



OPEN MINDS. OPEN HEARTS. OPEN DOORS.

Horizons

Newsletter of Eastside United Church



Lent 2017

Tread Lightly this Lent

by Suzanne Joyce

This year, the focus of our Lenten reflections is creation care and the environment. Over the coming weeks, we invite you to contemplate your role in environmental stewardship as a Christian responsibility.

Care of creation is one important way through which we might put our faith into action. While some believe that environmental issues fall more within the realm of the political than the religious, religion has a potentially significant role to play in addressing the challenges we face. Since much of our environmental quandary is arguably connected to overconsumption of resources, questions of an ethical nature arise: Is the amount we consume right or wrong? Are we being responsible to the planet and all its people? Are we consuming more than our fair share? This is where communities of faith are in a unique position to provide answers.

After years working in the field of environmental law and advocacy, Gus Speth, founder of the Natural Resources Defense Council, arrived at the same

conclusion: "I used to think that top global environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and climate change. I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address these problems, but I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy, and to deal with these we need a spiritual and cultural transformation. And we scientists don't know how to do that."

In fact, environmentalism has been referred to as "an ethic in search of a religion", one that is missing that larger story in which our actions are coherent, meaningful, and *right*. As communities of faith, we can provide that much-needed spiritual and ethical underpinning to the urgent action that is required.

The United Church of Canada has long been a vocal advocate for environmental issues, and has been deliberate about incorporating this position in its statement of faith, *A New Creed*. While *A New Creed* dates back to 1968, in light of growing environmental concerns the phrase "to live with respect in creation" was added in 1995. At a national level,

we have a history of being intentional about our relationship with the natural world.

Eastside United became an environmental leader of sorts when it first moved away from paper bulletins for worship. Each week, we still print a few PowerPoint outlines, mostly for worship leaders and helpers, as well as a handful of printed announcements for those who prefer them. This simple act has all but eliminated one of the main sources of waste for our congregation.

This Lent, we ask you to consider joining us as we strive to be even more mindful of how we might truly "tread lightly" on the planet we call home.

Zero Waste Sunday: Sunday, March 5, the first Sunday in Lent, was Zero Waste Sunday. Thanks to the leadership of Michelle Dickie, we attempted to reduce the waste produced before, during, and after our service by as much as we could. This meant reducing print materials to as close to zero as possible; opting for china tea cups over our Sustainable

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Lenten Reflection 2017: *Tread Lightly*

by Russell Mitchell-Walker

"Jews, Christians, and Muslims share a creation story from the Bible, found in the early chapters of the book of Genesis. Like many such stories, it begins with sky and earth intertwined in darkness. God first brings forth light, then separates what is above from what is below, thus making oceans, land, and sky. Although some people insist that Genesis 1 is a literal scientific account, it is best understood as what Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann calls a "liturgical poem," a form for use in worship that invites a community "to confess and celebrate the world as God has intended it." In the opening pages of the Bible, a cosmic vision of creation unfolds with the making of plants and forests, the stars and suns and moons beyond, all the fishes and birds and animals, and finally human beings. At each juncture, God proclaims blessing on what has been made, declaring it good, and with the creation of humankind the whole of the universe is pronounced "very good." At the end of the poem, God sends human beings out to till and keep the soil and to work on behalf of the earth, delighting in all its gifts."

