



Pastor's Ponderings

How Lovely

by Jennifer Ruth Lynn Garrison

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
Psalm 84:1 (NRSV)

How lovely is your home, O God!

Your home is in all of creation. Your home is in the cold, tumbling rivers and the giant, mossy evergreens near where I live. It is in the eagle that soars just below the clouds and the salmon that swims upstream to spawn. Your home is in the parts of creation that are unfamiliar to me, too: sandy deserts and windswept mesas and swampy bayous.

How lovely is your home, O God!

Your home is wherever people gather. Your home is in two wrinkled hands held at a worn kitchen table, and your home is in the imagination of children playing house under a tree during recess. It is in a congregation at worship, singing a new song for the first time. It is in the joyful tears at the baptism of a child and in the sad goodbye at a sunny graveside. Gatherings of those who worship in ways that are unfamiliar to me, but precious to you, are your home too.

How lovely is your home, O God!

Your home is in my heart. Your home is in the mess and the mistakes as well as in the grace and the gratitude. Your home is in the inward strength and the outward struggle. Your home is in the doubts at night and the faith at the break of day. Your home is in all that makes me who I am. And the parts of myself that are not yet known to me, those are your home too.

Peace,

Pastor Fred Kopp he/him/his

[from: "How Lovely," by Jennifer Ruth Lynn Garrison, published on September 14, 2024, www.ucc.org. ©National Setting of the United Church of Christ, 2024]

Chicken Chowder Sale – Returns November 2



By popular demand, TOL is excited to announce a Chicken Chowder Sale on **Saturday, November 2**. The chowder will be ready for pick-up at Noon (price TBD)

until it's sold out—so come early, as it tends to go quickly! For more details, be sure to check your Sunday bulletin. All proceeds will go directly to TOL's operating budget.

Given that chicken chowder is both delicious and labor-intensive to prepare, we're seeking volunteers to help out. We'll have a prep day on Friday, November 1, and we also need volunteers for at least two workdays in October to make chicken and beef stock. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Matt.

BW's Chicken BBQ ~ Basket Raffle Craft Show ~ Bake Sale

Thank You!

On Saturday, September 7, TOL hosted our first ever BW's Chicken Barbeque, Basket Raffle, Craft Show, and Bake Sale event! What a great time was had by all! There were 15 craft vendors, 99 baskets, lots of yummy baked goods, and delicious chicken dinners—who could ask for anything more?!

Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who donated, supported and volunteered at this event! A special "thank you" to Nancy and Lanny who spearheaded our activities. And special thanks to all of the volunteers because without you this, or any other event, would not be possible!

Earlene

Basket Raffle Update

"I have a notebook that I have used for every single basket raffle. When I looked back to see when we first started them, I was shocked that our first raffle was on 9/7/2014—exactly 10 years from this year's basket raffle! Wow, how time flies!"--*Kelly*

This year was our first year ever of having it on a Saturday. We were shocked at how well we did and how fun it was to have the craft vendors there as well. We had a total of 99 basket/raffle items and we took in \$1,648—double from last year!! What a blessing!

You can all celebrate with us because we definitely could not have achieved this amount without you!! Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!!!

Kelly and Debbie



Curtain Going Up!

Please join us for a live performance of *Holiday Inn* at **3:00 PM on Sunday, November 10**, followed by dinner at Family Tree Restaurant (4346 Bailey Avenue in Amherst). This is a Niagara Regional Theatre Guild presentation at the Ellicott Creek Playhouse (550 Ellicott Creek Road in Tonawanda).

Tickets are \$18 each. Please sign up on the main bulletin board or reach out to us. We have 30 tickets reserved.

Stephanie /Pete

Sermon Discussion/Input with Pastor Fred Wednesday, October 23, at Noon in the Fireside Room

Pastor Fred invites you to join him in a bag-lunch discussion of the texts for the next month of sermons. Please let him know if you plan to attend so he can prepare materials.

Trinity Tidings, October 2024

We invite you to join us for worship with Holy Communion, Sundays at 11:00 AM. (in-church or on Zoom)



ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2024*

Reformation Sunday Praise God for being patient with us through the challenges and changes of being the church and discerning God's truth.

ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2024*

- † Remember in prayer girls, women and people of other gender identities and expressions who suffer domestic violence. Pray that they will find care and safe shelter that support their recovery from physical, emotional and spiritual trauma. Give thanks for the work and resources available to us through the ELCA Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment program.
- † Ask the Spirit for guidance, wisdom and creativity as we work to grow the church, not for the sake of numbers but to spread the message of God's love and mercy for humanity and to draw upon the gifts of the many to love and serve our neighbors, here and around the world.
- † Pray for national leaders, diplomats, mediators and organizations working to achieve ceasefires, peace and recovery in Ukraine, Russia, Israel, the Palestinian territories, Sudan and other regions. Ask God to make us diligent bearers of hope, peace and justice in the world.
- † "When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue them and honor them" (Psalm 91:15). God is our ever-present refuge and fortress. Let our prayers and songs proclaim unceasing thanks and praise to God!
- † Reflect on the people around you who might hunger for a friendly word or some indication that they are loved and not forgotten. Include them in your prayers and reach out to them.
- † The message of the Old Testament prophet Micah is crucial for our world today: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). Pray that we will humble ourselves and serve our neighbors who suffer poverty, hunger and exclusion.
- † *Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, renewal of the church (1181-1226)* Give thanks and praise to God for saints who have gone before us and saints still in our midst, who teach and inspire us to be humble, generous, grateful and attentive children of God.

Prayer for Trinity Old Lutheran and Augustana Lutheran Churches

Inspire us to be good stewards of the resources you have entrusted to us. Teach us to give freely of ourselves and to offer our lives in service. Show us your will for the ministries at Augustana and Trinity Old Lutheran. Strengthen our relationships in this community as we serve our neighbors in love.

Trinity Tidings

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Mission for October: Support for Arlen Jenkins and Her Family

Arlen and her family are members at Good Shepherd LC. She underwent a bone marrow transplant one year ago and has dealt with a number of complications and setbacks. Arlen was recently transferred to the ICU at Golisano Children's Hospital in Rochester for further care. Her father, Andrew, reports that "...Arlen continues to slowly improve and show us just how strong, brave and amazing she truly is." She faces many months of recovery. Donations raised will help her family with medical/travel expenses and other family needs. There is also a GoFundMe page, "Support for the Jenkins Family." Please keep them in prayer.

You will find marked envelopes on the table in the narthex, or mail your donations to the church office (please indicate on your check that it is designated for the Arlen Jenkins Family). Thank you for your support.

September Mission

Thank you for your donations to Global Refuge in support of the organization's ongoing efforts to assist immigrants, refugees and those seeking asylum in the United States.

"When I was a stranger, you welcomed me." Rooted in faith, Global Refuge believes that we are all called to welcome those fleeing persecution and seeking refuge in the United States. [from: www.globalrefuge.org]

ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2024*

Remember in prayer refugees, immigrants and asylum-seekers who are displaced by economic and climate crises and by conflict and persecution. Ask God to protect them as they seek safe, welcoming places where they can settle and rebuild their lives.

Support for Local Food Pantries

Your donations in support of the Community of Good Neighbors Mobile Food Pantry in Buffalo and Good Shepherd Lutheran's pantry in Tonawanda are greatly appreciated. Please place your donations in the narthex shopping cart or leave them in the elevator entrance during the week (Tuesday to Friday, 9:00 AM to Noon). Thank you!



ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2024*

Give thanks and praise to our Creator, who is the source of bountiful fall harvests and sustains us in body and spirit.

Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke

You're invited to join the class on Monday afternoons in the Fellowship Hall (or on Zoom) from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM. Please contact Charlie for a Zoom invitation.

October 7: Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar
October 21: Isaac and Rebekah



My Musings by Diane Schmidtke

Perk

"Perk" is a word I seldom think about, but it popped into my head today as I continue to unpack and readjust to life back in the USA! "Perk" was first used in Middle English in the 14th century and can be both a noun and a verb.

Several "perks" came our way as we sailed the ocean blue. I never knew what would be awaiting us on our bed when we returned to the stateroom after dinner. The first day all 2,700 passengers received a Holland American canvass tote bag. Other times it was chocolate; sometimes a white towel folded into the shape of an animal that made us smile. One night we were gifted with Delft coasters honoring the maritime mythological figures which decorated ancient galleon mastheads and ship prows. They were considered good luck charms.

Then there were the formal certificates we each received "For venturing to 66°33' N and thereby Crossing the Arctic Circle."

