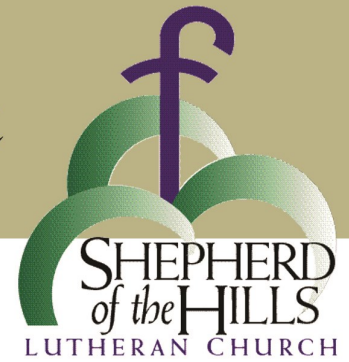


# Shepherd's Voice



November 2020

## **“Who is the King?”**

*By Pastor Scott Searl*

By the time this article reaches you the election will either be over, or we will still be counting the votes and wondering who won. I wish I had a time machine so that I could see the results and know how things all turned out. In my mind the results, or the situation would likely impact what I have to say and what I would be writing about. Alas, our newsletter articles must be completed before the election is over and I don't have a time machine.

However, I do have time honored thinking that has been given to us as a gift from the past. Martin Luther had lots to say about many things, but his most important and influential for me has been his small catechism. The more I keep it around, handy on my desk the more I find it helpful and insightful. I'm sure there is a “Christianity for Dummies” book, but there is no way it could come close to the genius of what Luther wrote more than 500 years ago.

As I strain to think about the days ahead I was drawn to the middle of the small catechism. If you remember there are three basic parts to the small catechism. The first, the ten commandments and Luther's explanations. (I don't like the term explanations... I think of them more like mini-sermons or mini-expositions on each part.) The second part is the Apostles' Creed and Luther's explanations. The third part is the Lord's Prayer and Luther's explanations. I've been drawn lately to the middle part, and specifically the first article of the creed, “I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.”

I've been drawn here because I love Luther's explanation. “I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves by body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties. In addition, God daily and abundantly provides shoes and clothing, food and drink, house and farm, spouse and children, fields, livestock, and all property - along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life. God protects me against all danger and shields and preserves me from all evil. And all this is done out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit of worthiness of mine at all! For all this I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true!”

Whatever happens on November 3rd or any other day for that matter, God is still God. As Christians our highest devotion is not to presidents or kings or anyone else. Our highest devotion is to God, who provides us with shoes! How often to you think, “Thanks be to God

***Continued on page 2***

**Shepherd of the Hills  
Lutheran Church  
500 Blake Road South  
Edina, MN 55343  
(952) 935-3457**

**Staff:**

Pastors	Scott Searl, Sherri Otto
Assistant/Visitation Pastor	Fred Jensen
Music Director	Emily Koski
Deacon	Brian Henning
Faith Community Nurse	Kaye Wothe
Administrative Assistant	Shawn Wacholz
Building Manager	Blair Prax

**Church Council Members / Officers:**

President	Todd Biewen
Vice President	Julie Luers
Treasurer	Steve Hanneman
Financial Secretary	Ryan Erickson
Secretary	Adam Driscoll
Serve	Nate Lichty
Worship & Music	Julia Buteyn
Building & Facilities	Peter Barott
Learn	Open
Communications	Jill Miller
Care	Dave Cousins
LMCC	Open
Evaluation	Chris Polston

**Telephone & Voice Mail Extensions:**

Worship Times	1
Directions	2
Shawn Wacholz	11
Pastor Scott Searl	12
Pastor Sherri Otto	13
Brian Henning	14
Blair Prax	15
Emergency Message Mailbox	24
Kaye Wothe	25

**Shepherd Online!**

Pr. Scott Searl	scott@sothchurch.com
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Shawn Wacholz	office@sothchurch.com
Kaye Wothe	kaye.wothe@sothchurch.com
Brian Henning	brian.henning@sothchurch.com
Blair Prax	blair.prax@sothchurch.com
Church web site	www.sothchurch.com

## Prepare the Pavement: Update on Capital Appeal 2021

Next time you swing by church be sure to take a little tour of our parking lot. You'll notice that our sidewalks are deteriorating from years of snow plows crashing into them. You'll notice that the main parking lot surface has many many cracks that have been filled over time. You'll likely notice that at our main entrance off Blake that there is a growing pothole that we have filled in every fall and spring for many years. While replacing our parking lot it isn't a very exciting project, it is a necessary project. A small team of Pete Barott, Nate Lichty, Pastor Scott and our architect Kevin Busch have been working to estimate costs and ensure that the parking lot renovation is done properly. Part of the work will include a rain garden to manage our storm water treatment. This is a required component based on the watershed district's mandate. It is also an important way for us to be good stewards of God's earth and care for the water that flows out of our parking lot back into God's creation. Please say thank you to Pete and Nate for their work and watch for more updates on our progress. We anticipate launching a capital appeal in January of 2021 we have lovingly titled "Prepare the Pavement - Make Straight God's Path!"

