

FEBRUARY 2021



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(Trinity Lutheran Church of Cass Lake)

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Pastor's Reflections

"When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim the release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" (Luke 4:16-21)

Did you know, that in a congregation of just 100 people, it is likely that at least three or four people have had thoughts of suicide in the last year? Have you known anyone who has had thoughts of suicide or has died by suicide?

Just this past month I took an online course on prevention, intervention and what they called postvention. A training really. Not a guarantee of course, but empowering people to cultivate safer communities. While it was informative and practical, it was also fairly intense and challenging. People shared stories both from their professional and personal lives. Stories that dripped with pain.

And yet, too often, these stories, and even more so, those who tell them, remain locked away because, understandably, it is a scary and uncomfortable topic. However, it is ever vital that we start moving into those places to

listen, learn, have those conversations and work towards healing and wholeness, together.

They say courage isn't the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear.

In an effort to raise greater awareness and foster more dialogue around these crucial intersections of faith and life, we will start including a "Mental Health Corner" in the newsletter. If you feel moved by the Spirit to write an article, share information, or perhaps your own story, let me know.

I ask you to take some time and think about these questions: what are my personal feelings and beliefs around suicide? What does the bible say? (Consider Elijah who wanted to die upon hearing Jezebel's threat, or Paul who wrote about his desire to depart and be with Christ). What, if anything, have I been taught about suicide from society? From the church? What if I encounter a person with thoughts of suicide? Do I know the signs? Do I feel equipped to be of support to them and help them find safety?

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim the release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Walking this journey with you,

Pr Amanda

Council & Boards for 2021

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Lent Begins Ash Wednesday

Wed Feb 17 we invite you to join us for **Ash Wed worship at 5:30 pm**, either in-person or online, as we start our Lenten journey towards the cross and empty tomb. We will be offering mid-week worship for the five weeks, but we are waiting to get results back from the survey (the deadline for which is after this newsletter was put together) before making firm decisions about the rest of the Lenten season and whether we will be in-person and online, or online only. Similar to Advent, the Lenten Ad Hoc team (Laurie Beuhler, Mary Nord, Pam & Tom Shepherd and myself) wanted to again provide us a meaningful way of nurturing our relationship with God. So we put together **Lenten packets** for each household to use for at-home devotions and activities. They will be **available for pick-up by Sun Feb 7**. Please take advantage of these opportunities!!

MARCH IS FOOD SHARE MONTH

For 40 years, March in Minnesota has been designated as Minnesota Food Share month. It is a time when nearly every food shelf in the state makes an all-out effort to raise as much food and money as possible. During the 2020 March campaign, more than \$21.5 million dollars and over 7.4 million pounds of items were raised by Minnesota food shelves. During this past year, food insecurity has affected 1 in 11 families in Minnesota. The need during the pandemic has never been greater. The board of Worship and Education has considered food donations vs financial donations and because of the pandemic are requesting that you make a financial contribution vs a food donation. However, if it's your desire to donate a product, one such need that is particularly in short supply at this time are personal care type items, like toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, deodorant, hand lotion & etc. You can find these items in many stores but I know they have them at Target, in aisle 40 in Bemidji. Your financial contributions and product donations will be split between the Cass Lake and Bemidji food shelves. We at Trinity support both food shelves though our donation of time, and the citizens from the community of Cass Lake also go to the Bemidji food shelf to obtain assistance. It is our hope and desire that you will make a financial contribution or a product donation to help feed the hungry and thirsty during this special time of need in our local area. You can do this by making out a check to "Trinity Lutheran church" and on the memo line write, "Food Shelf." For personal care products, drop them off any Sunday morning at church before services or during the week during normal office hours, Mon, Thur and Fri, 9 -12. God bless you and thank you for your support.



Service Groups

Date	Reader	Singers
2/7	Jane C.	Gary & Bev L.
2/14	Roy B.	Roy B & Laurie B
2/21	Connie M.	Gary & Bev L.
2/28	Lori H.	Roy B & Laurie B

Ushers for February

Earl Tiggeman & Gene Patten

Financials for Trinity

December Financials

Giving	\$14,370.00
Actual Expenses	\$10,161.00
Budgeted Expenses	\$10,567.00

To Till and to Keep: Our Calling to Be Stewards of God's Creation

Creation in the Bible Reflection

By Dr. Diane Jacobson, Professor Emerita, Luther Seminary; Retired Director of the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative; Member, Leadership Team of the EcoFaith Network NE MN Synod and the St. Paul Area Synod Care of Creation Work Group; Mother of Zipporah, the singing dog

In Genesis 2 creation is presented as a garden. God and humanity relate differently to a garden than to the more abstract portrait of creation found in Genesis 1. God provides for the garden and the gardener. God "tames" the chaotic waters of Genesis 1, creating from them springs and the rivers of the world to water the garden. Into this garden the Lord puts trees that are good for food and beautiful to the eye. The fruit of all the trees but one is freely offered. The garden, the creation, is conceived as pure gift.

