During the June 10th Church Council Meeting a recommendation was brought forward by Richard Ledebuhr, Property Committee Council representative, concerning the removal of the two trees adjacent to the southwest side of the sanctuary. During the bidding process for the roof project, both contractors strongly recommended that the Silver Maple and the White Pine that are present there be removed. As good stewards of our Church property, we need to listen to the experts that we have contracted to perform work for us.

A little background on the Silver Maple comes from this excerpt from an msu.edu publication on *"Repairing Storm Damage To Trees"* by Melvin Koelling and Russell Kidd of the MSU Forestry Department. "A few tree species including Chinese elm, **silver maple**, boxelder and various poplars have brittle wood which is easily broken. **These rapid-growing trees are particularly susceptible to storm damage. Homeowners should be aware of these characteristics and avoid planting such species close to buildings, utility lines, etc. where potential damage could occur.** If such trees are already growing in these locations, some preventive practices, such as pruning and bracing, or cabling, may help reduce the potential of storm damage. This is particularly true as the tree grows in size and the weight and surface of the leaf and branch area increases.

More severe damage consisting of large broken branches, split crotches and/or removal of bark, and splitting or splintering of the trunk can occur. Strong winds, lightning and heavy ice storms are the most probable causes. When a tree is severely damaged, the first question that must be answered is: "Is the condition of the tree such to make keeping it worthwhile?" Take the time and effort to save a tree only if a substantial portion of the tree remains intact and if, when repairs are made, the tree will still be attractive and of value to the property owner. This is particularly true if the tree has brittle wood and a branch structure which makes it vulnerable to additional damage from future storms. In addition to its condition, other factors to consider in determining whether or not a tree is worth saving include its age, species, growing location, the value it adds to the property, sentimental value, etc. When all of these are considered it may often be more desirable to replace the damaged tree than perform extensive repairs."

I have also found this information concerning Silver Maples from the Arbor Day website "Very fast-growing. Leaves are green on top and silvery-white on the underside, shimmering and dancing in the breeze. Tolerates a wide range of soil conditions. **Because of a vigorous root system, plant 10' or more from sidewalks, drives, foundations, and sewer lines.** Grows to 50' to 80'with spread 2/3 of height to wider than the tree is tall. (zones 3-9)"

We have examined the Silver Maple in question and over the years this tree has been periodically pruned on the side facing the sanctuary which now gives the tree the appearance of leaning away from the building. This tree will also need to have further pruning performed to allow us to erect the scaffolding needed during the roof project and to repair storm damage it sustained during the storm on June 8th. That, along with the fact this species of tree shouldn't have been planted in this location in the first place have led us to the conclusion that this tree should be removed.

As for the White Pine, this tree has been pruned over the years so that it is flat sided on the side of the tree towards the building. The tree also has a double top, caused from the leader sustaining damage at some point in time, which can lead to the top of the tree becoming weak and unstable. Also, over the years the shade and needle fall from this tree have caused a considerable amount of mold to form on the current sanctuary roof. Moss can grow on moist shingles. Once it grows, moss holds even more moisture to a roof system's surface, causing rot. In addition, moss roots also can work their way into a wood deck and structure. Algae also grow in damp, shaded areas on asphalt shingle roof systems. Besides creating a black-green stain, algae can retain moisture, causing rot and deterioration. Trees and bushes should be trimmed away from homes and buildings to eliminate damp, shaded areas, and gutters should be kept clean to ensure good drainage. Tree branches touching a roof will scratch and gouge roofing materials when the branches are blown by the wind. Falling branches from overhanging trees can damage, or even puncture, shingles and other roofing materials. Leaves on a roof system's surface retain moisture and cause rot, and leaves in the gutters block drainage. Based on these facts it has been determined that this tree be removed.

As I said earlier, a recommendation and then a motion was made at the June 10th Council Meeting to remove both of these trees, the motion was 2nd and approved with one dissenting vote.

The property committee agrees that once the construction is completed on the new roof that more appropriate landscaping will be added to replace the two trees to be removed. While no final decision has been made as to what species of trees will be planted, they will be ones that are more ornamental in nature and can be pruned to remain below the roof line and free of the building.

Tim Hiller
Moderator