



Rooted IN Abundance

Deep Roots

Roots run deep in Appalachia. A college graduate was asked why she returned to Harlan, far from opportunities to use her degree. Smiling she said, “I came home because I want to pick blackberries off of the same bush my grandparents picked from.” Another graduate returned home and explained, “If I don’t come home, who will take care of grandma?”

This rootedness reminds the Venerable Bryant Kibler, Priest-in-Partnership with St. Timothy’s Outreach Center in Estill County, KY, of the Syrian commander and leper Naaman, who took loads of dirt back to Syria with him because God’s healing presence was rooted in that soil (2 Kings 5). As Bryant ministers alongside communities in Appalachia, he witnesses how deeply rooted God’s people are to the land where they have known God’s healing through community and family. A place where abundance is known in caring for loved ones and tasting berries from ancestral bushes.



Questions for Reflection:

Where do you plant your roots? How does your location and history of being in or from a place impact your ministry?

The mountains and valleys of Appalachia have abundantly provided resources to the rest of the world, especially coal that is used to create electricity elsewhere. Companies have taken from the abundance and cleared out as soon as resources grew scarce, leaving whole communities unemployed. Some families migrate elsewhere. Others stay on the land they love, in mountains and valleys abundant in natural beauty and family connection.

St. Timothy’s partners with many congregations to explore Appalachian culture and to repair homes during summer work weeks. When a team came to assist a homeowner rebuild after the devastating recent flooding along the Kentucky River, the homeowner graciously pointed the team to a neighbor’s house, whose home was more destroyed. “They need you more than we do,” the homeowner announced.

In this place, abundance is rooted in a community that trusts God’s grace to heal what is broken. tens.org



The Venerable Bryant Kibler serves as the Archdeacon for the Mountain Region and as Director of Mountain Ministry for the Episcopal Diocese of Lexington.

