

# The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

## Thank you, from the Klein family

Many thanks to all who attended the Memorial Service for Len last week. We are touched by the outpouring of love and support from our church family since he passed away more than a year ago. We appreciate all the cards, flowers, food, visits and expressions of sympathy. It means so much to us. -*Jean, Rich, Carol and Bill Klein*

*Thank  
you!*

## Worship Assistants needed

Holy Trinity is looking for new volunteers to help make our Worship Services go smoothly. During the summer and into the fall, anyone who is interested can become a Worship Assistant in the following volunteer positions. No experience necessary! We've listed the volunteer opportunities below with a short explanation. If you'd like to help out Holy Trinity on Sunday morning, please contact the Church Office and we'll be happy to get you started.

- **Greeter:** Welcome worship attenders to our Church, and hand out Communion Cups & Bulletins.
- **Lector:** Read the First Reading in front of the congregation during worship. You will receive the reading in your email inbox on the Thursday beforehand.
- **Fellowship:** Purchase food & treats for Fellowship, set up the tables, make coffee, and clean up afterwards.



## Pastor Tim's Article: July 26, 2021

I am not a doctor, and I don't pretend to play one on TV or anywhere else. The closest I came to being a doctor was thinking about it when I was in college, but if you saw my grades during my first year, you would know I didn't think about it for long.

I tell you this because I am going to give what may be considered to be medical advice. In the end, you will need to make your own decision regarding the COVID vaccination and if you have questions, you should consult your doctor.



If you have not done so already and you are eligible, please get the COVID vaccine. As the summer moves on, vaccination rates have stagnated. We appear to have topped out at having only 58% of the population in New Hampshire receive both doses and, in the country, as a whole, we are only at 49.4%. While it seemed like we were going to get 70-80% of the population vaccinated, that now seems far-fetched.

I don't exactly know what that will mean for all us when we get to fall and winter, I do know that it means we will continue to live with daily updates of cases, hospitalizations and death counts. As long as we need to know that information, it means that we will not be "living normally."

I have had several conversations with people (not necessarily from church) who are choosing not to get the vaccine. Each conversation has come down to two reasons. One, they are waiting for more science to come out about the safety of the vaccine or two, they share an antidotal story they heard from someone who knows someone who had an adverse effect from the vaccine. In light of these conversations, let me offer some unsolicited advice on receiving the vaccine and why I believe we all should get it, if eligible.

First, while no vaccine has been advertised to be 100% effective, nearly all new COVID cases are appearing among the non-vaccinated. Here is an article from the AP that

speaks to the efficacy of the vaccine and the protection it provides. <https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-941fcf43d9731c76c16e7354f5d5e187>

Second, when I thought about whether or not to get the vaccine, I weighed the chances of having an adverse reaction to the vaccine against having an adverse reaction to COVID. If one were to look solely at the possibility of death from either COVID or the vaccine, one is much more likely to die from COVID. In the United States, there has been 34.4 million cases of COVID resulting in 610,000 deaths. Conversely, 310 million doses have been administered to over 189 million people with only 6,207 deaths being reported (.0018%). <https://covid-101.org/science/how-many-people-have-died-from-the-vaccine-in-the-u-s/>

However, the following comes directly from the CDC website, “FDA requires healthcare providers to report any death after COVID-19 vaccination to VAERS (Vaccine Adverse Reporting System), even if it’s unclear whether the vaccine was the cause. **Reports of adverse events to VAERS following vaccination, including deaths, do not necessarily mean that a vaccine caused a health problem.**”) This means the number of deaths due to a COVID vaccine is MUCH less. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/adverse-events.html>

But, if you are still on the fence of receiving the vaccine, I ask that you think of the children. Children 12 and under are still not eligible for the vaccine. While risk for serious adverse effects from COVID are low among them, there are still risks. When you get vaccinated, you are actively working to protect them also, not just yourself. Vaccinated people are less likely to spread COVID to others than non-vaccinated people. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/effectiveness/why-measure-effectiveness/breakthrough-cases.html#:~:text=Studies%20show%20that%20fully%20vaccinated,did%20before%20the%20pandemic>

After reading all of the preceding and you would like to get a vaccine and are not sure where to go, the following website will help. All you have to do is enter in your zip code and it will tell you where you can get your vaccine. <https://www.vaccines.gov>

I know that is a lot of information. I think part of the issue going on is that there is so much information out there and so many people are not sure what to believe. How do we sift through it all? Hopefully, what I shared has pared everything down into more manageable pieces and will come from trusted sources.