### Pastor's Message continued from page 1

for my shoes?!" Our highest allegiance is pledged to a loving, generous God who seems to enjoy giving us good, even practical gifts. These gifts inspire me to think, "Hey, look at that, God gave that person shoes too!" Or, if they don't have shoes it inspires me to think, "Wow! I have been generously gifted; I could provide that person with shoes."

This might seem silly but no matter what the outcome of the election, God will still be God, people will still need shoes, and we are people who can give them. No matter who wins the election we will still proclaim that a good and generous God is still the king of all creation. No matter who wins we will continue to give thanks for what we have been given and we will continue to share with all those in need. It might even be that what will be most important after the election will be the very same thing that is most important now... God is king, we are God's people and for all this we owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true!



## President's Post: All Saints' Sunday

By Todd Biewen , Council President

*For this month I've decided to resurrect what I wrote last year about All Saints' Sunday. This year I'm feeling really sorry that we are not able to gather together in our Shepherd sanctuary for this special day.*

The first Sunday in November is All Saints' Sunday at Shepherd. I don't think I paid this special Sunday much attention for many years, but over time it has become among the most meaningful days in the church year for me. Perspective is everything, and as I have aged, my view of All Saints' Sunday has changed. Let me explain.

When Cindy and I joined Shepherd nearly thirty years ago, we were in our twenties and had one baby with another on the way. Our kids were usually more content being with us in the sanctuary than in the nursery, so we usually kept them with us in the pew. We did our best those many years ago to pay attention to sermons by Pastors Trelstad and Nordin, but we were also laser-focused on keeping the babies happy and reasonably under control. In those days we stayed closer to the back of the church in case we needed to make a quick exit with one of the kids. I'm sure most of you can relate to carving out your space in the sanctuary, where you get comfortable with the same people near you each week. It was the same for us -- we had our own little neighborhood back there, with many friendly faces returning each Sunday to the same area of the sanctuary.

Of course, in those early days of our time at Shepherd, we were welcomed warmly by many people who were very nice and interested in how we were all doing. There were a number of families like ours, young people, some starting families, and many others in the second half of life, who made us feel welcome and special as part of the Shepherd family. The friendliness and warmth of the people at Shepherd hasn't changed, but of course, the people around us has changed over these thirty years. Some of the people that made it such a special place, are no longer sharing the pews with us. And as I move into the second half of my life, I've been aware of how my perspective has changed from those early days. I am more aware of All Saints' Sunday as a day to remember, and as a day of great solemnity.

All Saints' Sunday is a day when I think about all the people who were special to me who have passed, including my grandparents and other family members. I think about Cindy's parents, both taken by cancer when they were in their early 60's. I think about people that I love that are still living, including my parents, who are healthy but getting older. On All Saints' Sunday I think about what it will be like when my parents are gone. I think about other people in my life that are getting more fragile. And then I am aware that it is All Saints' Sunday, and that I am surrounded by a sanctuary full of people remembering like I am, the people they love and have loved.

*Continued above*

## All Saints' Sunday continued

I will confess here that attending church is a place where my emotions come closer to the surface. For me, this is one of the things that makes attending church unique, in a good way. What can I say, church is pretty different than anything else I do on a regular basis. I attend a lot of meetings in my job - interesting and all, but not exactly spiritual! I spend time with friends and family every week, I attend my kids sporting events, I ride my bike, I take walks, I read the Sunday paper, all good things, but none of them is like going to church.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not going through a box of tissues every Sunday morning, and the emotion I feel when I am in church is a good thing -- I think of it as "emotion borne by appreciation". The ingredients are the combination of the music, the routines and rhythms of the service, the prayers, the words spoken to us and by us, the moments of silence; these elements combine to leave me feeling relaxed and contemplative. Life slows down for a while in church, leading me to a place that I don't experience most other days of the week.

