



Life in Eden

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Hello Church!

Dear Beloved Siblings in Christ,

It is getting harder.

There is really no way around it, I suppose. We are nearly eight months into this pandemic and the science and data points to a potentially difficult winter. A combination of a second wave, the cold/flu season, and the dry cold air the virus appears to thrive in may make us more vulnerable to this virus. Most of us know someone who has been directly affected by the virus. Some of us are actively praying for someone who is fighting to overcome it right now, or another dealing with the lingering symptoms and medical bills.

Personally, I am feeling like waiting out the pandemic is getting harder because Larry and I have had to make the decision not to make our traditional Thanksgiving trip to the be with the kids and grandkids this year. Just a few weeks ago we thought we could manage it.

But then the case numbers, hospitalizations and deaths started to rise. Quickly. And I started hearing my own voice from conversations I had with others who were contemplating travel out of our day-to-day region. "I know it's hard to miss this (*fill in the blank*), but is it worth the risk of getting sick or infecting others?" I had to ask myself the same question, and I started to feel hypocritical.

I also thought about the health care workers who I had seen just recently when I myself was in urgent care (October deer tick bite, ugh). And then again when I went to get my flu shot. They are like health care workers all over the world right now. They are terribly busy in many, many places. They, along with the systems they bring to life, are under great stress. So, I had to consider: Should I travel knowing it increases the possibility of adding additional pressure to an already overtaxed health care system?

So, we made the heartbreaking decision not to go. And it grieves me. I have lamented the cancelation of many things in this pandemic experience, but this decision, this pandemic outcome of not seeing my grandchildren, not checking in with my children face-to-face ... this feels sacrificial.

I am telling this story because I think you also, Dear Reader, may have felt this sense of



sacrifice, and all because of something as uncaring, relentless (for now) and cunning as COVID-19. Unfortunately, we all *get it*.

So that is one comfort I would lift. As we continue to make our way through this wilderness, we are all equally and simultaneously the wounded and the minister. The very nature of a common enemy creates the empathy we need to hear one another's pains and, hopefully, the call to care for one another as best we can as we work to defeat that common enemy.

This is hard. And it may very well get harder in some ways before it gets better. And so, we need to prepare for that. I urge to wear your mask whenever you are around people who do not live in your household or who are outside of your pod or bubble. (I encourage you to consider this if you have not already. My pod includes Larry, obviously, my parents and sister, and is beneficial in many ways. Read more [here](#) or [here](#).)

So, in other words, what we need to prepare for is more sacrifice, more grief, more lament. (Ugh. This year *is* like a deer tick bite in October!)

And yet ... take heed!

At the end of November, we enter a new church year. It is the season of Advent, and it gives us a vocabulary for this experience. It awakens our memories of how God has made a way for us to survive all the trials of our lives, even heartbreaking sacrifice, even pandemic.

And it all starts with lament, offering grief like smoldering incense to God and crying out in dissatisfaction. The prophet Isaiah gives us words to get us started the very first week of Advent. "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence." (Is 64.1)

That is where we start, and by the time we emerge into the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany, we know in our bones precisely what God has done. The heavens *have* been torn open and God *has* come down and the mountains *are still* quaking at the presence of the Christ Child. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light," (Isa 9.2) Isaiah proclaims.

And the Christ Child, we also remember, knows something about sacrifice... he *gets it* too.

Maybe precisely because we must wait for so many things right now, we are also being given a gift of an unusual Advent perspective. With so many events, appointments, social affairs and activity off our calendars, it is a lot easier to see our foundations, the essential, what is meeting (or not meeting) our basic needs and keeping us safe.

And so as we walk forward as we must in the wilderness, into what could very well be days and weeks of more sacrifice, more grief, more lament – I invite you to lean hard into what may very well be the gift of an unusual season of waiting.

With the essence of our life laid open by the pandemic, perhaps we also have usually more space to consider the things this season of waiting asks us followers of Jesus to ponder.

Where in my life may God be making room for something new? Where am I being called to let go?

