



Hebrew: “Hyaets”

English: “Tree of Life” (though it is poor Hebrew grammar)

Planted at the very center of both the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:4b-9) and the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1-3), the tree of life is a thematic image that bookends the biblical story of God thereby orienting our thoughts and attention towards sustaining, cultivating, and promoting life throughout creation. Stories, parables, and sayings throughout scripture develop the image of the tree of life as they remind listeners of the formative symbol of life. Take, for example, some of the following:

- Trees used in the construction of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25/35)
- Elijah contemplates his life underneath the broom tree (1 Kings 19)
- Isaiah’s prophecy of the young sapling that will shoot forth from the root of Jesse (Isaiah 11)
- The wise men who bring the infant Jesus gifts made from the resin of the frankincense and myrrh trees (Matthew 2:1-12)
- Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree to see Jesus (Matthew 19:1-10)
- Paul compares Gentiles to wild olive branches grafted into the rich olive tree of Judaism (Romans 11:17-18)
- Jesus’ death through crucifixion on a cross made from a tree (Mark 15)

The Hebrew word meaning “life” shares a common root, pronunciation, and spelling with the word which means “community.” Thus, it would appear that life and community are linked in Hebrew thought. This is Hyaets: a non-profit organization covenanting to inspire, enrich, and embody community. We strive to do so by cultivating, nourishing, and promoting life within the communities in which God has rooted us, particularly the Charlotte Enderly Park-Parkview neighborhood. The biblical image of the tree of life guides us as we live, worship, pray, act and reflect.

Hyaets is loosely organized into 5 branches:

- Intentional Christian Community (The Arbor) – Christians living together sharing resources, housing, meals, prayers, spiritual guidance, and daily life
- Urban Ministry (Shade for Sojourners) – neighbors helping neighbors in a relational, need-meeting context, including after-school ministry, community meals, resource connection, transitional housing, jail/prison visitation, community gardens, and more
- Retreats Experiences (Little Tree) – retreats for Sabbath, silence, mission, and growth to bring together the poor and affluent
- Congregational Partner (Seed Exchange) – partnering to assist, support, and encourage local churches in mission and ministry with the poor of Charlotte

- Resource Creation (The Well) – Printed, spoken, and custom-designed resources to advocate for forgotten and ignored voices of Charlotte

Hyaets was founded by four young seminary graduates in 2005. Over the past few years, Hyaets has been a mission partner numerous churches throughout North Carolina, Virginia and South Carolina. Hyaets desires to cultivate strong relationships with local churches through retreat and mission experiences, mission training, and other mutually-affirming community building opportunities. Please visit our website (<http://hyaets.org>) and contact us that we might learn and serve together.

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