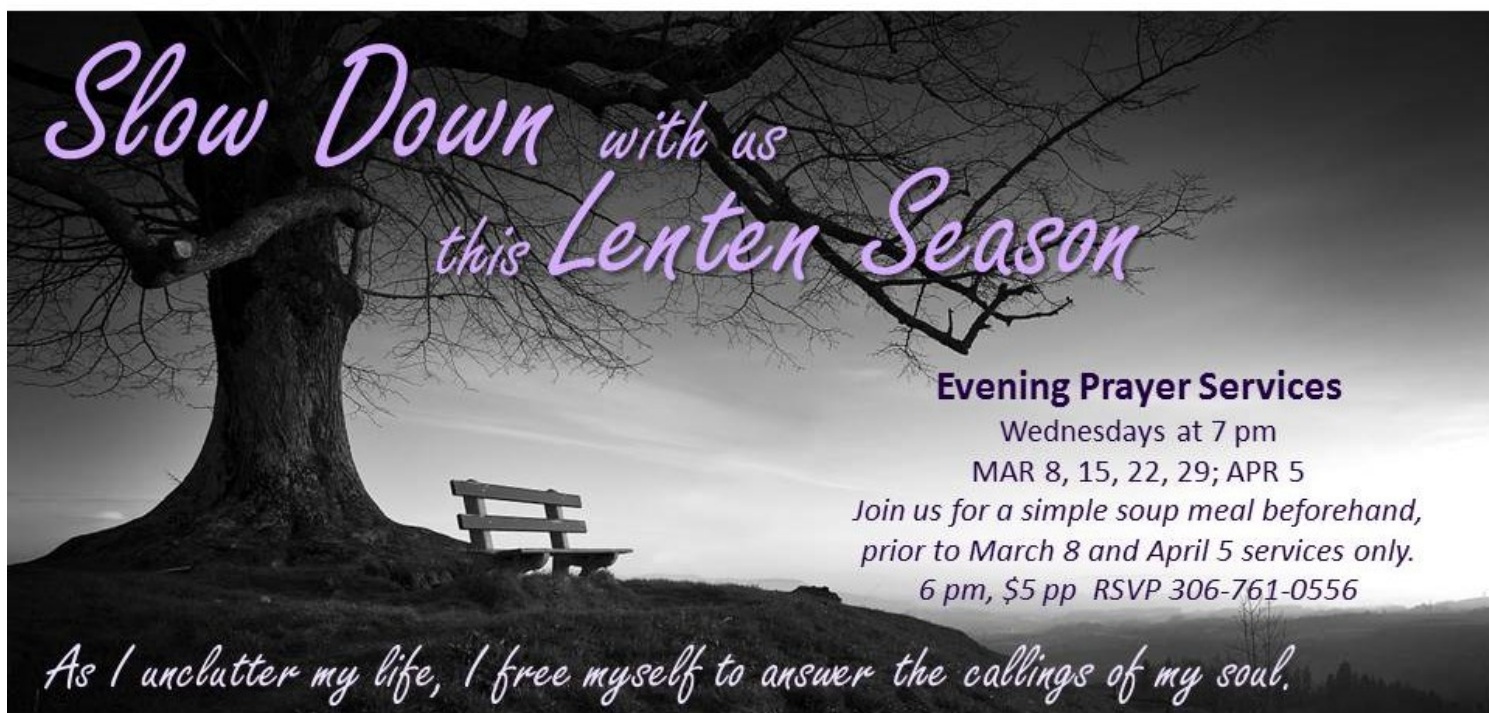
— [Diana Butler Bass, *Grounded: Finding God in the World-A Spiritual Revolution*](#)

We are blessed with a creation that is beautiful and good. God has commissioned us with caring for this creation. We have much opportunity to enjoy and take in its beauty if we wish, and can experience God in that beauty. We also have contributed much to harming the earth which impacts not only our lives but all creatures of God's creation.

Lent is a 40 day period of reflection and repentance as we walk with Jesus to Jerusalem. Jesus began his ministry in the desert for 40 days praying and reflecting on what God was calling him to do and how he was going to live his life. In essence that's what Lent is, an opportunity for us to reflect on our lives and how we might live better following in God's ways. Repentance is about turning around and turning away from wrongdoing. Traditionally people give up things for Lent, indulgences or things that are not as good for us. The theme for this year's Lent is *Tread Lightly*. It invites us to examine how we might tread more lightly in the world, caring for creation and one another, turning away from the practices that leave a heavy

footprint on the environment, and on those around us. What might you give up to tread more lightly and care for the earth?