When the earth is a garden, then the human is a gardener. The human is still male

and female. The woman is the "helper" of the man (*not* helpmate!), making her like unto God who, in Psalm 121, is "our helper." The role of humanity, says Genesis 2:15, as regards the garden earth, is "to till it and keep it," considerably better, I think we would agree, than the language of "subduing" found in Genesis 1:28.

What might capture our biblical imaginations here are the meanings of the two verbs, meanings not clearly reflected in the usual English translations. The first verb, translated in the NRSV as "to till," in Hebrew *'abed*, is a fairly common and terribly rich word meaning "to serve." Do you hear that? By tilling the garden, the human is to **serve** the garden.

And the human is also "to keep" the garden or "to guard" it, in Hebrew *shamar*. The Lord, again citing Psalm 121, is our *keeper*, our shade on the Lord's right hand; the Lord *keeps* our going out and our coming in; the Lord *keeps* our very life. We in turn *keep* God's law; we *keep* God's commandments; we *keep* the way of the Lord. In just such ways as these we are intended to "keep" God's creation. We are obedient guardians, *safe keepers* of God's creation.

By just such "keeping" we are to "serve" creation. We are to serve perhaps as the suffering servant is to serve. Moreover, we are to serve just as Levitical priests would serve in God's temple, taking care that God's dwelling place is honored and rightly preserved. One might conjecture, in fact, that beneath the picture of God's creation as a garden is an equally inviting portrait of all the earth as God's temple. The garden, like the temple, is a gift from God. The earth, as garden and temple, is the dwelling place of both God and all living things. Now, keep your eyes from searching out that one tree whose fruit you cannot have!

EcoFaith Green Tip

According to a recent study by Environment Minnesota, Minnesotans throw out 6,500 cellphones every day, and 40 percent of the heavy metals in U.S. landfills come from discarded electronics. Tired of our "make, use, toss and make more" system, more citizens are showing interest in independent repair of electronics, with Tech Dump and Tech Discounts, a non-profit providing job training and experience for adults facing barriers to employment, leading the way. Tech Dump's mission is to train people who face significant barriers to employment how to refurbish and salvage unwanted electronics, giving both people and stuff a second chance to show their value. Tech Dump estimates that only about 14 percent of all the donated electronics can be put back to use, because the manuals, diagnostics, tools, parts and firmware to reuse them are unavailable. So Minnesota legislators passed just this last summer a bipartisan bill (SF 15) that would require electronics manufacturers to make replacement parts and tools needed for repairs available. It would help create new opportunities for repair work in Minnesota, empower people to fix their own stuff and reduce the amount of waste going on the scrap heap.

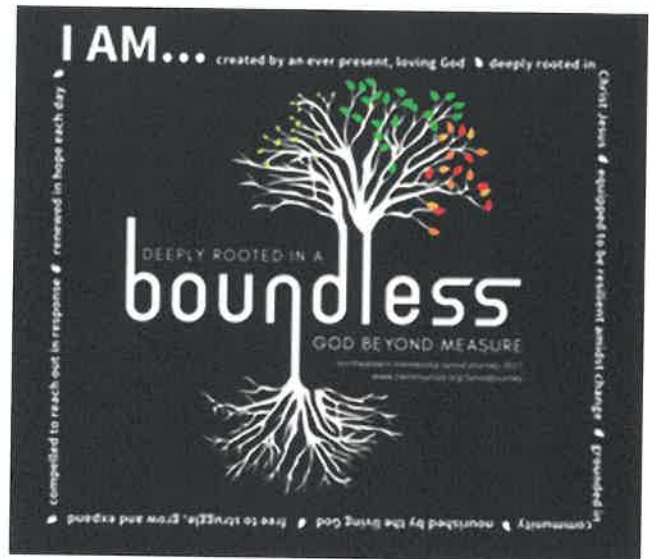
Mental Health Corner

For Pandemic Panic

Breathe. And feel
the Spirit filling your whole body.
Breathe. And give thanks;
it is a wild gift every single time.
Breathe. And acknowledge
the grief of your plans changing,
the fear of uncertain things
looming too large to bear alone.
Breathe. And consider
how well Christ knows,
how fiercely God cares.