As always, thank you for taking the time to read what I write in the Tidings. I take seriously the responsibility I have and the platform given to me and my voice. I appreciate the trust you give me.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Tim

### **Offering Envelopes**

We are about to order the Offering Envelopes for 2022, and Holy Trinity would like to have a more accurate number of Offering Envelopes we need to purchase. If you currently receive Offering Envelopes, but no longer need them, please let the Church Office know. You may also notify the Church Office if you don't have Offering Envelopes, and would like them for next year. Having a more accurate number of envelopes needed will help Holy Trinity save money when we place the order in a few months.



## Pastor Tim's Article: July 29, 2021

I am wearing a mask again. I still have some in my car from a couple of months ago when it was common place and I didn't leave the house without a mask. But I will throw those away and grab a couple new ones from a supply we have at church. I will wear one when I go to the grocery store. I will wear one when I go to Target. I will wear one when I am indoors in public places. I will wear one when I am in worship, beginning this Sunday morning. I ask you to do the same.



I don't have to. According to the new CDC guidelines, masks are only mandated (as far as the CDC can mandate) to be worn indoors in counties where COVID transmission is "substantial" or "high." At this point in time, we are fortunate, Rockingham County and the immediately surrounding counties are not in either category. Our level of community transmission is "moderate." I am happy about that and am grateful for the ways the people of the seacoast have embraced the strategies for keeping COVID at bay, as much as we did. (Here is an article from NPR that contains an interactive map of the US with every county and their "rate of transmission." <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/07/28/1021795290/cdc-mask-guidelines-indoors-vaccinated-by-county-covid-spread>)

The reason why I am doing so is simple. Even though we live in a place with lower transmission rates, we do not live in an isolated bubble. People are travelling this summer. Grandparents are going to see grandkids. Young adults are going to visit colleges. Disney vacations that were postponed are being resumed. Simply put, people are going to places of high transmission and coming home. Unless we take proactive steps to limit it (besides being vaccinated), we could very easily become a place of high transmission. I don't want to think about the steps we might have to take if this were to occur. We all lived through the last 18 months. I don't want to revisit that and I highly

doubt you do either. I want kids in school (hopefully maskless). I like gathering in the sanctuary and singing and I want no one being anxious or afraid of becoming sick and dying if they were to join us. Vicky is looking to going to California to see friends in September. I have a trip there to run a Spartan race in October and the two of us have a vacation with family to Costa Rica in December (that has already been postponed twice!). I want to do these things. If wearing a mask will help to ensure that happens, I will gladly wear a mask.

But most of all, as a Christian, I am called to care for my neighbor. As I have said before, as a Christian, we forfeit the ability to make the statement of, "That's my right." Instead, that statement is turned into the question, "What's right for my neighbor?" If it is better for the most vulnerable (those with compromised immune systems, children under 12 who can't get a vaccine, etc...) that I wear a mask, then how could I not?

I also understand that at times masks can be very difficult for people. We are in the summer and it can get hot. Masks can make it more difficult for people to breathe. If you want to come to worship and are vaccinated and wearing a mask can be problematic, no one will kick you out of church if you are not wearing one.

Lastly, this is not a council decision and it is not being mandated by anyone. This is solely my thought and I ask you to join me in it. At our next meeting, I am sure we will talk about our COVID guidelines and what may or may not change.

### **Walk the Walk 2021**

As of August 5, 2021, Team Holy Trinity has a total of 47 members walking to fundraise for Calumet. Together, Team Holy Trinity has walked a total of

**4,718 MILES!**

*That's **2.36%** of the total number of miles Calumet needs to reach their final goal. Every week, we will update this number for the congregation to see. Calumet has a total of **105,966** miles from ALL congregations and teams towards their goal of 200,000 miles, as of August 3.*



## Creation Care

### From Then to Now:

### Older Than We Think & Less Than We Know

#### Thousands of Years & Countless Religions

If we think that faith-based Creation Care is a relatively recent development and that it's primarily Christian, we are sorely misguided. "Creation care" (and other like ideas) spans thousands of years and globally across countless religions. In Chapter 1-4 of his acclaimed book, *GreenFaith: Mobilizing God's People to Save the Earth* (Abingdon Press, 2015), Fletcher

Harper<sup>(1)</sup> overviews the development of "green" theologies, faiths and practices in Judaism, Christianity, spirituality, ethics, indigenous religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Islam, and some variations of each.