There are many opportunities for you to reflect on this theme and consider ways you can care for creation and tread lightly. Each week in worship through a Lenten Candle Extinguishing liturgy, we will put out a candle as we lament on an aspect of creation that is suffering. There is a [Lenten Calendar](#) that was sent out in our weekly email at the beginning of Lent (March 1) as well as is available on our website. You can join a [Carbon Fast](#) and receive a weekly e-mail for reflection and action. There will also be available *Give it up for the Earth* Postcards encouraging a far reaching climate change policy and you can [pledge](#) individual commitments for the climate as part of your carbon fast. I hope that you will engage in some way this Lent, in this theme and deepen your connection with the earth and how we each can do our part to Tread Lightly, honouring God in Creation. Blessings for a meaningful and inspiring season!



*Slow Down with us
this Lenten Season*

Evening Prayer Services
 Wednesdays at 7 pm
 MAR 8, 15, 22, 29; APR 5
 Join us for a simple soup meal beforehand,
 prior to March 8 and April 5 services only.
 6 pm, \$5 pp RSVP 306-761-0556

As I unclutter my life, I free myself to answer the callings of my soul.

Join us for **Easter Worship**

April 9 Palm Sunday

A Walk through Holy Week All Ages Service
11:15 am

April 13 Maundy Thursday

Teaching Seder with Bread of Life
7 pm

April 14 Good Friday

Memorial Wake with IMCF
Featuring Creator's Sacrifice Paintings
7 pm

April 15 Easter Vigil

At St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral
with St. Philip Anglican
10 pm

April 16 Easter Sunday

Sunrise Service @ LSC 5:45 am
Easter Worship 11:15 am



FAITH VISITS

Throughout its program, the Faith Exploration group will be visiting the places of worship of a number of different faith traditions. All Eastsiders are welcome to attend these experiences!

Islamic Centre and Mosque

Friday, March 3 at 8:30 pm

Buddhist Meditation

March 16 at 7 pm

Sikh Gurdwara

April 1, 4 to 7pm (tentative)



Sunday School

will be offering Godly Play!

We will hear the story during Theme Time and need volunteers to supervise the creative time downstairs.

Training March 21 at 6:30 pm

Let Russell know if you're interested.



IMCF Breakfast

Eastside continues its involvement with Indian Metis Christian Fellowship by preparing and serving breakfast the fourth Saturday of each month, from 9 am to 12 noon.

Six volunteers are needed to help make this happen. If you are able to spare any time at all, as your schedule allows, you are more than welcome. Volunteers typically help with setting up tables and chairs; laying place settings at the tables; preparing and cooking breakfast; clean up including washing dishes and putting away tables and chairs. All volunteers are invited to join in for breakfast and conversation, the emphasis is on fellowship. IMCF is a very family oriented facility; please talk to me if your children would like to be involved.

Our next breakfast is Saturday, March 25. Please contact [Peter Braun](#) if you are interested in helping on this or a future date.



CONTACT INFORMATION

If you would like to volunteer with the IMCF Breakfast please contact:

PETER BRAUN

peterbraun@myaccess.ca

306-789-3830



Wanted: Photographers

If you've been snapping the odd pic of church services and activities with your phone, we would love you to send us what you've got! We're always looking for pictures to share in reports, newsletters and online. They don't need to be perfect—that's what Photoshop is for!

Sunday School Seeks Godly Play helpers!

by Amanda Tessier

Due to fluctuating attendance and other recent changes, Eastside will be adjusting the structure of Sunday School a bit! We are looking to center Sunday School directly around the worship message and use Godly Play to educate and engage the children. The story will be delivered during theme time and children will proceed to carry out arts, crafts and other small activities to reflect on the message. We are very excited to explore this new and creative way of learning the words and actions of God. In order to go forward with this we will



need volunteers to take a short training course to guide children through their reflection time after the story. The training will be on Tuesday, March 21 630-930pm. If anyone is interested or has any questions please contact Russell Mitchell-Walker or Amanda Tessier.