The color of Advent is a deep and rich blue. Do you see God in beautiful blue?

Advent accompanies us through the darkest time of the year. What does the experience of darkness say about your relationship with God? With your beloved? With your enemy?

In Advent we wait for Immanuel – *God among us* – to arrive. And Jesus always arrives. He is a poor, brown, vulnerable, refugee infant. What does that mean to you this year?

What are *your* questions and ponderings in this Holy season of waiting?

God's messengers are already gathering, I remembered as I practiced *Angels We Have Heard on High* for a virtual choir recording. They are warming up their voices, perfecting their proclamations and getting ready to gather round. Watch for them, our familiar troubadours! "Gloria in excelsis Deo! Come to Bethlehem and see! Christ the Lord! The newborn King!"

***God's peace and protection be with you, this November, this coming Advent and each of your days,
Pastor Ann***

Your Christian Education in Unusual Times



It's like Sunday School Take Out!

Eden Sunday School has resumed and there is always room for more.

These are cards that were sent to Pastor Ann and waiting for her when she returned from a week off in early October. What a blessing of a return to work! (***Thank you Violet, Skylar and Lena!***) We have come up with at-home Sunday School lessons and activities that are distributed to interested families and households. There is no cost to participate. The content is geared to families with children at about grade level 6 and under. If you would like to join in or get more information, **please email Jennifer Wood**.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Are invited to join a Wednesday night book study on "Dear Church, A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.," by Pastor Lenny Duncan, beginning Nov. 4, 5:30-7 pm, on Zoom.

Please visit this **link** or email Pastor Ann at **pastor@edenonthebay.org**, to register.

"This is not an easily digested, topical read," noted Pastor Ann. "I was quite challenged by it. It is a chance for us white Lutherans to see our tradition, our culture and our nation through the eyes of a very honest and very loving black man. And he speaks some hard truths. But I remain convinced that we need to hear and struggle with these truths if we are to take meaningful steps into the Beloved Community Jesus envisioned when he said, 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'" (John 13.34-35)

Zoom helps fill the absence of in-person faith formation

One of the resources we have as people in pandemic in 2020-21 is the ability to use technology to connect with one another. It doesn't replace our Christian fellowship together and it isn't a perfect fix, but it is something in place of nothing.

We will continue to hold Bible Study on Zoom, for instance, and it would be nice if we could add a time of virtual fellowship on Sunday afternoon.

There are some for whom this is a challenging proposition. Some of our Eden family do not feel very comfortable with a platform like Zoom. It can be intimidating, certainly.

So here are a couple of resources to help get folks started.

[Quick little videos showing people how to do basic things in Zoom.](#)

[This article may also be helpful.](#)

At this point we have a Zoom subscription at our disposal. So, if you would like to reconvene a group (WELCA, committees, prayer group, bible study, etc) please contact **[Pastor Ann](#)** to get you set up with a Zoom meeting. It's really easy to do.

We pray to you Almighty God, in this time of pandemic, you are our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Do not let us fail in the face of these events. Uphold us with your love, and give us the strength we need. Help us in our confusion, and guide our actions. Heal the hurt, console the bereaved and afflicted, protect the innocent and helpless, and deliver any who are still in peril; for the sake of your great Mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (elw)

Upcoming Events

Due to the pandemic, our worship arrangements vary from only online, to restricted gatherings. Worship resources, usually a Facebook Live service is held each week. When we are able to gather indoors, masks are mandatory and individuals or households will be required to maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet.

We use Michigan guidelines and best practices for preventing the spread of COVID-19. In the event public health restrictions are tightened, we will pull back to online services only. **The most up-to-date information on worship status may be found on our [website](#) or [Facebook](#)**



Do you have something you would like added to the calendar? Email or call with your info (what, when, time, place and contact) to the office.