So when All Saints' Sunday comes around, it becomes even more special because it is a chance to gather together to hear the bells ring and to be in our own unique thoughts. Thirty years ago I was in a different place in my life and didn't really understand the meaning of All Saints' Sunday. Now I see it as a day of great significance, when we come together to remember our loved ones and give thanks for them. It's a day when we respectfully remember those who meant so much to us, and we celebrate for having had them in our lives.

Peace, Todd Biewen



# Staff Reflection

## Pathways continued

at our neighbors as Jesus did. See those who may not think, act or appear like us and join them on the road which they are walking on. And please open your ears to listen. Listen to the Holy Spirit who is calling you to help and serve those in need. God longs for unity rather than division, for love rather than hate, for pathways filled with different footsteps.

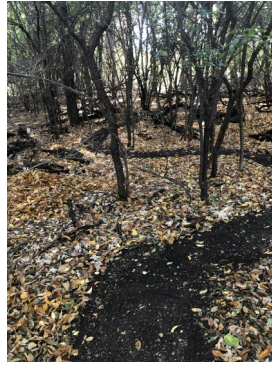
As we walk through this season, over, under and through the brush of life, please know that you are not alone, that God is walking with you and so am I. If you find yourself thinking about your path and would like to have a conversation, please contact me. I would love to talk with you.

As you walk the pathways of your life, I leave you with this Prayer of Good Courage:

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Peace, Pastor Sherri



## Pathways

By Pastor Sherri Otto

Earlier in October, I was outside raking the leaves in our backyard, when I stopped and stared at our wooded area, beyond and behind our fence. I thought about how we hardly ever go back there for it is heavily wooded with a lot of dead branches on the ground.

The idea came to me that I wanted to make a path for us so that we can walk back there safely and enjoy nature. So, I took the rake and a pruner and went to work! I made a path with the rake and if there were any dead branches in the way, I'd cut them down. And I made multiple ways that a person could walk, choosing to go straight, left or right.

But there were some areas where nature could not be disturbed, where a small tree had fallen over the path, where the walk would be a bit difficult but not impossible. I left it that way for a few reasons.

1. To remember that nature is wild at times and should not be tamed.
2. To remind us that the paths in our lives may not always be easy.
3. To recognize that we have a choice in which path we take.

I have walked on several trails in my life, some paved, some gravel, some dirt and some I have made for myself. There have been some rough terrain, ditches and gullies in between the paths. There have been ponds or rivers separating the paths, and at times, I can see people on the other side.

It got me thinking that even though we are on opposite sides of the river or gully, I wondered what would happen when our paths crossed. How would we handle this precious moment in time? For it is here that we make an important decision. Do we stop and talk? Do we just say hi? Or do we ignore the other person, keep walking or turn around and walk the other way?

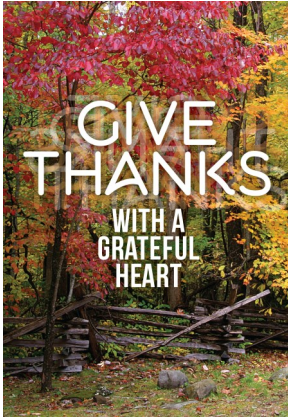
I bring this up because as I write this article, I cannot know the changes that have taken place in the world as you read this. I cannot know if the numbers are up or down for COVID-19. I cannot know if we are getting closer to a vaccine. And I do not know who won the election. For these are all things that will have happened after this article was written.

The one thing I do know is this... just as we are given a choice as to which path to walk down in our lives, we are also given a choice as to how we will treat each other as we meet on that path in the coming weeks and months.

In all honesty, I am fearful for our country with this election, no matter which way things turn out. No matter who has won the local or national elections, there will be hurt, there will be division, there will be grief, pain and loss.