Community Easter Egg Hunt

Eastside United plans to hold an Easter Egg Hunt once again this year! Planned for the afternoon of **Saturday, April 8**, this fun event will feature refreshments, gift basket draws and a hunt for over 1000 Easter eggs. There will be no admission, it is our gift to the community. To make this happen, we need a volunteer coordinator, helpers the day of, and donations of chocolate. We hope you'll plan to get involved in this enjoyable way to reach out to neighbourhood families!



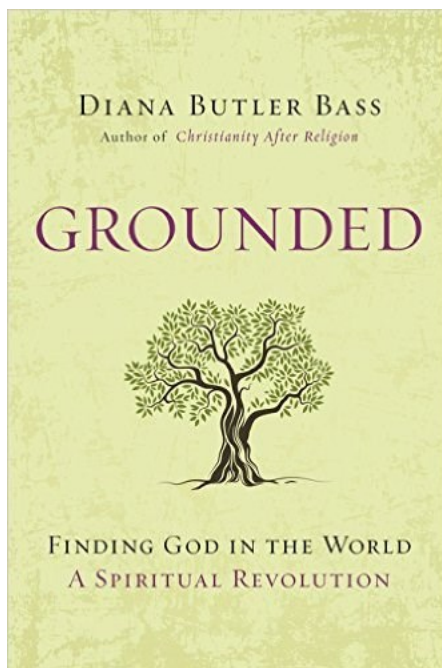
Craft and Study Group set to be *Grounded*

Eastside's **Craft and Study Group** meets each Thursday afternoon at 1:30 pm. This group has been very popular with participants and continues to grow in numbers each year. Typically each session includes spirited discussion around a series of questions while each individual works on handiwork of their choosing. A time of fellowship and refreshments wraps up the afternoon.

The next book to be covered by the group will be *Grounded* by Diana Butler Bass. The subject matter of this book coincides perfectly with our Lenten theme of "Tread Lightly". Here's what the publisher had to say about *Grounded*:

The headlines are clear: religion is on the decline in America as many people leave behind traditional religious practices. Diana Butler Bass, leading commentator on religion, politics, and culture, follows up her acclaimed book Christianity After Religion by arguing that what appears to be a decline actually signals a major transformation in how people understand and experience God. The distant God of conventional religion has given way to a more intimate sense of the sacred that is with us in the world. This shift, from a vertical understanding of God to a God found on the horizons of nature and human community, is at the heart of a spiritual revolution that surrounds us – and that is challenging not only religious institutions but political and social ones as well.

Grounded explores this cultural turn as Bass unpacks how people are finding new spiritual ground by discovering and embracing God everywhere in the world around us—in the soil, the water, the sky, in our homes and neighborhoods, and in



the global commons. Faith is no longer a matter of mountaintop experience or institutional practice; instead, people are connecting with God through the environment in which we live.

Grounded guides readers through our contemporary spiritual habitat as it points out and pays attention to the ways in which people experience a God who animates creation and community. The book observes and reports a radical change in the way many people understand God and how they practice faith. In doing so, Bass invites readers to join this emerging spiritual revolution, find a revitalized expression of faith, and change the world.

We will be ordering books shortly, but there's still time for you to get involved. Please let the office know if you're interested!

*I took a day to search for God
and found him not. But as I trod
by rocky ledge, thru woods untamed,
Just where one scarlet lily flamed,
I saw his footprint in the sod.*

From VESTIGIA by Bliss Carmen



LSC Women's Breakfast, Saturday, March 11 from 8 to 10 am

Join us for breakfast and conversation!

This month's special guest is Sandra Fowler.

Sandra will be sharing about a recent Canadian Food Grains Study Tour to Nicaragua in which she took part. This tour included meeting with rural communities who explained their child nutrition programs, conservation agriculture and land bank programs; a visit to a United Church Mission and Service partner in Managua; and learning from academics and Oxfam workers about the history and political situation in the country; but the true joy was getting to know Nicaraguans and learning how, with the help of the Food Grains Bank, they are improving their lives and the lives of their children.

