



Our little one is like a sapling.



She is growing in and by God's grace,
dwelling in the light of His love and drinking
from the River of Life.

She is surrounded and supported by a
community of faith; she is sending deep roots
into scripture and prayer; she is growing
strong and reaching her branches out,
welcoming others as she has been welcomed.

The Spirit rustles her branches; she is moved.
Though seasons come and go, though storms
arrive, she stands firm.



I see seedlings growing, in the safe garden of the church.

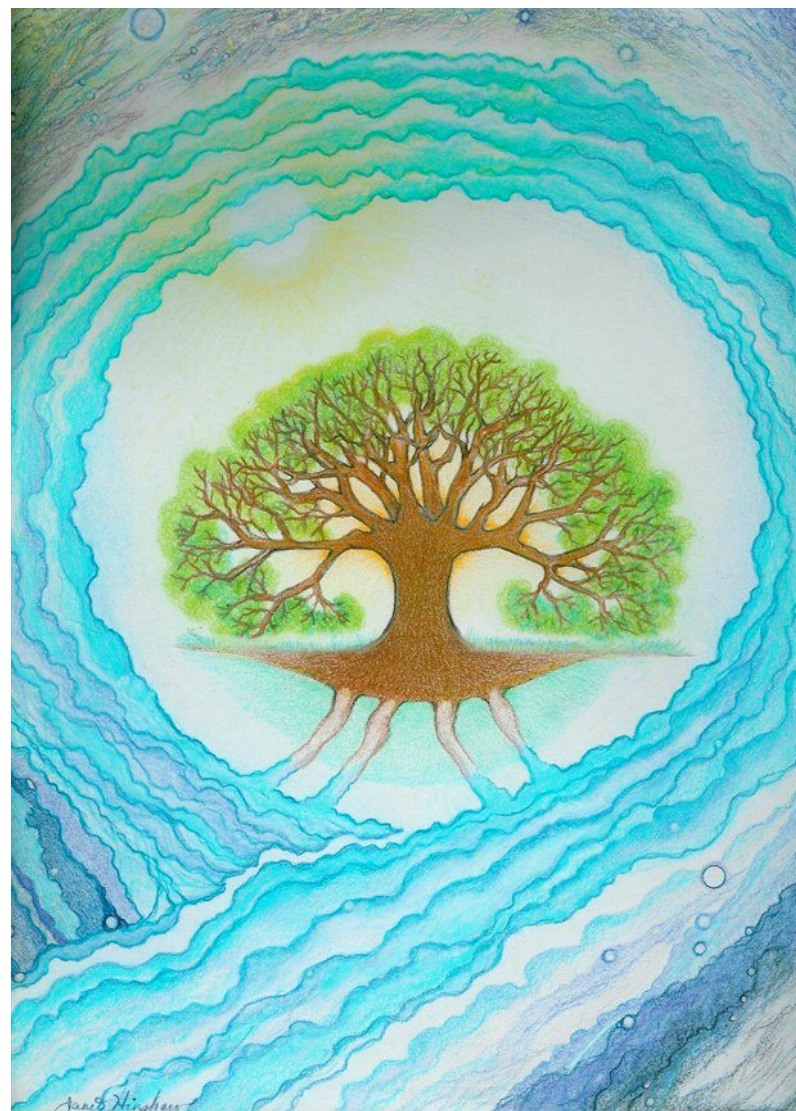
Each seedling is surrounded by caring adults...



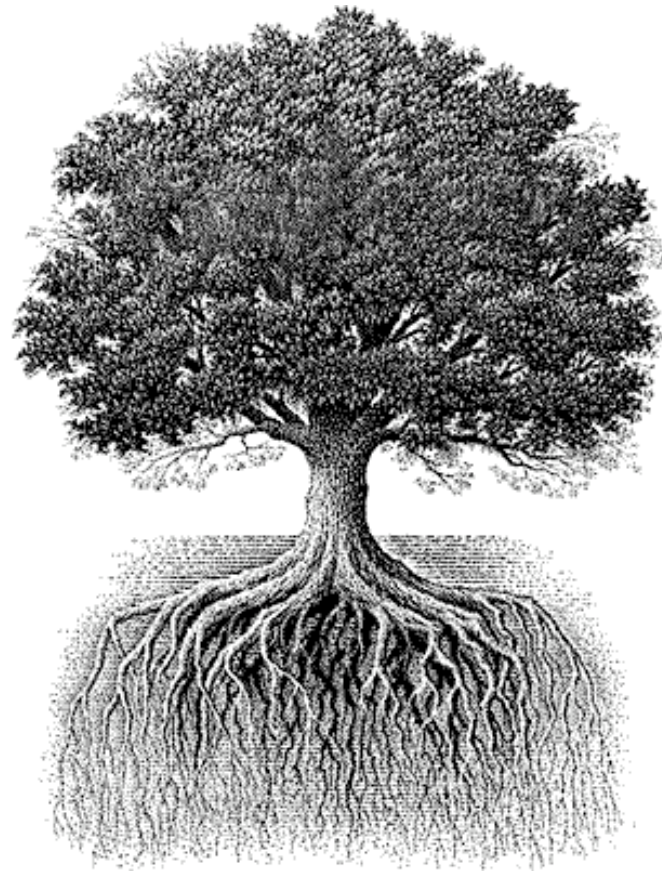
who till the soil, build supports as the tree grows branches,



wrap the young tree's trunk to keep it from freezing during the winter.



God is the giver of life—He is the Sun, the Rain, the River from which the trees drink.



The roots go down deep—deep into scripture and deep into prayer.



As the tree matures, she grows rings, and her memories of being loved in the nursery, of being part of a community of faith, are treasured in her center, in every part of her being. Her identity and knowledge of who she is and where she belongs are written on her year after year, layer after layer, so that she has a thick, strong core.



She grows leaves, and they dance in worship. She is listened to and affirmed; others remark at the rich color of her bark, the beautiful sound of the wind rustling her leaves, the special fragrance of the gifts God has given her.



She produces fruit and she gives it freely, offering nourishment to others around her. She plants new seeds, and she works also at protecting other trees.



She will be called a mighty oak,
a planting of the LORD
for the display of his splendor.

(from Isaiah 61:3b)