And so, I would like to offer some guidance in this. With this division and loss, if we start to walk or run away from each other rather than coming towards each other, please stop. Stop, take a breath and hear God's word of love, grace and mercy. Once we have stopped, please take notice. Look

*Continued above*



## Not Perfect, but Better

By Deacon Brian Henning

This past weekend I was clearing out the several feet deep piles of leaves which have been building up in my driveway and my side yard throughout the fall. I kept waiting until all the leaves had dropped to begin this project, but, like many of you I am sure, had to do that project much earlier with the threat of snow in the forecast. At that point, clearing the leaves was an emergent project and had to be done quickly. After several hours with my leaf blower and

doing the best I could, I uttered to myself, “well... that’s certainly better. It’s not perfect, but it’s better.”

I have discovered myself uttering this phrase quite often lately. When I moved to my new house I thought that everything would finally be perfect. My apartment was fine and I certainly made do with what I had, but my new house would be perfect because I could have everything exactly the way I wanted it. If you’re laughing at me right now, fear not - I am laughing at 2019 Brian, too. I have learned that my standard of a perfect house was perhaps a bit too lofty. And so, I am finding that my projects have to make things better, not perfect.

This phrase, “better, not perfect,” has been meaning a lot to me lately. Not only is it my personal mantra, but it has a humbling teaching tool.

I am wondering today if you are hoping that now that this election season is over, we can go back to a time that felt more perfect than this year has. Or perhaps you are hoping that the results of this election will lead to a more perfect lifestyle or a more perfect union, as it were. I know I have that hope. The problem, though, is a lesson that my house has taught and a lesson that studying the Creation story for the whole month of October with WAM has taught me: there is no such thing as perfect, there is only better and good.

In Genesis 1, God calls Creation - the earth, the plants, the trees, the whole cosmos, even us - good. In fact, God ultimately calls it all very good. I love that we are all called good, but we must remember that we are called good, not perfect. Nothing has been deemed perfect by God. If for no other reason, I think perfection is such a strange standard to live up to because perfection will look very different to each living thing; what is perfect for one could likely cause pain for another.

A Biblical story that emphasizes this perfectly is the story of the Exodus, the story WAM will be studying in November. Think of that whole saga - what’s great for the Hebrews is rather horrible for the Egyptians. Then, while the freedom of the Hebrews is good, it’s a not a perfect deal either. They are forced to struggle in the desert for 40 years. There’s lots of good in these stories, but there is no perfection.

## Not Perfect but Better continued

Today is no different. You may find good in your candidates of choice, but you will not find perfection. You may find good in your community, but you will not find perfection. And now that our election cycle has completed, no matter how this election turns out, we are called to participate in the age old tradition of God to make things good. Whether your party is in office or not, we are called to hold each other accountable to make things good for all. Life will not be perfect. The troubles of yesterday will likely be around today and tomorrow. But, we can work together to make things good - the kind of good declared by God at the beginning.

So, dear people of God, how will you make good today and tomorrow and for all the days to come? How will you continue to participate in this work of community building to make sure that all people can see that creation is good?

In this now post-election season of gratitude and anticipation of the birth of Christ, what do we do to make things better? Not perfect, but better?

*Continued above*

## SOTH BOOK CLUB

Book club at SOTH is open to all, male and female. Please feel free to join us. We have 2-3 copies of each book. All books will be available all year if you want to read ahead. Please read the book and return ASAP so another person can borrow the book for reading also. We try to get 2-3 readers to be able to read one copy.

For questions please contact Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse at [kwothe@comcast.net](mailto:kwothe@comcast.net)

## Book Club Schedule

Wed., November 18, 6:30 pm,  
“How To Be An Antiracist”  
by Ibram X. Kendi

Wed., January 13, 6:30 pm,  
“This is How is Always Is”  
by Laurie Frankel

Wed., February 17, 6:30 pm,  
“Us Against You”  
by Fredrik Bachman

## IN MEMORY

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Joni Pladson and family on the death of her husband Bruce Pladson. We pray God’s grace and peace in the days ahead.



## WoSOTH BREAKFAST

We expect to meet remotely until the pandemic allows meeting in person. We will meet on the ZOOM platform on Saturday mornings from 9:00 am- to 10:15am. This will include the use of open discussion and at times breakout groups. Some of our

speakers will be live and others pre-recorded. We hope to have fun with some food sharing, etc. to add to our sense of community while we are physically apart. Suggestions? Questions? Want to attend but need technical help or device? Want to come but timing does not work for you? Contact Pastor Sherri ([sherri.otto@sothchurch.com](mailto:sherri.otto@sothchurch.com)) or Kaye Wothe, Faith Community Nurse ([kwothe@comcast.net](mailto:kwothe@comcast.net)).