We also returned home with a print of a painting by renowned artist, Marcus Glenn. Ever hear of him? We hadn't either, but he has works of art in public and private galleries throughout the world. His "One Nite Outta This World" was selected as the official art for the 56th Annual Grammy Awards. Our print is entitled "Keys for The Soul," and we received it (perk!) when we entered a contest to guess the cost of a large and colorful ceramic pig! Who knew?



Now home again, back to reality, feet grounded, what I do know is that when I re-enter the doors at TOL I will "perk up" at the thought of the "perks" which await me: the friendly faces, the hugs and handshakes, the smiles, the music, the laughter, the words and prayers, the bread and wine and the love...

It is amazing what feelings a word can conjure when we take time to reflect.

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"Christian Cancer Support"

If you are on a cancer journey and are in need of support, please contact Linda Sokoley. She is on a journey as well and she can offer you support, hope and healing.

Please contact Linda through Augustana LC's office at 716-832-5720 or by email at augustchurch@yahoo.com.

"Thank You" to Anne...for refreshing and repurposing the two bulletin boards located inside the front entrance! The messages are from Galatians 5:22-23:

"Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control."



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

"'Foods' stands for diversity, nutrition, affordability, and safety. A greater diversity of nutritious foods should be available in our fields, in our markets, and on our tables, for the benefit of all." [from: www.fao.org/world-food-day]

ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2024*

World Food Day The theme for World Food Day 2024 is "Right to Foods for a Better Life and a Better Future." Pray that all people will have adequate access to food that is safe and healthy. Give thanks for the work and advocacy of ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response and partner organizations to address the causes of hunger and improve food security.



ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2024* For God's Creation

"Yours the soil that holds the seed, you give warmth and moisture, too. Sprouting blossoms, crops and buds, trees and plants: the season's signs that you make all things new" (*With One Voice* 727). Greet this new day with gratitude to God for the blessings of autumn – fall harvests, the beauty of changing seasons and other signs of God's ceaseless creativity.

We are nourished and sustained by countless resources in creation – all gifts from God, entrusted to our care. Give thanks for the gift of water, without which life cannot exist or flourish. Pray that we will exercise discipline, responsibility and generosity in how we use water, and that we will work to assure the availability of clean water for all people, everywhere.

Operation Christmas Child: It is that time again. If you would like to pack a shoebox, you may supply your own or there will be some available in our designated box in the hallway. Please return yours by Sunday, November 10. Thanks!!

Also, during October we'll continue to collect donations of school supplies, coloring books, watercolor paint sets, small books, puzzles, travel-size games and flash cards.



ELCA Prayer Ventures, October 2024*

Indigenous Peoples' Day "We join states, cities and towns across the country to celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day in place

of Columbus Day and honor the people whose lands we walk, whose Indigenous voices have always been spoken here and who share their gifts and contributions throughout our society" (*Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Indigenous Peoples' Day statement*). Pray that, in our relations with Indigenous neighbors and children of God, we will not waver in our commitment to repentance, reconciliation, healing and unity.

Ways to Give to TOL

Online: Tithe.ly is available. For instructions, please visit the church website at www.trinityoldlutheran.com or download the Tithe.ly app to your smartphone. Please contact the church office at (716) 836-4868 if you have any questions. Giving by mail: Please send your checks to the church and to the attention of the Financial Secretary.



Adult Ed. Classes with Charlie Schmidtke
Study Notes: "Temple or Mount of Olives"

Part V: Jesus as a Hindu, Continued

Followers of Thomas, the apostle to India, have written the following:

"Throughout the Gospels we see that the disciples of Jesus consistently misunderstood his speaking of higher spiritual matters. When Jesus spoke of the "sword of wisdom" they showed him swords of metal to assure him they were well equipped (Luke 22:36-38). When he warned them against the "leaven" of the Scribes and Pharisees, they thought he was complaining that they did not have any bread (Mark 8:15,16). Is it any wonder then that he said to them: "Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? How is it that ye do not understand?" (Mark 8:17, 18, 21). Even in the moment of his final departure from them, their words showed that they still believed the kingdom of God was an earthly political entity and not the realm of spirit (Acts 1:6).

