

**Pastor's Blog**  
**Rev. Laura Baumgartner**

As the season turns to Autumn, I am reminded of Parker Palmer's reflections on Autumn: "Faced with the inevitable coming of winter, what does nature do in Autumn? It scatters the seeds that will bring new growth in the spring- and scatters them with amazing abandon."

I attended a conference recently and listened to our Bishop talk about living in a tension between two ideas. On the one hand, we know to be true, "As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end." On the other hand, we also know to be true that God says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing in you. Do you not see it?" To me, that tension is autumn. The world is as it has always been, is as it was created, moving toward winter and a time of rest. At the same time, the world is preparing for what new things the Spirit is doing and planning and bringing to life.

I am moved by the observation at Aldersgate this Autumn of the seeds that are being scattered and planted and tended. I am moved by the work of the Spirit among us as we start to imagine what might be in store for us. There are new beginnings, among them the EM-BaRC team. EM-BaRC stands for Enquiring Minds- Becoming a Reconciling Congregation. That doesn't mean we are necessarily becoming a reconciling congregation, but rather that we are questioning whether that is something we are called to do. The EM-BaRC team is a team which will design a process for the congregation so we can engage in conversation around questions related to whether we believe we are called to be open to the gifts of everyone, including those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and allies or whether that is not our calling. No one knows how the congregation's conversation will happen yet but the EM-BaRC team is the team that will help us find a way to make room for all voices in the conversation. The EM-BaRC team is made of volunteers from the congregation who are interested in designing a series of safe, respectful forums where deep listening is possible for all of us. Membership on the team will require the ability to listen and work with people who are different and will require time to be responsive to questions and suggestions from others. It's not for everyone to be on the team, but the team is open to everyone. The team is committed to hearing from everyone. If you are interested in being on the team, I encourage you to be in contact with one of the pastors or with Joe Lee, the chair of the Core Leaders. The EM-BaRC team doesn't have a chairperson yet, and they will decide how they will work together once the team comes together. Expect to hear more about their work frequently throughout the coming weeks and months and start praying for their work and the discernment of the entire congregation as we seek God's will in this and all things.

Also, be on the lookout for evidence of other seeds that are being scattered in this season, like a caroling party for the holidays, a new start for the GREEN team, and the formation of a team interested in caring for those with limited mobility who can't be with us in worship. It's Autumn and it's time to celebrate all that the season brings.