**Date:** November 7, 2020 at 9:00 am via Zoom

**Topic:** “Let Resiliency be Your Super Power!”

**Speaker:** Sandy McGurran

**Description:** Pandemic, burnout and resiliency are challenges we all deal with everyday now and looks like we will continue to be struggle with in future days. Join us to hear Sandy McGurran, MSW, LISW, Coordinator of Integrative Healing Therapy and Manager of Social Workers for Fairview Home Health and Hospice. Sandy is a very talented speaker and always on the cutting edge of new ways to help us cope, find resilience and integrate self care into our lives. Remember, you need to put your oxygen mask on first so you can role model and better help others. Please RSVP to “join us” for breakfast! RSVP to: [kwothe@comcast.net](mailto:kwothe@comcast.net)



## WEDNESDAY NIGHT SPEAKER SERIES

**Date:** Wednesday, November 4, 2020 from 6:30-7:30 pm

**Topic:** Ecological Justice and the Old Testament

**Speaker:** Dr. Ellen Davis

**Description:** Ellen F. Davis is Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor of Bible and Practical Theology at Duke Divinity School. Dr. Davis is the author of eleven books and many articles, her research interests focus on how biblical interpretation bears on the life of faith communities and their response to urgent public issues, particularly the ecological crisis and interfaith relations. *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), integrates biblical studies with a critique of industrial agriculture and food production.

A lay Episcopalian, she has long been active as a theological consultant within the Anglican Communion. Her current work explores the arts as modes of scriptural interpretation.

**Date:** Wednesday, December 2, 2020 from 6:30-7:30 pm

**Topic:** It's not Your Birthday – North Minneapolis:  
Rebuilding a Vibrant, Yet Forgotten Neighborhood.

**Speaker:** Veronica Hawman, Executive Director, Redeemer Center for Life

**Description:** The Harrison neighborhood in North Minneapolis is a vibrant community where people live, work, learn, and grow. Yet, it is often forgotten, oppressed by poverty and social systems. There is another town that was uncelebrated and forgotten - Nazareth. Yes, the place "Jesus of Nazareth" grew up. Where we live and grow matters. Connectivity, relationships, and the ability to self-advocate for better conditions matters. Join me as we explore what it means to create a place for people to come together to learn, work, and discover community.



## CHRISTMAS AT SOTH Special Outdoor Advent Services

It's not far away! Advent begins Sunday, November 29th. While we cannot gather together in our sanctuary will be hosting special outdoor Advent worship services on

Saturday evenings starting November 28th at 3:00 pm. Come to our north patio on the Maloney Avenue side of the building where we will have a short 30 minute service including carols (to listen to), bible readings, and a brief liturgy. Even if it's cold, we will gather together! Bring your kids, bring a folding chair, come and stand up and do jumping angels in the air to keep warm! We'll have a fire and the warmth of the season to keep us warm!



## A GATHERING OF GRATITUDE

Thanksgiving Eve Worship  
Service

Wed., November 25  
at 7:00 pm

What have you been grateful for this year? This may be a tough question, given all that has taken place in 2020. Please join us on ZOOM for a time of reflection and fellowship as we explore how feeling grateful can have an impact on our attitude and how we treat others.

## WITH HEARTFELT THANKS

Thank you to Pastor Scott and Pastor Hub and to Shepherd members who called and sent cards wishing me success on my recent hip surgery. I very much appreciate the good wishes. I am feeling so much better and look forward to the day when we can gather at church again.  
Sincerely, Arlene Gullickson

## Pregnancy Losses continued

- women, then and since then, who shared with me their own heartbreaking experiences of miscarriage or infertility. There is great comfort in knowing we are not alone in our suffering; by sharing my story with other women and listening deeply to their stories, I—and they—have been able to find solace and peace.

Eventually, with the help of modern medicine, I became pregnant a fourth time—and I gave birth to a beautiful boy who has been the light and joy of my life ever since. He's about to turn 3, and not a day goes by when I don't give thanks for him and realize how fortunate I am to be his mom.

