

Thursday News – September 3, 2020

Hello everyone,

*Community is not an ideal; it is people. It is you and I.
In community we are called to love people just as they are
With their wounds and their gifts, not as we want them to be.
Jean Vanier,
From Brokenness to Community*

Well here we are heading into fall and there are a couple of upcoming events that may interest you.

The first is a book club:

Living our Faith - Read: Bible Book Club

Last September, ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson invited the whole church to join in a new four-year emphasis on Living our Faith as together we pray, read, worship and love. At Gloria Dei, we engaged the theme of prayer by preaching on it, listening to one of our members during Sunday worship as he shared about his practice of prayer with us and holding a book study on prayer.

This September marks the second year of the Living our Faith initiative, to which our emphasis shifts from prayer to reading. To help us engage in the practice of reading the Bible, ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson is inviting us to consider forming a Bible Book Club with other members of our church, our friends, family or others from our community as a way to read and study the Holy Scriptures together. Each month we will focus together on a different book of the Bible. Our first month, September, will have us reading the book of Genesis. There will be prepared study questions which we will then discuss as we meet together. Please let Pr Vida know if you are interested in participating.

You can watch the "Bible Book Club" introductory video from Bishop Susan Johnson here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vu1qKoPfht4&t=14s>

The second event is:

Season of Creation

Did you know that the BC Synod has a Climate Action Group and that our own Jason Assam is a member? They are extending an invitation to all congregations to consider participation in "The Season of Creation" - an ecumenical event celebrated around the world annually. The season begins September 1, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and runs through October 4, the Feast of St. Francis. The theme for this year is "Jubilee for the Earth: New Rhythms, New Hope." Please watch this space next week for details on how Gloria Dei will participate.

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Choir uniforms for the 🍂fall!

See you all soon!

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Something extra from the ELCIC Newsletter:

Take a Sacred Pause is a brief guide for reflecting and connecting with creation. This resource was prepared by the local engagement group of the *For the Love of Creation* movement and I have copied it here or to download your own copy, please [click here](#). It can also be found on the ELCIC website.

For the Love of Creation: Take a Sacred Pause

To Love Creation

What will we do For the Love of Creation?

A growing group of people have gathered into a series of working groups to consider and act on what we, as people of faith, can do - individually, in small groups and as large faith communities – For the Love of Creation. This resource is the first fruit of these discussions; an offering that came out of a conversation about how we can engage locally. How do we love creation? Why do we love creation?

The first part is a reflection from Gkisedtanamoogk, an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, a deep thinker, who invites us to consider both why and how we love creation. His writing is dense and profound. Sit with these words, read them more than once and open yourself to how they might speak to you.

The second part is an invitation to Take a Sacred Pause for the Love of Creation. This simple practice uses the words Sense, Appreciate, Connect, Respect, Express, Delight (SACRED) to guide us in remembering or discovering how to be in relationship with creation – a relationship of love and respect. The instruction to love and care for the earth and all its inhabitants is not unique to any one religion. We hope people of all faiths or spiritualities will find these words helpful in making space for a deeper love of creation. This practice can be used and adapted to a wide range of activities. Taking a hike, sitting in your backyard, or playing at the shore. It was envisioned for practice outside, but with a little creativity could be used inside if necessary. We encourage parents, grandparents, pastors, caregivers, camp leaders and teachers

to consider how you could Take a Sacred Pause with children or groups of all ages. The resource was sparked by a conversation with a working, city-dwelling mom drawing on her Indigenous roots to bring her children closer to nature during the COVID-related school closures. This practice can be done anywhere by anyone. To introduce the practice to a child or any group, read the page over yourself first and think about how to best convey the ideas in your situation. With older children or a large group you might want to explain the whole thing, repeat the key words several times and send them out to find their own spot and point of focus. With a young child or any small group you might want to talk through it piece by piece like a guided meditation. Let them choose the point of focus and then ask the questions as you gaze at it together. This practice can be incorporated into your life right now, in the summer season, or at any time of the year. Use it, repeat it, post it, share it, complement it with material from your own tradition.