Eden on the Bay Calendar

Financial Snapshot



September Financial Snapshot		YTD
Income	\$ 8,155.67	\$ 114,707.84
Expenses	\$10,084.44	\$ 95,208.90

October Financial Snapshot		YTD
Income	\$ 7,880.72	\$ 122,588.56
Expenses	\$ 9,607.44	\$ 104,816.34

As you can see, we are holding our own in these challenging time. Although our expenses are down and we continue to look for ways to save money, you can see that in the last two months, our expenses outpaced our income.

Thank you for continuing to make your offering toward Eden's ministry. Please continue to give generously as you are able. If you or someone you know is struggling in these challenging times, please reach out to Pastor Ann.

MEMORIAL FUND

In Memory Of Bradley James Mattson
Dianne A. Mattson & James Madison
Current Balance - \$15,852.21

YOUTH MINISTRY FUND

Current Balance - \$4,280.35

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Current Balance - \$28,350.17

YOUTH MINISTRY FUND

Current Balance - \$4,280.35

Community Notes

Congratulations to Lon Hider who has officially entered the candidacy process to be a called and ordained pastor in the ELCA. Lon is a member of Eden and leads worship and preaches on occasion. Eden is his sponsoring congregation in the candidacy process. Please hold Lon and his family in your prayers as he learns more about Lutheran Theology and the ELCA model for a faith community.

Left: One of the last roses of the season from the tenacious yellow rose bush . So fragrant and beautiful Thanks be to God. Thanks for tending to our flower garden,

Brenda St. Martin. And thank you to John Murk, Ed Hines, Doug Scheuneman



Left: Couldn't resist sharing this little glimpse of one of our newest faith community members. This is Cedar Wolf Dennis, little brother to Violet and child of Michael and Candace. We look with hope and jubilant anticipation to the day we can welcome him fully into the Eden family.

Mailbox

Dear Members of Eden,

Thank you so much for the beautiful flowers you sent me for my 81st birthday recently. They were much appreciated. *Love Doris Ritter*

Dear Eden Members,

Thank you for your kindness. I really appreciate the flowers from our Congregation! They are holding up still! *Thank You again, with love Kinky*



Thank you, Judy Erickson, Helen Scheuneman, and Jean Hayes for packing up and sending the quilts for Lutheran World Relief. We packed up **76 quilts** that were made by our Quilting Group. Thank You to Judy & Curt Erickson who took them to Gladstone to be shipped out. Thank You to our Quilting Ladies: Judy Erickson, Helen Scheuneman, Margaret Gosselin, Karen Derwin, Billie Lindquist, Debbie Perttula, Linda DeRoche, Cindy Hines, Candy Simonen, Jean Hayes, and Lenore Schramm who sews a lot of quilt tops for us.

Dear Eden,

Thank you for delivering Christ in Our Home and Word in Season (devotionals). I really appreciate it. *Violet (Babe) Stimac*

Thank you John Cromell, George Balko and the Property Committee for helping us keep this place in order and respond to furnace and light fixture hiccups.

Mask Effectiveness Illustrated in Kansas

There is a new, very straight forward study from the University of Kansas that shows masks make a significant difference in interrupting transmission of the virus. ([Read more.](#))

Happy Birthday Blessings to You!

November Birthdays:

11/02 Angela Treiber
11/05 Sean Sutherland
11/12 Jason Lindquist
11/13 Jean Mattson
11/14 Debra Perttula
11/17 Max Alexander
11/17 Bette Immel
11/17 Jacob Mahoski
11/22 Pauline Knuttila
11/22 Lori Stein
11/23 Karen Derwin
11/24 Scott Lindquist
11/28 Edward Hines
11/28 Sarah Willoughby
11/30 Michelene Dausey



Pray Ceaselessly

Eden Prayer List



Please remember the following people in your prayers: Alek B., Lori Mattson, Jonnie True, Chandler Lundbom, Larry Ouellette, Keith Lundbom, Paxton Florek, Bruce Graves, Mary Kutsick, Cathy Mickelson & Family, Marlene Robbins, Larry Tweedale

In the Nursing Home: Ruth Elavsky, Janet Whippen, Pat Seglund, Don Johnson, Jim LeVeque, and Babe Strand. We also pray for nursing home staff members who go above and beyond each day to protect those in their care.