To give you an idea of one of Harper's foundational convictions, the first sentence of his book states "Nature, the outdoors, the environment is fundamental to religious faith and spirituality." The final paragraphs of his book are subtitled "Faith in Action." Since this article is for a Christian congregation, a summary of what Harper writes about Judaism and Christianity are only noted here.

**Judaism.** Harper goes back to the first story of creation itself (Genesis 1) and works through the Old Testament (Torah) to highlight primary tenants:

- God made the earth and it was very good.
- God is committed to the full community of universal life.
- God owns the earth and - through stewardship - so do humans.
- The biodiversity of nature demonstrates nature's goodness and its right to exist for its own sake and for God's sake.
- Humans have a place in the larger order of the universe which, in turn, evokes authentic humility.

- Everything God created - human and non-human - are joined in mystical, collective praise of God the Creator.
- The second story of creation (Genesis 2) establishes humanity's responsibility to guard, protect and watch over nature.
- Wastefulness and extravagance are contrary to the biblical limits for human care of the earth.

**Christianity.** Harper Fletcher reviews the full breadth of New Testament books - including the apocryphal Revelations to John - in *GreenFaith* where he clarifies: Jesus's connection to nature throughout His life, teachings, actions, death and resurrection.

- "...Christ is the force that enables the universe to cohere, to exist, to make sense."
- "...The scope of Christ's resurrection is not focused solely on Christians (or people). It is truly universal. 'All things ... whether things on earth or in the heavens' are reconciled to God."
- "Revelation's vision (of the second coming) isn't an endorsement of a 'torched' mind-set. It's a confirmation that God's commitment to the Earth is every bit as real (and) long-lasting as God's commitment to us."
- "The time has arrived for Christianity to recognize creation's basic dignity alongside humanity's." (*Food-for-thought from this article's author: In Communion and Baptism, the sacramental elements of bread, wine and water, are indeed for humanity and directly proceed from nature.*)

### **Faith-Based Environmental Organizations & Programs - Christian**

Now we step away from Fletcher Harper's book to look at the broad scope of environmental organizations, programs and advocacy in American Christendom. The list below is not all-inclusive; any one of the following will lead to many other web pages of resources and faith community actions. This list is not presented in any particular order. However, since we're an ELCA congregation, the first three are those related to the ELCA.



### **Lutherans Restoring Creation (ELCA) [lutheransrestoringcreation.org](http://lutheransrestoringcreation.org)**

LRC is a grassroots movement promoting care for creation in the ELCA. They accomplish their goals by cultivating a community of dedicated stewards of earth and neighbor who proclaim God's promise of hope and healing for all. LRC is driven by laity, pastors, lay professionals, synodical leadership, and others who hold positions in the ELCA and its institutions. This movement grows out of a long history of Lutheran concern (the ELCA's 1993 social statement Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice, and other pre-ELCA Lutheran documents) and involvement.

### **Web of Creation [webofcreation.org/](http://webofcreation.org/)**

The Web of Creation websites maintained by the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (ELCA). As the founder of the Green Congregation Program, the Web of Creation has been a Christian ecumenical organization active in providing environmental resources for faith communities in the area of worship, education, building and grounds, lifestyle at home and work, and public witness.

### **Bible and Ecology [www.bibleandecology.org](http://www.bibleandecology.org)**

Bible and Ecology is an offshoot of the Web of Creation. Its purpose is to provide resources for individuals, churches, pastors, scholars and activists wanting to explore the biblical foundations for sustainability and eco-stewardship ("creation care"). We want to challenge people to see - and to begin to read - the Bible as an ecological book. Our aim is to point to some of the best resources currently available, both print and online, on the Bible and what it has to say about creation, the deep connectedness of all forms of life and the role of humankind in helping to sustain and heal the earth.

### **United Methodist Creation Justice Movement [umcreationjustice.org](http://umcreationjustice.org)**

The Creation Justice Movement is emerging at this kairos moment to connect and support groups within the United Methodist Church and beyond for the work of creation care, justice and regeneration.

### **Earth Ministry [earthministry.org](http://earthministry.org)**

Earth Ministry's work is focused on Washington state and the Pacific Northwest, but its website provides extensive resources useful to other faith-based environmental groups.

## **Environmental Justice from the General Board of Church and Society - Global Ministries, United Methodist Church [umcjustice.org](http://umcjustice.org)**

The Economic and Environmental Justice Program calls the church and society into a greater faithfulness to the biblical vision of wholeness and justice for all of God's creation. From global warming and environmental racism to worker justice and poverty eradication, the program seeks to restore right relationships among ourselves, others and the created world. There are three primary programs: Creation Care, Sustainable Development and Hunger & Poverty.

