

## **Devotion, Week of July 20, 2025**

**Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

This past Sunday we looked at the text in Acts 6 where deacons are elected by the early church. The need became apparent when the widows were not being taken care of properly, and the 12 apostles decided they couldn't do everything. So 7 wise men, full of the Holy Spirit, were chosen to handle benevolences and administrative duties. The text says the entire community of believers was happy about this, the deacons were blessed with laying on of hands, and the church grew. Taking care of the community means that all are accounted for and valued. I'm reminded of quaking aspen trees.

In Utah, there is a forest of about 47,000 quaking aspen trees that function as a single organism. They reproduce by sprouting new trees from their underground root system, which is entirely connected across the forest. It is believed to be one of the largest, oldest, and heaviest connected colonies of living organisms at about 80,000 years of age, covering 107 acres and weighing about 6600 tons. It is called "Trembling Giant." The slightest breeze causes the leaves to flutter, and in the fall, when the leaves turn golden yellow, it is an amazing sight of thousands of golden leaves trembling in unison. A community that depends on every single other tree for life and sustenance. That is what we are called to do as Christians – to follow the early church in taking care of each other. When we are connected, our roots make us stronger, and when we care for those who are in need, we build a community of love that shows the world how to live. Thank you, shepherds, for all you do to care for your church members.

*Jeanne*