

**ST. STEPHEN'S WORSHIP SERVICE**

Ready for your participation each Sunday morning.  
"Together in Spirit"

Worship in the comfort of your own home.

Go to the recording at [www.stephenslutheran.org](http://www.stephenslutheran.org)

*(Print the bulletin and Celebrate so you can read, sing and pray with Pastor Jim. Have some bread and wine/grape juice ready for Holy Communion)*

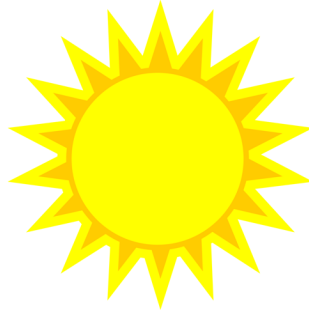
NEWSLETTER WAS SENT ON  
October 28, 2020

POST OFFICE:  
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PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

St Stephen's Lutheran Church  
2500 Soquel Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Non-Profit Org.  
Postage Paid  
Permit #7079  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060-9998

*St. Stephen's Lutheran Church*



**SUN**

**November 2020**

**Sunday Worship on website**

**Nov. 1, 8, 15 & 29**

We continue to record worship on Saturday mornings at 11:00. If you would like to participate, we are open to a **few people** (max. 5). Call 476-4700 to reserve your spot. Make mention if you would like to Read Scripture or offer the Prayers of Intercession from the Celebrate insert.

**Consecration Sunday - November 22**

**Outdoor Worship (parkinglot) - bring your commitments**

Let's all respond generously to God's love and grace for us. Use the materials mailed out to you to honestly reflect on how you will give thanks in the coming year. By faith, as God enables us, let's strive to:

- Pray regularly for the ministry of our church.
- Attend worship services often to keep our faith first, and seek to interest others in sharing that with us.
- Be available to follow God's leading by offering your gifts of time and ability through our church.
- Significantly give financially to the work of the Spirit as a reflection of your dedication, through the ministry of our church in 2021.

***St. Stephen's Lutheran Church***  
***Evangelical Lutheran Church of America***  
***2500 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz, California 95062***  
***Phone—831-476-4700 — Fax—831-476-3918***  
*www..ststephenslutheran.org*  
*email—office@ststephenslutheran.org*  
***Rev. James P. Lapp, Pastor***

Ministers: The Entire Congregation  
Church Council: Pres. — Renee Rice V.P.— Robert Bartee  
Secretary - Jay Johnston Treasurer— Kent Madsen  
David Balogh, Bill Schraft, Alyssa Burkhardt,  
Paul Cunningham, and Steven Hendrickson  
Director of Music: Gary Roberts  
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp  
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens  
Custodian: John Hopping  
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp  
Office Open: Mon.—Thurs. 8:30am—2:30pm  
Pastor Jim's Office Hours — Weds. & Thurs. 10 am to 1 pm

**MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Stephen's is a welcoming, healing community who worship God in Christ, nurture people growing in faith, serve others with acceptance and love, and invite people to share the joy of the Spirit.

**VISION STATEMENT**

To become an energetic, inclusive, multigenerational, multicultural, missional community that offers, hope, joy, worship, service, play, and life as disciples of Jesus Christ

**El Salvador Sister Parish News**

Welcome to the sister parish corner, with news and updates on the work with our companion communities in El Salvador, Guillermo Ungo and El Pilar.

**Guillermo Ungo** School has been difficult this year in Guillermo Ungo due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In some ways, not too different from the remote learning here in California, but the difficulty with internet connections (see photo at right, "Seeking a Signal") and suitable equipment made it more challenging. The school year runs from January to early November, so it is just finishing up. The new year will continue with remote learning in January 2021. We are expecting the list of scholarship recipients soon. I will be contacting student sponsors once we have the new list. Stay tuned as we figure out an alternative method of providing the students with sponsor gifts and greetings. In the past, we have asked you to fill one-gallon zip-style plastic bags with small items appropriate for your student. This year, due to the pandemic, there will not be a delegation going to El Salvador in December/January to carry the gifts. This will be the first time since 2001 that we will have an entire year without a delegation.



Your sister parish is the special benevolence for the month of November. Please give what you can to support our projects. The bulk of the special benevolence money will support scholarships.

**El Pilar** We just completed Phase 5 of the composting latrine project, with a total of 61 latrines built. Our original commitment was for 83 latrines, but we suspect the communities have grown since we started. We have enough funds already raised for at least another ten latrines but will need more to reach the goal.