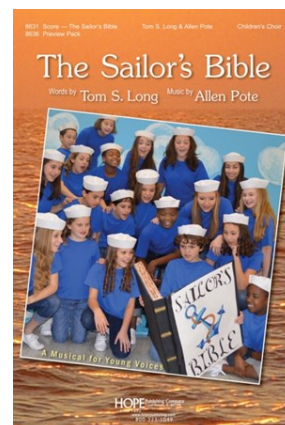
Sandra is a United Church lay worship leader who lives near Eyebrow where she and her husband and daughter have a cattle and sheep operation (and is Sarah Tkachuk's mom, too!).

All women are welcome to attend – please bring a toonie to help with breakfast costs.

Join us for another LBC Musical

Cast members needed!

May gathering intro
with fall rehearsals and
performance before December



Let Russell Know if interested!

House Concert with Skylight Contributor Martyn Joseph

At Russell and Brian's house
2 O'Brien Bay
Weds. March 22
Doors at 7 pm,
Concert at 7:30
Tickets \$25 - see Russell!





Worship at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre

On the third Sunday of every other month, Eastside United Church volunteers hold a worship service for residents at the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre. The service takes place at 1:30 pm and volunteers arrive at the Centre a half-hour ahead of time to usher worshippers from their rooms to the chapel.

Our next service is scheduled for Easter Sunday, April 16 and we are still determining whether we can find enough volunteers on this day. If you are able to assist, please contact [Shelly Williams](#).



Film and Faith Friday, March 17

Join us for a movie and conversation following! We plan to see Moonlight, The Shack, Fences or Lion. Please follow our Facebook event page to vote for your movie choice and for movie times and location.

Tread Lightly for Lent Continued from page 1

Earth paper cups; and cloth napkins over paper. In the restrooms, we had hand towels. We're curious to hear about your experiences with Zero Waste Sunday. Was it difficult? Did we go far enough? Were there things you missed? Or do you feel we could implement most of these changes on an ongoing basis? **Please let us know.**

2017 Tread Lightly for Lent Calendar:

We are also asking that you consider following along with the 2017 "Tread Lightly for Lent" daily [reflection-action calendar](#), created by the Presbyterian Hunger Program's Environmental Ministries and Enough for Everyone offices. This Lenten calendar begins with ways to prepare ourselves for the Lent and Easter season and then moves to weekly foci of women, creation, water, consumption, and social justice.

Carbon Fast Email: Climate change will prove to be one of the most pressing environmental issues of our time and we may only have one chance to respond with appropriate conviction. Sign up for the [Carbon Fast email](#) to receive daily suggestions for how you can get involved, through a series of do-able actions, in climate justice.

Give It Up for the Earth Campaign:

This [Lenten faith-in-action campaign](#) to increase climate justice in Canada, is centred on a postcard that includes a pledge to individual climate action, and a call for more far-reaching national climate policy.

Grounded by Diana Butler Bass: The timing couldn't be more perfect for the new book our Craft and Study group will be starting in a couple of weeks. *Grounded* by Diana Butler Bass explores

how people are finding new spiritual ground by discovering and embracing God everywhere in the world around us—in the soil, the water, the sky, in our homes and neighborhoods, and in the global commons. It promises for some stimulating discussion! If you are unable to attend the Thursday afternoon group but would like to follow along with the book, just let us know. We can always order extra copies and share the discussion questions by email for your pondering.

LSC Solar Energy Working Group: You may have heard that there is a small committee with representation from each of the three LSC congregations that is exploring the feasibility of one day meeting the majority of our power needs through solar panels. While many members of this group feel that switching to renewable energy is an important way to put our faith into action (and has financial benefits for the LSC as well), one of the most beautiful things about this shared project is that it is a way for our three congregations to work toward a common goal. All three of our faith traditions, United, Anglican and Lutheran, have directives that encourage us to become better stewards of the earth.