Breathe. And lift up
your neighbor more vulnerable still.
Breathe. And believe
we are in this together and
the next right thing is enough
but first remember to
Breathe.

@metaherrickcarlson



Deeply Rooted Curriculum

Are you looking for resources that will help youth (and adults!) navigate the many changes they are facing this year?

www.nemnsynod.org/SJResources

There will be nine Discussion Guides that will focus on our identity in Christ, using the metaphor of a tree with deep roots that is equipped to grow and be resilient as it encounters the changing seasons of life. The Discussion Guides will follow a creed statement that will help us explore *who* we are and *whose* we are.

Each session will focus on one aspect of the creed statement and its accompanying image. Participants will engage through discussion and activities that can be led in-person or online. Supplemental resources on mental health will be available for each session. Discussion Guides will be released monthly.



What else do I need to know?

1. When you write to Dear Friend in Christ, your letter will be swapped with a letter from another writer. They will get your letter; you will get their letter. The exchange is anonymous (unless you provide your contact information), so you can share as little or as much information about yourself as you like.
2. Dear Friend in Christ is open to all participants, although **writers under 18 must have parental consent.** [Download the release form.](#)
3. Letters are paired at random, and we will try to match participants with someone in a different geographical part of the ELCA. Women of the ELCA staff read all letters before the exchange happens.
4. Letters will be mailed to participants on a rolling basis, beginning in June 2020. We will continue exchanging letters received through March 5, 2021.

WELCA: Letter-Exchange Project - we're extending it

DEAR FRIEND IN CHRIST

Want to sustain the community that is a hallmark of Women of the ELCA? Then join Dear Friend in Christ, a unique letter-exchange project to which all participants are invited.

How does it work?

1. Write a letter. Use the "Dear Friend in Christ" salutation. Fill a page or two, however you are inspired. Among other things, please share your thoughts on these questions: How is your faith in Jesus Christ sustaining you during the global pandemic? What words of encouragement can you offer the person who receives your letter?
2. You can handwrite or type the letter.
3. You could include a drawing, a photo, or a recipe, anything that fits into an envelope.
4. Offer up a prayer for the recipient.
5. You may include your mailing address in the letter if you do not wish to remain anonymous.
6. Print and sign the [Dear Friend in Christ release form](#). If you don't have access to a printer, please use [our online form](#). We cannot exchange letters without a release.
7. Mail your letter and signed release form to Dear Friend in Christ, Women of the ELCA, 8765 W Higgins Road, Chicago IL 60631. **Deadline for mailing letters to the churchwide organization has been extended until March 5, 2021.**



Thank you for your generous gift of \$1199.00 to Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) ministries through ELCA Good Gifts.

Piglet	\$30.00
School Supplies	\$300.00
Bible	\$24.00
Chicks	\$10.00
Honey Bees	\$20.00
A Farm	\$715.00
Scholarship support	\$100.00

for an international woman leader.

Thank you!

One particular four-year-old prayed, "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."

Energy Assistance Program

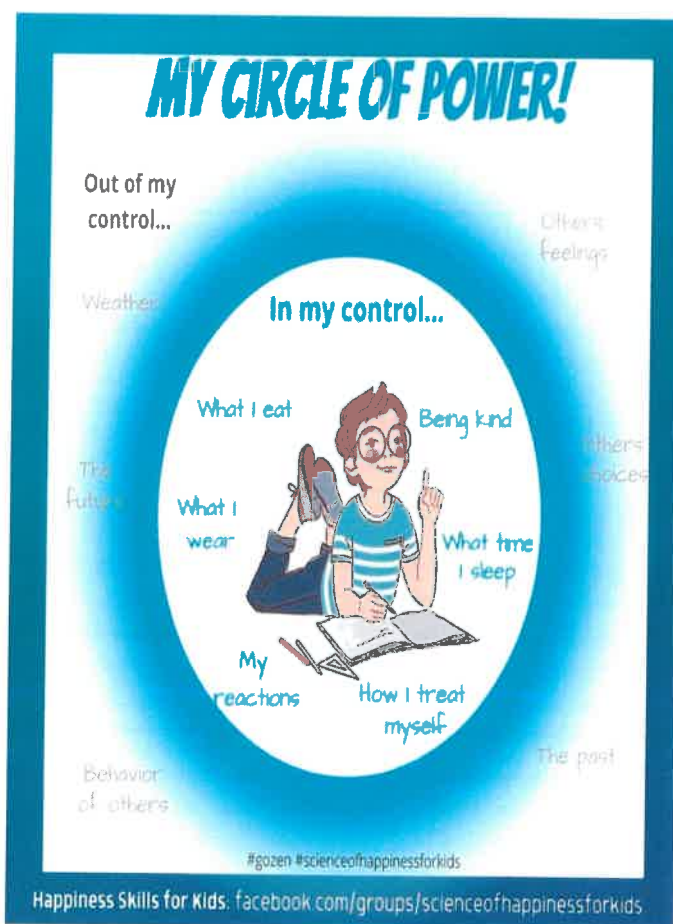
Please share this resource with anyone you know who is struggling financially.