In assisted Living: Norma Secreast, Jean Moore, and Donna McNally.

In the Service: Airman Craig Oas, Ryan Graves, Zac Culter, Mike Knickerbocker, Sean Sutherland, Peter Peterson, Brad Salmi, Mathew Moilanen and our veterans who have returned to their communities.

And in general: All who deal with COVID-19 here in our neighborhoods and beyond.

Pray for peace at the
9pm whistle!

Growing Stewards Step by Step

Devotion 11

Coming to Terms with Life's Realities ***Luke 18:1-8***

This passage is often referred to as the parable of the “dishonest” or “unjust” steward. For some this is the most troubling of all the parables Jesus told. On the one hand a steward is discharged in response to charges that goods were being wasted. Yet in the second half of the parable, this dishonest steward is commended for shrewdly discounting the debts of others to the same master. How are these two actions reconciled?

In the first half of the parable Jesus reminds us that we are all stewards of what God has entrusted to us. Yes, everything. If we are not faithful stewards, we can be discharged. Perhaps more appropriately, what we have been put in charge of can be taken away. Has this ever happened to you? I can remember times that I did not use my money wisely and some of it was taken away. We frequently hear in the news about people who have been poor stewards and their position and status are taken away. Yes, this can happen. We are encouraged to always be faithful and responsible stewards of what is entrusted to us.

It is the second half of this parable that may be more difficult to understand. Here Jesus is not commending the specific actions of the unjust steward, the reducing of the debts, but commending the shrewdness in taking action. Acting shrewdly means having a discerning awareness of the situation or reality and a willingness to act in skillful ways. The unjust steward assessed the reality of the crisis facing him and acted promptly with foresight.

This was not the only occasion Jesus illustrated this point. In Matthew 10:16, as he was sending out the disciples, Jesus said, “be wise as serpents and innocent as doves”. The word translated as “wise” in this context is the same word as the “shrewd” in the parable. Therefore, Jesus is encouraging and praising disciples to be both devout in their purpose and skillful in their planning.

In Scripture there are many other places where Jesus admires shrewdness in managing affairs, both in work and in love. It is our ability to face reality and skillfully deal with crisis situations that also reflect our ability to be a just and honest steward.

Let us Pray: Dear Lord, help us to recognize and appreciate the gifts you have entrusted to us. May we understand their purpose and use them in ways you would approve. We know we are not always good managers. May we be prudent in assessing reality, patient in addressing a crisis and wise in our decision making. Help us to be faithful to your calling, skillful in planning and responsible as your just and honest stewards. Amen.

ELCA Youth Gathering Update

The ELCA Youth Gathering planned for next summer has been rescheduled for 2022. Eden will plan to send a group. Watch for announcements on preparing for



the trip next summer.

More information is available on the [ELCA Website](#).

From Our Synod



From the Bishop

The same night [Jacob] got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ... Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ...Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.'

~Genesis 32.22 ff

Dear Friends in Christ,

Have you seen those social media memes about the year 2020? There's a picture of an outhouse on fire and the caption reads, "If 2020 were a scented candle...". 2020 is the year your peanut butter toast falls face down, your pizza loses its toppings in the oven, and your keys are locked into your running car. Between the pandemic, killer hornets, early snow, a divided country, and an election year, you are not alone if you think you've had just about enough of 2020.

Jacob of Genesis in the Bible has also had enough. He has had enough of being estranged from his brother, Esau, enough of being considered a cheat and a heel (which is what the word "Jacob" means), just enough. So he is on his way home to make amends, and he's worried. He knows his brother has every right to kill him, every right to still be angry (Feel free to read the whole story in Genesis). So Jacob sends all his wealth, his family, everything he owns across the river, Jabbok, and he's left alone.