## **Evangelical Environmental Network [creationcare.org](http://creationcare.org)**

The EEN seeks to equip, inspire, disciple, and mobilize God's people in their effort to care for God's creation, to be faithful stewards of God's provision, to get involved in regions of the United States and the world impacted by pollution, and to advocate for actions and policies that honor God and protect the environment. EEN's work is grounded in the Bible's teaching on the responsibility of God's people to "tend the garden" and in a desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ and to follow Him. EEN tends to be individual and congregation and denominations from more-orthodox Protestant denominations.

## **The Forum on Religion and Ecology [fore.yale.edu](http://fore.yale.edu)**

The Forum on Religion and Ecology is the largest international multireligious project of its kind. It is engaged in exploring religious worldviews, texts, ethics, and practices in order to broaden understanding of the complex nature of current environmental concerns. The Green Seminary Initiative [greenseminaries.org](http://greenseminaries.org) The Green Seminary Initiative encourages schools of theology to be participants in, and keepers of, God's creation in all its human, biological, geological, and ecological manifestations. To that end, the Green Seminary Initiative is dedicated to building a nationwide coalition of theological schools that infuse care of the earth into all aspects of theological education.

## **Interfaith Power and Light [interfaithpowerandlight.org](http://interfaithpowerandlight.org)**

Interfaith Power and Light sees itself as a religious response to global warming. It is a campaign of the Regeneration Project that mobilizes a religious response to global warming in 39 states. It focuses on tangible results in congregations, putting our faith

into action through the promotion of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and conservation.

**Creation Justice Ministries (National Council of Churches of Christ) [creationjustice.org](http://creationjustice.org)**

The Eco-Justice Program office of the National Council of Churches works in cooperation with the NCC Eco-Justice Working Group (of which the United Methodist Church is a member) "to provide an opportunity for the national bodies of member Protestant and Orthodox communions to work together to protect and restore God's Creation.

**Let All Creation Praise [letallcreationpraise.org](http://letallcreationpraise.org)**

Let All Creation Praise offers worship resources for congregations to celebrate God's love for creation, to worship God *with* creation so as to reconcile and restore our human relationship with the rest of nature, and to foster love and care for God's whole creation. It also provides resources to celebrate a "season of creation" or "creation time" in the church year.

**The National Religious Partnership for the Environment [nrpe.org](http://nrpe.org)**

This partnership is comprised of four major religious organizations, each representing faith communities across the US: the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, the Evangelical Environmental Network, the National Council of Churches of Christ, and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops

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**Presbyterians for Earth Care <https://presbyearthcare.org/pcusa-programs/>**

PEC is part of the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PCUSA) which works to inspire and equip congregations and presbyteries to work for eco-justice for all of God's Earth. It

produces, promotes and distributes faith-based environmental resources and oversees the Earth Care Congregations program.

**Catholic Creation Care** <https://www.catholiccreationcare.com/>

Roman Catholic Creation Care is not as much an organization as nationally-led educational and action-oriented resources for families and parishes, including personal study, an indigenous peoples' park program, graded parish school lessons, and courses.

**Creation Justice (American Baptist Church USA)** [abc-usa.org/creation-justice/](http://abc-usa.org/creation-justice/)

American Baptist Churches USA has long heard God's call to tend, love and care for God's creation and all people. They've understood that ecological care and human justice are one, two sides of the same coin. The Office of the General Secretary has partnered with the ABC Creation Justice Network, Creation Justice Ministries and ecoAmerica to galvanize the work their churches have been doing on climate solutions and to build visible national leadership. The ABC Creation Justice Network can offer introductory workshops and training sessions for clergy and congregations.

**Future Creation Care Articles**

While this monthly series of **Creation Care** articles is a work-in-progress, at least four more articles are anticipated to address these matters:

Interconnections of Nature, Worship and Spirituality

- What Households Can do for Creation Care
- What Can HTELC Do for Creation Care
- Creation Care Books and Resources in the HTELC Library

Your comments about **Creation Care** articles are most welcomed. Please direct your questions, ideas and concerns to me. Thank you!

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**(1)** Fletcher Harper is an Episcopal priest and Executive Director of GreenFaith. His highly-recommended, easy-to-read book will soon be available in the HTELC Library. In worship, and in our daily lives, we pray for people. We pray for physical and mental healings. We pray for safe travel. We pray for peace. We pray for those who are hungry.