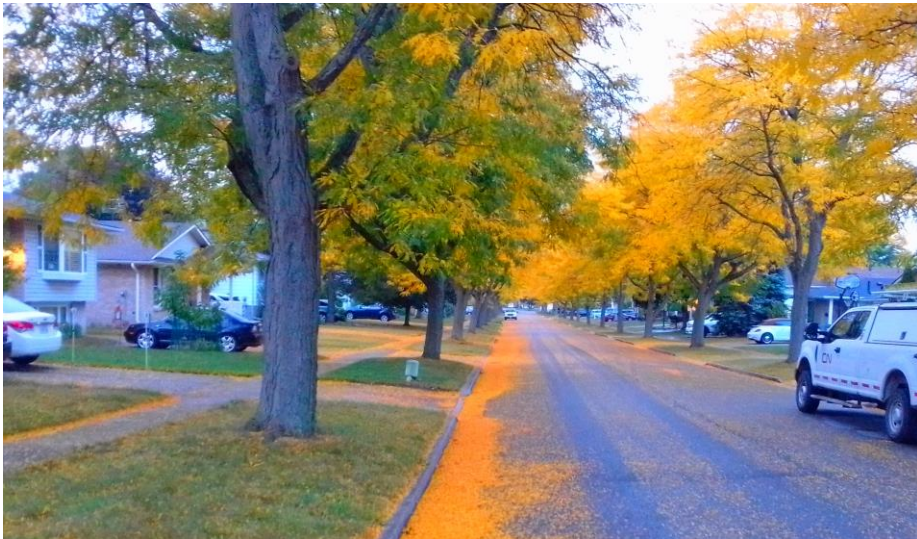


By: Rev. Mark Breese

*Pastor Mark is the Agency Minister and the Director of Ministry & Community partnerships at Community Missions.*

### **Yellow Brick Road**

Each fall the leaves on our street turn color before all the other trees. Their tiny yellow leaflets turn a vivid yellow. Walks during this time are always among the most pleasant for me. After the leaves begin to fall, they cover the sidewalk and street. As you walk and look down the road there are fallen leaves under your feet, and those still on the trees above. It creates a tunnel of yellow. It feels a little magical and it helps float the troubles away for a time. Each step feels like I've entered the magical Technicolor world of OZ and I'm walking down my own 'Yellow Brick Road'.



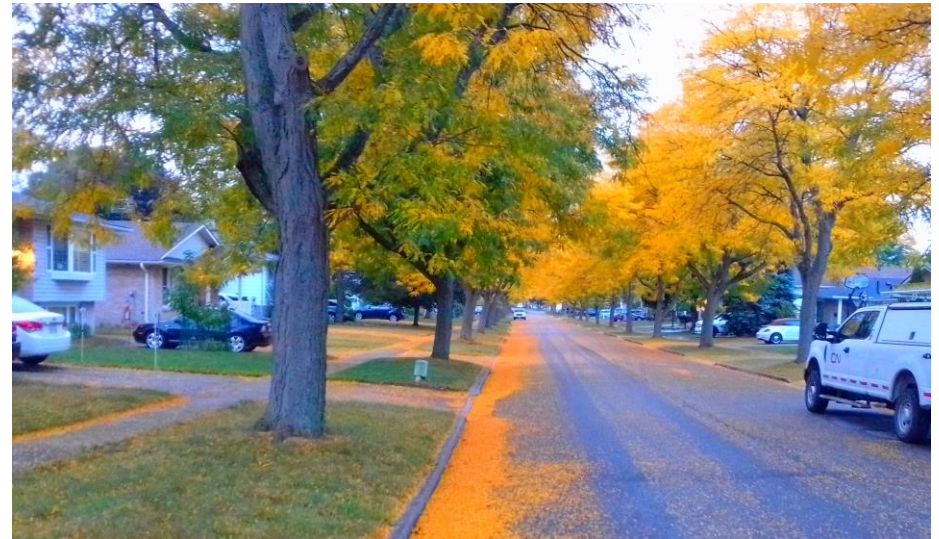
Of course, Dorothy's Yellow Brick Road, for all that it was also a magical path, was not just a pleasant journey. Dorothy was faced by many challenges and obstacles along the way. Many were downright frightening! There were lessons learned as she and her friends overcame challenges one by one. The final lesson she learned was this: what she sought was already inside herself—she always had the power to get home.

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As we move into the fall, we are 7 months into this new world of ours. I've been speaking with many people these days that are pretty worn out by all the changes and stresses that we have been living with. That is completely understandable.

I'm worn out too. There is still much to navigate in the coming months, and we don't know how long the journey will be. Many wonder if they will have the wherewithal to remain strong throughout the journey and have the ability to meet the obstacles that will come.

If you are feeling that way, believe me, I get it! When those feelings of fear and concern begin to get the better of me, and keep me from taking the next steps down the road of this strange journey, try to remind myself that God is right there with me:

*Deuteronomy 31:6*

*It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."*

*Isaiah 41:10*

*Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.*

These are pretty strong and straightforward words, and that is what is needed right about now. At least I need those sorts of words at the moment. I have no idea how far away my Emerald City is. I have no idea what I will meet on my yellow brick road, but I know I will continue to have struggles. So it is a comfort to me to be reminded that God is with me on this journey. I am not alone. God will help me meet the challenges and will not abandon me in the midst of the challenges. Because of this I have nothing to fear. I already have within me all that I need to make it through—God is with me.

Pastor Mark

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