For better than the last fifty years, we have heard countless warnings that our relationship with the earth is unsustainable, and have seen evidence of this all around us. In this recent history, one sees a parallel to the present season in the church year - as we come through the 40 days of Lent, to the darkness of Good Friday, to the joyous hope of Easter. May this be the darkest point in our relationship with the earth, and may we have hope that we will soon emerge and rejoice at being in right relation with God through creation!

REGINA YOUTH FORUM IS HAVING 2 COMMUNITY STUDY NIGHTS!

Coffee, tea and snacks supplied! Come for a quiet space to get some studying and homework done. Pull up a chair, grab a snack and a drink, and enjoy a comfortable space for you to get on top of some schoolwork. Plug-ins for laptops will be available! At the LSC. March 29 and April 12. from 8 to 11 pm Contact Taylor for more info : taylor.balfour1@gmail.com





earth save reduce recycle reuse
energy grow trees pollute trash litter

Earth Care as Lenten Practice

*If we're fashioned from the earth -
- ashes to ashes, dust to dust --
then we need to be faithful to our
relationship with the earth.*

You are from dust and to dust you will return.

What does the Ash Wednesday imposition of ashes mean to you? What do these words communicate to your body, mind, spirit?

This is one of my favorite liturgical rituals of the church year. To be marked with ash is to be reminded of my mortality.

Recently, it also is for me a powerful reminder of my earthiness, my connection to God's beautiful, mysterious earth. It is a call to humility that connects being human to being "of humus." The Creation myth from Genesis 2 invites us to believe in an artistic God who sculpts us of clay, creating *adam* from *adamah*. We know that the molecules that make up our human bodies are no different than the components that make up life on our entire planet. Our bodies are connected to world's body. We are from dust and we will go back to dust. Life and death, and death to life, all blessed by God.

Throughout Lent we can reflect on what it means to have been created by God as these earthy creatures. If fashioned from the earth, and blessed and called by God, how can we live into an awakened relationship with the earth?

Rather than being in a domineering, or even a "stewardship" posture in the world, perhaps we can begin to see ourselves as being in an original, intended relationship with the earth, seeing ourselves as part of the earth brought into being and given breath by a Creator who loves and knows us.

During this reflective season, we might spend some time with this basic element of our human vocation: being created by God from earth with a vocation to till and to keep the earth (Gen 2:15). (The verb translated as "to till" also means "to serve" in the original Hebrew.) Going back to an original relationship that God intends for us, what might we learn from a humble posture of caring for, and relating to, all creation? Recognizing our dust-ness, how can we be empowered and energized to both rest in the gracious, creative goodness of God and to work for justice throughout all creation?

However you are called into Lenten practice this year, I encourage you to consider how God, who sculpted you from the earth itself, calls you to some new form of earth care in this holy time.

Rebecca Barnes-Davies is the Associate for Environmental Ministries (PCUSA) and author of "50 Ways to Help Save the Earth: How You and Your Congregation Can Make a Difference."

Abridged from article Earth Care as Lenten Practice on www.patheos.com. February 12, 2012. Used with permission.



Eastside Family Dinner Thursday, April 6 Doors open at 5:30 pm Supper at 6 pm

Families have been loving the chance to get together and visit, to have a meal provided on a busy weeknight, and to let the kids run around and have a blast!

Parents with kids, and grandparents with grandchildren are all welcome (bring your kids too if you can!).

RSVP to [Russell](#) by Monday, April 3. This event can't happen without help to provide the delicious meal. Please let [Wanda](#) know if you can lend a hand.

Can't make it to this one? Eastside's Family Dinners take place the first Thursday of each month.

LSC Meditation Group Monday evenings at 7 pm in the East Sanctuary

**Meditation is
the activity of
holy thought
consciously
performed in
the presence
of God.**



Horizons: The Newsletter of Eastside United Church

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