But through the process of trying to birth a child, I also created a more grateful, more vulnerable, and more compassionate version of myself. My struggle has helped me to not take life for granted, to find the everyday blessings (of which there are so many), and to show up for others in their pain and suffering. What a gift! I will always look back at my pregnancy losses with some sadness, but I am also looking ahead each day with a newfound sense of purpose.

What has been your greatest struggle in life, and how did you navigate it? What have you learned from it? How has it changed you?



## Anxious? Thanksgiving? 2020?

By Kaye Wothe,  
Faith Community Nurse

I would say that I have had an excess amount of anxiety my entire life. In the last five to ten years, we have told you the number of people experiencing an excess amount of anxiety has grown

to make it the leading mental health challenge of our time.

In the last several months, I cannot recall one person I have talked to who has not reported experiencing a painful amount of anxiety. Anxiety that is impacting their life in multiple ways. The pandemic with so many unknowns, the elections and related division between family members, old friends and neighbors on political views, the unrest over racial injustice including the growing presence of white nationalists, the divide between the rich and poor growing wider, and still with all the other stressors of cancer, accidents, sudden deaths, job loss, relationships breaking up, memory loss, mental illness unchecked, etc., who is not impacted by more than one of these things? Who would not be anxious about the future? About today and every day after that?

I, too, share this anxiety. I can get pulled down into a depressed state by it. It can distract me. I can get very animated, verbal and angry about it. I talk back to newscasters, the President, family, friends and lots of other people who will not likely ever hear me but are who I blame for much of my anxiety and who I do not trust to fix it.

I am overwhelmed with the realization that I, or my knight in shining armor (i.e., my smart and very caring husband), cannot fix it either. We do what we can. We wear masks. We distance. We quarantine. We vote. We read, listen, learn, speak out and network. We try to educate others and provide what they need. Those things are important and must be done. But at the end of the day, we are not in control. It is scary and frustrating. Maybe the huge volume of snow on October 20th was the straw that broke the camel's back for me and reminded me again, loudly, that I am not in control.

In my life when someone I love has been very ill, I have been reminded that I am not in control.

When someone in my life is struggling endlessly to find their way, I can offer to help but I cannot fix it. I am not in control.

When my friend dies in a car wreck, I am not in control.

When it snows eight inches on October 20th, I am not in control.

When my mask-less, COVID-denying family member visits my parents' house from out of state for two days, I am not in control.

When my niece struggles with infertility, I am not in control.

When the snow leaves the crops standing in the field for farmers already behind from botched trade deals, I am not in control.

When we cannot get COVID numbers down enough to have school in person, I am not in control.

When my body hurts from the arrival of cold weather, my eyes begin to falter and my memory becomes worse, I am not in control.

*Continued on page 9*



## **Anxious? Continued from page 8**

At all these times and others, I am finally reminded who is in control. Who has the power to change things, and the discernment to do it better than I could imagine, even if it is not the way I imagined? It is then that I remember what I really need to be doing:

- 1) I need to rejoice in the glory of the Lord! His glory and power are all around me I just need to notice.
- 2) I need to pray. I need to recall that Jesus is my Savior, that I am a child of God. I can call on God to help me carry this load, to help heal, mend, repair, lead, move in each of us as He uses His great power in the world. I can pray for good to win over evil.
- 3) I can pray for peace, the kind that passes my understanding, among all people. Peace between family members, friends, government officials, countries. Peace for those who are not well.
- 4) I can pray for hope. The hope only God can give.
- 5) I can pray for discernment. For God to be my anchor every day and guide my choices.
- 6) I can pray for peace, presence, healing and vision for a future when things don't turn out the way we had hoped. Again, peace that passes understanding. Peace that only comes from God.

In this epic year of 2020, as we head into a winter of great pandemic, less mobility, less employment, more debt, less control at every turn, unknowns about the election and post-election, etc., I cannot help but wonder if we are being reminded that God is in control. Prayer is our way of being in conversation with God. The Apostle Paul gives us many examples of this in the Bible where he is beaten, in prison, losing the battle in so many ways. But he persists in prayer. One of the most highlighted passages in Kindle bibles is Phil. 4: 6-7 where Apostle Paul writes:

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (NRSV, Lutheran Study Bible).