Until, that is, a man, presumably a very earthy angel, comes and wrestles with him. All night long they struggle. Talk about a dark night of the soul. As Jacob wrestles with this stranger, he also wrestles with his fears, his doubts, his guilt, his hopes of reconciliation, every instance of where he really has cheated someone or been less of the man that he wants to be. And then as dawn breaks, the stranger seeks to break Jacob's hold and leave. But Jacob will not let him go, not until he receives a blessing.

This is where I think we are, in so many ways. We have been wrestling with our hopes and fears, struggling with an uneasy estrangement from neighbors, friends, and family that we either disagree with or that we miss terribly. As the election results are delayed, as the pandemic continues and case numbers rise, as the days grow shorter and the dark nights lengthen, remember Jacob, remember to hold on, remember to hold on for blessing.

Jacob holds on and receives the blessing of a new name. No longer will he be named cheat and heel, but rather Israel and the father of a nation. I encourage you too, to hold on for blessing and receive the name "Resilient," "Peacemaker," "Survivor of 2020."

Because our night isn't over yet. We are still wrestling with fears and uncertainties, struggling with divisions and the need for reconciliation. Election results will take some time. Please wait. A vaccine will take some time. Try to be patient and be your best self. And just hold on, hold on for blessing. The day will come when our dark night will be over. We might, like Jacob, be a bit bruised when the new day dawns. But our journey towards making amends will continue. I pray that friendships will be renewed, divisions reconciled, and we will all emerge as a better version of ourselves. Hold on for blessing.

***Yours in Christ,
Bishop Katherine Finegan***

We are the Synod and we have a newsletter!

[Read Northern Light](#)

From Churchwide

ELCA presiding bishop issues election statement

10/28/2020 4:30:00 PM

“God’s care for human society calls us to rise again each day ... to appreciate — and do — the work of self-government.” (From the ELCA social message “Government and Civic Engagement in the United States,” p. 18)

This coming Sunday, Nov. 1, at 4 p.m. Eastern time, I will join many other religious leaders in the Holding On to Hope National Prayer Service, to be held at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. Please join me for this special occasion to pray for the good of our nation on the eve of Election Day. Even as we pray, we are called to participate in our nation’s electoral process as one way God works through us to love and serve the neighbor (Matthew 22:39). Our vote is a choice about what will make our society a more just, more whole community where human dignity is honored and rights are upheld.

Throughout our church, many are experiencing heightened anxiety around the 2020 election. I confess that I feel it, too. Elections often raise tensions, but this season more than half of Americans say they are stressed over the future of our nation. We are beset by negative ads, targeted by misinformation campaigns and worried by reports of foreign interference. We are seeing unprecedented numbers voting early and many concerned for safety on Election Day. There are concerns about voter suppression and voter fraud, the near-certainty of delayed results and fear of election-related unrest or violence. We experience all of this under the weight of a pandemic, in a year that has been filled with many crises, especially the ongoing scourge of racism and white supremacy. ([Read More](#))

ELCA and Lutheran World Relief partner to fight COVID-19 around the world

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has worked with Lutheran World Relief (LWR) to repurpose \$160,000 in project funding for emergency responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

In Latin America, the funding will be used for food assistance in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, which have been hard-hit by the coronavirus and the resulting economic disruption that is causing increased hunger. In Africa, the support will provide improved water, sanitation and hygiene, along with personal protective equipment, to displaced communities in South Sudan. And a project in Nepal will ensure that quarantine facilities are hygienic and comfortable, and that households economically affected by COVID-19 are able to cultivate their crops and sustain their small-scale businesses ...

[Learn more here.](#)

Lutheran Disaster Response

Lutheran Disaster Response brings God’s hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need. [Learn more about Lutheran Disaster Response.](#)

Learn more about Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Read Psalm 77. Let us pray. We pray to you Almighty God, in this time of pandemic, civil unrest, climate change and economic uncertainty. You are our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Do not let us fail in the face of these events. Uphold us with your love, and give us the strength we need. Help us in our confusion, and guide our actions. Heal the hurt, console the bereaved and afflicted, protect the innocent and helpless, and deliver any who are still in peril; for the sake of your great mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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