"This being so, the Gospels themselves must be approached with grave caution and with the awareness that Jesus was not the creator of a new religion, but a messenger of the Eternal Religion he had learned in India. As a priest of the Saint Thomas Christian Church of South India once commented: "You cannot understand the teachings of Jesus if you do not know the scriptures of India." And if you do know the scriptures of India you can see where—however well-intentioned they may have been—the authors of the Gospels often completely missed the point and garbled the words and ideas they heard from Jesus, even attributing to him incidents from the life of Buddha (such as the Widow's Mite) and mistook his quotations from the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Dhammapada* for doctrines original to him. For example, the opening verse of the Gospel of John, which has been cited through the centuries as proof of the unique character and mission of Jesus, is really a paraphrase of the Vedic verse: "In the beginning was Prajapati, and with Him was the Word."

One ancient book of Kashmiri history, the *Bhavishya Maha Purana*, gives the following account of the meeting of a king of Kashmir with Jesus sometime after the middle of the first century:

"When the king of the Sakas came to the Himalayas, he saw a dignified person of golden complexion wearing a long white robe. Astonished to see this foreigner, he asked, 'Who are you?' The dignified person replied in a pleasant manner: 'Know me as Son of God [Isha Putram], or Born of a Virgin [Kumarigarbhasangbhawam]. Being given to truth and penances, I preached the Dharma to the mlecchas [means foreigner who is impure. O King, I hail from a land far away, where there is no truth, and evil knows no limits. I appeared in the country of the mlecchas as Isha Masiha [Jesus Messiah/Christ] and I suffered at their hands. For I said unto them, "Remove all mental and bodily impurities. Remember the Name of our Lord God. Meditate upon Him Whose abode is in the center of the sun." There in the land of mlecccha darkness, I taught love, truth, and purity of heart. I asked human beings to serve the Lord. But I suffered at the hands of the wicked and the guilty. In truth, O King, all power rests with the Lord, Who is in the center of the sun. And the elements, and the cosmos, and the sun, and God Himself, are forever. Perfect, pure, and blissful, God is always in my heart. Thus, my Name has been established as Isha Masiha.' After having heard the pious words from the lips of this

distinguished person, the king felt peaceful, made obeisance to him, and returned" (*Bhavishya Maha Purana* 3.2.9-31).

Another Kashmiri history, the *Rajatarangini*, written in 1148 A.D., says that a great saint named Issana lived at Issabar on the bank of Dal Lake and had many disciples, one of which he raised from the dead.

When teaching in Israel, Jesus told the people: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold" (John 10:16), speaking of his Eastern disciples. For when Jesus came to the Jordan at the beginning of his ministry, he had spent more years of his life in India than in Israel. And he returned there for the remainder of his life, because he was a spiritual son of India—the Christ of India.

As Swami Sivananda wrote in *Lives of Saints*: "[Lord Jesus] disappeared at the ages of thirteen and reappeared in his thirty-first year. During this period, from his thirteenth to his thirty-first year, he came to India and practiced Yoga. Jesus left Jerusalem and reached the land of Indus in the company of merchants. He visited Varanasi, Rajgriha and other places in India. He spent several years in Hindustan. Jesus lived like a Hindu or a Buddhist monk, a life of burning renunciation and dispassion. He assimilated the ideals, precepts and principles of Hinduism. Christianity is modified Hinduism only, which was suitable for those people who lived in the period of Christ. Really speaking, Jesus was a child of the soil of India only. That is the reason why there is so much of similarity between his teachings and the teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism."

Our tradition in the West never includes this possibility for Jesus, but Christians in the East, especially in India, believe this story line to be true.

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"Thank You" to Pastor Fred for setting up Zoom capability at the outdoor worship service on Sunday, August 25! TOL joined with Good Shepherd LC and Augustana LC for the service—followed by a picnic. Everyone enjoyed worship on the beautiful summer day at Veterans Memorial Park!

"Christ in Our Home"

Devotional booklets for October through December are available in the narthex. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please call Nancy in the church office at 716-836-4868

Happening at Augustana LC in October
(3143 Eggert Road, Tonawanda)

- Saturday, October 5: Chiavetta's BBQ Chicken Dinners (\$15.00) from 11:30 AM to 3:00 PM
- Saturday, October 26: "Fall Festival Saturday," indoors from 11:30 AM to 3:00 PM (free, includes "Trunk or Treat")



For more information, please visit Augustana's website at www.augustanaonline.org or call the Augustana church office (716-832-5720)!