Theological writer Max Lucado suggests using the acronym: C.A.L.M.

C-Celebrate God's goodness, this fits with what we know about the helpful use of gratitude practice in our wellness. Phil. 4:4

A-Ask God for help. Be specific in your prayers. Phil. 4:6

L-Leave your concerns with God. This is where peace that passes understanding comes in! Phil. 4:7

M- Meditate on good things. Choose what you allow to rumble around in your brain.

I know this is all a struggle and can feel like one more thing that I cannot add. I am there with you. But at this point I will do a lot to find peace in it and to feel well. I will leave you with Psalm 145:8-20 that may be of use in this month of 2020 that we celebrate the holiday of Thanksgiving and our usual Psalms may feel too light for the darkness of the day.

**Continued above**

## **Anxious? continued**

Psalm 145:8-20

The Lord is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in  
steadfast love.

The Lord is good to all,  
and his compassion is over all that  
he has made.

All your works shall give thanks to  
you, O Lord,  
and all your faithful shall bless  
you. They shall speak of the glory of  
your kingdom,

and tell of your power,  
to make known to all people your  
mighty deeds,  
and the glorious splendor of your  
kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting  
kingdom,

and your dominion endures  
throughout all generations.

The Lord is faithful in all his words,  
and gracious in all his deeds.

The Lord upholds all who are falling,  
and raises up all who are bowed  
down.

The eyes of all look to you,  
and you give them their food in due  
season.

You open your hand,  
satisfying the desire of every living  
thing.

The Lord is just in all his ways,  
and kind in all his doings.

The Lord is near to all who call on  
him,

to all who call on him in truth  
He fulfills the desire of all who fear  
him;

he also hears their cry, and saves  
them.

The Lord watches over all who love  
him,

but all the wicked he will destroy.  
(NRSV, Bible Gateway)

Kaye Wothe

Faith Community Nurse



# Mental Health Connect Resources & Education



mental  
health  
connect

We help open doors

**MENTAL HEALTH CONNECT**  
Mental Health Resources and  
Education can be found on their  
webpage:  
<http://www.mhconnect.org/>  
events

## Mental Health Sunday at SOTH

We are happy to provide  
opportunities this year to focus on  
mental health topics in light of the  
current pandemic.

**Date:** Sun., November 15  
during online worship

**Topic:** "Managing Mental  
Health During a Pandemic"

**Speaker:** Kristin Rewey, MSW,  
LICSW, Mental Health  
Therapist

**Description:** Kristen not only  
has active counseling experience  
in this area but also has been a  
guest speaker on podcasts, etc.  
on the subject. (She will be part of  
the sermon time in an attempt to  
lessen everyone's time spent on  
Zoom.)

**Mental Health Connect presents ...**

## "Where Do We Go From Here? Grief and COVID-19"

Tuesday, November 17, 6:30-7:30 pm via Zoom

Eight months into this pandemic, our lives have changed in countless ways. Chaplain Jenny Schroedel, bereavement specialist from Optage Hospice, Presbyterian Homes & Services will reflect with us on the ground we've traveled and offer concrete suggestions for finding hope, purpose and a path forward in uncertain times.

Jenny Schroedel is a chaplain with Optage Hospice (Presbyterian Homes & Services). She offers grief support and education across sites and in the community. She is also an author, most recently of Naming The Child: Hope-filled Reflections on Stillbirth, Miscarriage and Infant Death. While living in Hawaii, she worked as Director of Bereavement Services for Hospice of Kona, where she helped found Hospice of Kona's Maluihi Grief Center. After a decade in Hawaii, she is glad to be home in the city she loves for such a time as this.