Santa Cruz al Salvador continues to be very grateful for all the amazing support from the people in our congregations. **Thank You!**

Kent Madsen  
For Santa Cruz al Salvador

# Birthdays & Anniversaries

11-5 Sandra Eldridge	11-19 Isaiah Brouse	
11-7 Dorothy Ronning	11-19 Briana Juhl	
11-8 Lorie Juhl	11-19 Jessica Juhl	11-26 Sam & Nancy
11-10 Amanda	11-20 Hilding Ronning	Loya
Cunningham	11-22 James Jones	
11-11 Charlotte Judd	11-22 John Hopping	11-26 Mitch & Linda
11-13 Colin Boyle	11-24 Lindsey Cramer	Ronning
11-14 Barbara Johnston	11-23 Xavier Brown	
11-16 Stephen Cappelloni	11-24 Kathy Johnson	11- 27 David & Martha
11-17 James Abler	11-25 Brian Brouse	Balogh
11-17 Ariela Turzo	11-26 Mathew Garden	
11-18 Linda Ronning	11-26 Galahad Hughes	



**Short Term:** Fire fighters and evacuees, Healthcare workers & teachers, family of Eleanor Zoellner, Hendrick, Betsy, Donna, Sherilyn Jager & family, Family of Delores Price, Family of Al Mitchell, Family of Cheryl Denny, Jean Patterson, Sheila, Frank Giammona, Heather, Kevin, Family of Suzanne Duval, Shelly

Barker & family, Sam, Tom, George Webber & Family, Cox Family, Becky & Aaron Johnson, Marlene Simmen & family, Lorraine Chavez, Kimberly & Danny, Lora Schraft Poulson, Chuck, Michael, Kayla, Don, Lina, Sal, Katarina, Taiyo, Mateo, Stephanie Jager, Cabel, Miller, Kyle, Noah, Esdras, Immigrant families, The Homeless, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, Pastor Jim and Our Church Family. **Long Term:** The Sanders Family, Linda Johnson, Bailey Ingalls, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, John B., Michelle, Josh, CJ, Susan Anderson, Rick, Bobbie Erickson, Edna Lindquist, Richard C., Eric VonSchell, Lauri Hollist, Ken Pahel, Pat M., Gary, Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Barry & Barbara, Chris & Lorie Juhl, Karin, Will, Chris, Pat Hubbard, Cathy, Pearl Runquist, Volpi & Robe Family, men and women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today.

*from Pastor Jim*



## Memorial Service for Suzanne Duval

Sunday, November 15 at 11am.

We will gather with Suzanne's family and friends outdoors in the church parking lot, weather permitting. Please bring your own chairs and masks. Attendees will sit with their own families distanced by 10 ft. between groups. You may stay in your car if you would like. We will attempt to park you closer so you can hear better.

Unfortunately, as you can imagine, there will be no reception and we will ask everyone to leave the service immediately following so that we do our best to reduce the risk of possible transmission of Covid-19.

It was felt that we wanted to have Suzanne's Memorial Service before the holidays, when so many of us will be grieving her loss as one who brought so much joy and meaning through music to so many during those times in previous years.

Please come if you are comfortable doing so. It will be an important expression of our love and appreciation to God for her witness and gifts shared among us for over 20 years as our Church Musician. We will also grieve together how it was too soon that she left our physical presence and suffered so much at the end of her life. At the same time, there is much to celebrate about who Suzanne was for the life of our congregation and the way she helped sustain our spiritual lives through music.

Blessed be the memory of this child of God. May light perpetual shine upon her.

## Reconciled In Christ Welcome Statement

(Approved at January 2020 Congregational Meeting)

**"We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace.**

**We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status.**

**We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ."**

## Council Highlights

1. For devotions, Pastor Jim chanted the Psalm 96 for Sunday and related it to our current situation, reminding us that we are to tell our faith out among the nations and to never concede our loyalty to any empire, while working to allow God to be praised by restoring creation where we have harmed it.
2. Pastor Jim reported that there has been a slight decrease in participation and views in Bible Study and of our worship service, respectively. As the pandemic continues to affect so many and threaten so many others, there is a weariness and malaise that we tend to fall into because we can't gather as we used to. He reminded us of the importance to keep trying to engage with each other and participate in worship at home. Maintaining regular spiritual practices is essential to keeping ourselves hopeful and healthy as we get through this time together.
3. Pastor Jim reported that the family of Suzanne Duval and her close friend Katy have decided it is time to hold an outdoor Memorial Service on Sunday Nov. 15 at 11am. It will be set up like we do on the Sunday mornings we have had worship in the parking lot. This will be our first Memorial Service since we suspended in-person worship services.
4. Pastor Jim was a Co-Chair for COPA's Accountability Session with the District 1 candidates for County Supervisor. Both John Leopold and Manu Koenig agreed to all points of our agenda and to meet with us within 2 weeks of taking office to begin accomplishing our goals. 210 people attended the Zoom gathering with about 20 from St. Stephen's.
5. Council approved a motion to compensate Rev. Carol Been the amount of the Synod Guidelines for Pulpit Supply—\$275 for one service. There was some discussion about whether we might offer an additional amount taking into consideration the last minute extra effort that went into holding a Zoom worship service due to the unforeseen absence of our video production team.
6. Jay Johnston made a motion to return to regular in-person, indoor worship services beginning in November. The motion was defeated 8-1, but it led us to discuss what it will take for us to be able to return to regular in-person, indoor worship services. Pastor Jim expressed he would not consider leading a regular indoor worship service until a vaccine was received and made more broadly available. He suggested that we form a Task Force to think about how we might approach returning to regular in-person, indoor worship services. Jay Johnston, Paul Cunniingham and Bill Schraft volunteered to help with that. Pastor Jim will gather some info from our Synod and local churches to help begin our conversation and potential plans and potential problems and issues with doing so.
7. Council voted unanimously to hold another outdoor parking lot worship service on Sunday Nov. 22—Consecration Sunday— at 10:30pm

