kitchissippi Times News)

In April, like many local businesses and organizations, the Kitchissippi Times team had to make some tough decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included suspending our printed monthly publication.

But that didn't stop us from producing local news. These last months, we were busy keeping up with the community and publishing stories digitally. The Kitchissippi Times website was also redesigned! Check it out at [www.kitchissippi.com](http://www.kitchissippi.com).

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**We are here for you! Please reach out!**

**Kitchissippi United Church**

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CLOSED UNTIL  
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TO THE COVID-19  
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