Energy Assistance helps low-income households by paying a portion of the home's heating costs. Bi-CAP serves households living in Beltrami & Cass Counties.

Here are the 2020-2021 Maximum Income Guidelines for this year.

Household Size	Annual Income	3 Month Max. Guidelines
1	\$28,266	\$7,066
2	\$36,963	\$9,240
3	\$45,660	\$11,415
4	\$54,357	\$13,589
5	\$63,054	\$15,763
6	\$71,751	\$17,937
7	\$73,382	\$18,345
8	\$75,013	\$18,753
9	\$76,643	\$19,160
10	\$78,274	\$19,568

Households may request an application by calling BI-CAP at 800-332-7161 or 218-751-1631.



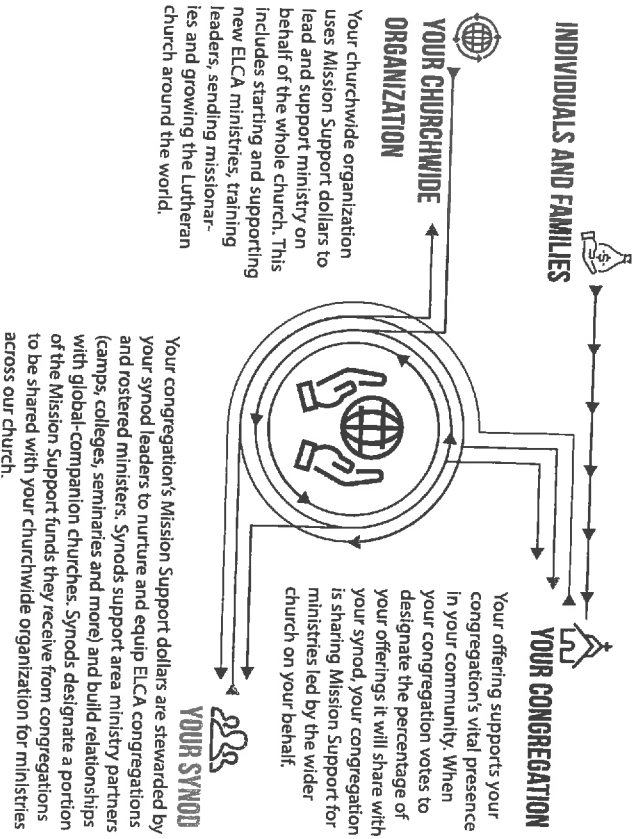
HOW YOUR OFFERING BECOMES MISSION SUPPORT

As Lutherans, we believe that Christ has freed us from sin and death, and even from ourselves, so that we can love and serve our neighbors. One way we put our faith in action is by making a financial gift—an offering—to our congregation.

Each year, ELCA congregations pledge to share a portion of their offerings to fund ELCA ministries in their synods and beyond. We call these funds Mission Support.

Mission Support enables the ELCA's 9,100 congregations and 65 synods to pool resources to love and serve our neighbors in ways that no individual or congregation can do alone. Mission Support is one way we are church together — it's essential to who we are as the ELCA. Through Mission Support, we expand our participation in God's life-changing work in our communities and around the world.

HOW MISSION SUPPORT FUNDS MINISTRY ACROSS OUR CHURCH



2019 FINANCIAL PICTURE

In 2019, ELCA members gave \$1.7 billion in unrestricted offerings* to support God's mission and ministry through the three expressions of the ELCA. Thank you for your generosity!

94.5% — CONGREGATIONS

\$1.6 billion remained with and was stewarded by the ELCA's 9,100 congregations. \$93.5 million was shared by congregations as Mission Support.

3% — SYNODS

\$51 million was stewarded by the ELCA's 65 synods.

2.5% — CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

\$42.5 million of Mission Support was stewarded by the ELCA churchwide organization.

*Unrestricted offerings do not include special offerings (e.g., congregational capital improvements or gifts to ministries such as Lutheran Disaster Response or ELCA World Hunger).

