***In Nature at LCOC***

Dear LCOC Family Member ~

If you’ve never spent time in any of the outside sanctuaries surrounding our church, you are missing an opportunity to feel God’s awesome peace and His presence. As we begin our walk today, the weather feels more like winter than November. While winter doesn’t officially begin for a month, it seems Jack Frost has made an early visit to the area. We begin our stroll at the entrance to the UFH:

* We pause to enjoy the beauty of the hardy lavender and yellow pansies in the pots on the steps in the back.
* The birds are fueling up at the feeder nearby and flock close together while enjoying the tasty sunflower seeds that have recently filled their feeding station.
* As we round the corner, we startle the grey and black squirrels as they are working hard to store the abundance of acorns in the outer sanctuary. They stop temporarily to grab a sunflower seed or two that has fallen from the bird feeder.
* Many of the leaves that remain on the more juvenile trees have frozen as they were caught by the surprise snow that came early.
* Brilliant red berries hang gracefully from the many Heavenly Bamboo shrubs in the outer sanctuary. Birds will depend on these treats during the upcoming winter.
* Red berries are also plentiful on the many Dogwoods on the property. It is apparent that our feathered friends and a squirrel or two are already enjoying these delicacies.
* Leaves blanket the drive into the parking area and crunch under our feet as we walk by the beautiful woods. The smell of the leaves delight our noses and we are thankful.
* Daylilies, still dressed in green apparel seem to shiver as a cold wind is beginning to blow.
* The pansies by the entrance to the main inner sanctuary appear to want our attention. We can almost hear them say “Look at us, we like the cooler weather”.
* Many of the gardens have been “put to bed” for a long winter’s nap, especially the ones along the front sidewalk. They look very much at peace and are ready to endure the colder weather and any precipitation that comes their way.
* We have come full circle in our stroll today and are anxious to get something warm to drink as we continue to relish our delightful experience in this glorious outer sanctuary.

You are encouraged to take a self-guided tour through our wonderful landscape here at LCOC. But be ready – you are going to experience God’s peace and presence – so enjoy this special time with our Creator! We will be looking for you even though winter is inevitable and it will be cold as you peruse this beautiful space. It will be a refreshing and rewarding encounter – we guarantee!

***“How silently they tumble down, and come to rest upon the ground
To lay a carpet, rich and rare, beneath the trees without a care.***

***Content to sleep, their work well done, colors gleaming in the sun.***

***At other times, they wildly fly, until they nearly reach the sky***

***Twisting, turning through the air, till all the trees stand stark and bare.***

***Exhausted drop to earth below, to wait like children for the snow.”***

* Elsie N. Brady, Leaves