Reflection from Gkisedtanamoogk, Knowledge Keeper and longtime member of the KAIROS Indigenous Rights Circle. To Love Creation Points:

1. To understand that Manitou/"God" is in everything of Creation, from the Earth to the Cosmos
2. To view and hold that All life, All the living, sentient beings deserve respect; human beings are part of Creation; human beings are part of the Great Web of Life
3. Then it is not a far leap to recognize that all Life between the Ant and the Earth; between the Cosmos and the Cellular Universe; between the esoteric and the exoteric; between the fractal Implicate Order and the Explicate Order are all reflections of one another inclusive of the basic and fundamental principles of Existence We live within a vibrant living universe; we are interconnected in the Sacred Web of Existence and inter-related together with All of Life; we are all fractal components of one another and reflect one another in the multitude of living expressions.

The Squamish Headman, Seathl, said it profoundly that human beings cannot impact the Earth and All Creatures of the Earth without impacting one another. This is the basis of Indigenous worldview and the values that shape our living.

In my opinion, every human culture at one time, knew of this, and was shaped by this inter-relationship. Now we have gathered together to express how we might embrace the opportunity to Love Creation and to be in relationship. Personally, this discovery is not a far-fetched leap in the possibilities. One only needs to adjust the frequency we each carry to open to the thought that the Earth is indeed alive and quite deserving of our respect, and to embrace All the Living with such respect.

Humanity is not the only collective of Nations, so too are the species of life, the Mountains, Waters, Trees, Fish, Mammals, Birds, Insects, and the Cosmos---Sun, other Stars, Galaxies, and Planets. To Love Creation is to acknowledge the Creator, God, Allah, Yahweh, and Manitou. Being in Creation can simply be taking more time for hikes to ceremony that includes acknowledging the Living Earth; watching and observing how Life and All the Living move about; identifying what Life shares our space and the moment with us. I have so many personal experiences with All My Relatives, as does my Nation and the many indigenous Nations throughout this hemisphere, testimonies abound. We have concepts that shape this notion, Naiyantaqt (Nye yan TAH kwut) speaks to the understanding that All Life below our feet and All Life above our Heads stand in Balance and everything, every being between these realms is interconnected, meaning we must always and in all ways mind our human foot print to not disturb this balance, as much as we can.

Wač̣paukmināonkčam8onkaš (WAH choo buk meh nah ONK CHAH moo ONK kash) refers to everything has purpose and Instructions. Nothing that exists lives without purpose; and of course, Manitou, who many in my Culture believe simply as GOD---but in this case, we are speaking of the entity that is Conscious, of its own nature, connected to All Life. No one is compelled to know of these terms, but to simply understand that in many Indigenous realities, these are real and profound shapers of knowledge, experience, and are related to Existence and Consciousness.

For many Indigenous Spiritualities, ceremony shapes our living, exhibiting how we pray and live. My Grand-Daughter, eight months in utero, helped me to understand this principal, in conversation, that while she experienced the entirety she has come to know as her universe, i too at this very moment, am in the uterus---the Womb of Existence! There is so much to share of our abundance and relations to all that exists. For the Love of Creation has deep resonance for me.... for the Love of Creation • Sense – use as many senses as you can. Notice the sounds and smells. Look wide. Look soft.

Choose something and look close. Feel with your skin, your bones, your muscles. Feel your breathing. Notice any reactions you might be sensing in yourself – alertness, curiosity, fear, restlessness, attraction, distraction....

- Appreciate – focus your attention on something(s) near you. Take as long as you like. Notice all you can about it – its colours, shapes, textures. Appreciate what it is offering to you in this moment. Appreciate it for simply being itself. Acknowledge and give thanks for this gift of Creator/Creation. Speak your gratitude out loud.
- Connect – Is there a story, teaching, or image that this brings to mind? Think about who or what depends on this element? On what or on whom does it depend? How does it give? How does it take or receive? Consider any threats to its safety. What will become of it in a day, a year, 10 years, 1000 years? How will threats such as climate change and severe weather patterns impact it?
- Respect – think of how you relate to this element. How do your actions or inactions impact this part of Creation? How do you show care and respect for this element? Are there actions you will take to protect, to heal, to honour, or cherish?
- Express – show your appreciation and respect by making an offering – you could do this with words, a prayer, a ritual, a song, a dance, for example. You might offer water, tobacco, or a lock of your hair. Take an intentional action in the moment to express your love and respect for this unique and precious part of Creation.
- Delight/Deepen – As you leave, or return to your walk or swim or task, allow the feelings and sensations to deepen in you. Delight in the connections you noticed, or the concern you felt. You may want to take time later to reflect, using silence, arts, journaling, or other methods – perhaps in the context of your own spiritual tradition. Begin with a... PAUSE – Stop what you are doing.