

## Kale and companionship

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It withstood a few cold snaps and then a long dry spell. Neem oil protected it from the threat of wee invaders. Chicken wire and bungee cords protected it from the threat of larger invaders. It's an early harvest of kale, grown by our gardening team and headed for the Watertown Food Pantry today.

It's just an armful of kale. But it's a miracle, really. It's a testament to life's capacity to carry on, to assert itself in the face of challenge.

I've spent a lot of this week with people who are facing their own cold snaps and dry spells. They are looking for the emotional equivalent of neem oil and trying to locate some spiritual chicken wire in the face of some really tough stuff.

I've sent them to the Psalms, my first response to most pastoral crises. The Psalms remind us that life has never been a walk in the park. They give voice to the full range of human emotions. They hurl those feelings at God, even when they're not sure God's out there.

I wish I had a tool kit with neem oil and chicken wire that would protect people from the dark night of the soul. I don't. I have healing oil, which reminds them that God's deepest yearning is for their health and wholeness. I have prayers, which reminds them they are not alone. And sometimes I have kale, or a handful of another beautiful crop, to offer them sustenance. What I know is that the more we share this stuff, the more likely it is we can harvest peace, joy, and a good night's sleep.

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