## Mental Health Monday Speaker Series

### "Loneliness and Mental Health: Paths Toward Well-Being"

**Speaker:** Ted Bowman, Mdiv Author and Educator

Monday, November 9  
6:30-8:00 pm via Zoom

The Monday Night Mental Health Speaker Series is free and open to the public. The theme for the 2020/2021 series is "Hope for the Journey". Join us on the 2nd Monday of (most) months to talk about important topics related to mental health. Zoom link can be found at [mhconnect.org/events](http://mhconnect.org/events)

## Let's Connect Thursday

Thursdays, 8:00-8:45PM

"Let's Connect" is a virtual community. We meet together via Zoom for a time of connection and discussion about how our week has been, how we're feeling, and we will share resources, encouraging one another. 2020 has brought us many unexpected challenges - isolation, working from home, layoffs, missing friends and family, stress and uncertainty are just a few of the concerns we are experiencing. We NEED each other and a community to safely discuss life. If you have been longing for a group to connect with, like many of us have, join us each Thursday, beginning July 30th. A trained facilitator will lead the conversation. Free! All welcome! No registration necessary.



## How Pregnancy Losses Gave Way to Gratitude, Renewed Purpose

By Christa Meland

*This piece was written as a blog post for End in Mind Project (<https://www.endinmindproject.org/>), a nonprofit that helps people have difficult conversations about death and dying and encourages us to live with intention and purpose at any stage of life. It is shared with permission.*

When my husband and I were ready to have a child, we both assumed that it would be easy for me to become pregnant, and that the following year, we'd have a baby in our arms. After nine months of trying, we got the news we were hoping for. We were going to be parents, and we were elated. We started brainstorming names, debating whether to find out the sex of our baby, and planning how we'd announce to our parents that we were expecting.

But about a month later, after a doctor visit and an agonizing wait for blood test results, we learned I'd had a miscarriage. I was devastated. It felt like my world had imploded and my long-awaited dream of becoming a mother had been shattered to pieces. We were assured that miscarriages are common, that it wasn't because of anything I did, and that we could try again soon. None of that eased our pain in the moment, but after some months passed and we'd had time for our hearts to heal, we determined we were ready to try again.

Over the next three years, I became pregnant two more times—and both pregnancies resulted in miscarriage. Each one was more excruciating than the last because it increasingly seemed like I simply wasn't going to be able to carry a baby to term. I asked myself the same questions over and over again: *How could my body have let me down so many times? Why me? What if I never got to become a mom? How could I possibly keep going through the motions of everyday life, pretending everything was okay, when my heart was broken?*

For me, one of the worst parts of pregnancy loss was the loneliness that accompanied it. I had told my parents and a few close friends about my miscarriages, but most people in my life had no idea what I was going through, and I didn't know anyone who'd personally gone through the experience in recent years and could relate to how I was feeling. In fact, no one I knew ever talked about the topic of pregnancy loss at all. So surely people would find it strange if I shared something so deeply personal, wouldn't they? For the most part, I suffered in silence because I was afraid of what others might think. I often wondered: How is someone supposed to appropriately grieve the loss of a life that never really was?

But the more distant my pregnancy losses became, the more I started to feel like I couldn't stay silent. Slowly, I became determined to find a light in my darkness and to turn my pain into something positive. So after picking myself up from a sob session on the bathroom floor one night, I decided to do three things to change my outlook and circumstances:

- **I practiced gratitude and focused on what was good.** I regularly took inventory of the things in my life I was grateful for—my family and friends,

### Pregnancy Losses continued

- my job, my health, my home, the many creature comforts I was fortunate enough to be able to provide for myself. Most nights, my husband and I would each name something we were thankful for that day. Even on the tough days, there was always something for which to give thanks. We also went on trips, took classes, and enjoyed visiting places in our area that we'd always wanted to try out. We embraced the situation we found ourselves in rather than being solely focused on the life we wanted for ourselves.
- **I became more intentional about fulfilling my dream.** I made a conscious decision to stop feeling sorry for myself and to explore other ways to become a mom, even if they weren't what I had long imagined for myself. My husband and I went to a fertility clinic for testing and to explore various treatment options. And we began looking into adoption and seriously considering that possibility. I realized that nothing could stop me from becoming a mom if that was what I really wanted.
- **I started sharing my story in hopes that it would help other women.** I realized the only way to break the silence around miscarriage was to talk honestly and openly about it. So I overcame my fear of what others might think, and I shared—with friends, with coworkers, even with my Facebook following. And I was utterly amazed, not just by the support and kindness that hundreds of people in my life offered but by the number of

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