## Delight Ministry with Nelleke Meerman

October has been a busy month! It has consisted of delight photoshoots, LOTS of calls- this time with other girls on the leadership team so I can get to know them also, and many hours in the car.

One very cool thing that happened this month was that delight HQ hired me to do some photos for their site & social media after seeing some I took for Azusa Pacific's delight chapter! I got to be strategic about planning shoots with girls from three different universities: Loyola Marymount, California Lutheran and San Diego State. It was special to meet the girls and spend time with them while also making them feel beautiful & celebrated! It was so cool to see them feel special to be in photos that will be included in Delight's brand image!

I also got to go visit the girls at Chapman University a few weeks back! Spending time with them was so special! Including a socially distanced picnic.

ASIDE FROM WORK — I took some time off last week and took photos at two weddings! I felt very refreshed coming back to my regional director duties after having some time where my mind was on other things! One wedding had a really beautiful sermon about love and some hymns included which was so special to see how the bride and groom wanted Jesus to be part of their day.

Other things that filled my free time was watching The Great British Baking Show, trying new coffee shops and taking photos with Rachel and Taylor.

DIVERSITY UPDATE — When at our staff retreat in Nashville, we had a conversation and watched a video interview with a black couple who are heavily involved in the church and spoke out about their experiences with prejudice and racism. I received the book "The Myth of Equality" that we are reading as a staff.

I have had a few conversations with leaders to hear about how Delight can support them better with resources and hearing their questions, concerns and what they have been learning about!

TRAVEL — We went to Nashville for a staff retreat- to rest, learn and grow in community with one another. We stayed in the country in a beautiful white house. It was so sweet to experience the Tennessee country landscape and see some fall colors.

There have been some changes with travel! Some of my leaders in South Dakota were quarantined and there have been more health issues in my family that have come to light- so I decided it wasn't safe to risk traveling there.

I will still be traveling to Cal Poly SLO, OR & WA. I am getting COVID tested before and after all my trips and staying by myself in order to keep everyone safe.

Blessings, Nelleke (831) 421-2645  
[nmeerman@delightministries.com](mailto:nmeerman@delightministries.com) 13



## In Memoriam of Eleanor Zoellner

died August 25, 2020

Eleanor served as organist, and Sunday School teacher at St. Stephen's from 1956—1959 during Jack's time as our Pastor. He tells us that they had a wonderful time here. Their two girls were born here!

Eleanor was born in Sparkill, NY. She earned a BA in Education at Hope college in Holland, MI graduating Magna Cum Laude. She taught fourth grade then moved to CA. She met Jack at Camp Pendleton where he served as an enlisted Marine in WWII, then as a Chaplain. They eventually settled in Scottsdale AZ. Eleanor was the church organist, choir director, and gave private piano lessons in addition to being a first grade teacher. She earned her private pilot's license and enjoyed flying. She received her Masters degree in Library Science at ASU and became a Librarian. She was awarded the Outstanding Librarian of the Year her first year. Eleanor taught for a total of 53 years. Her love of children animals and music never diminished. She was full of life and loved by all who knew her. She will be greatly missed. She leaves behind her husband of 66 years, Jack, and their daughter Susan's family. She was preceded in death by their daughter Gretchen. A private interment will be held in Sparkill, NY.

*Dear Friends,*

*Thanks you so much for sending me the monthly newsletters. I open it first thing to read all of the events. I was interested about fire damage to members of the congregation and the church.*

*This is a "new world" with elections and all. I pray that soon it will be like the first creation, in spirit, in kindness and in love. God did not create us to be as we are today.*

*My warm blessings to all at St. Stephen's. In the good old USA, we need a "new creation". Bless you for all your service and help to others in need. I love your "Reconciled in Christ" welcome statement. Only if only all churches were so inclusive and members were so warm.*

*I miss Santa Cruz and you ALL. God continue to be with you all.*

*Love, Pastor Jack Z.*

*P.S. I'm 94 now and don't see too well.*



## Child Development Center

On a personal note, November will be special for me as I welcome my second grandson who will be born mid-month. He is a true miracle for my family as we did not know for sure that we would have more grandchildren. It keeps me going to witness this joy for my daughter Kimberly in the midst of all that is going on.

November marks our third month of being open successfully. Our school community is doing a great job taking precautions so we can keep this school going. I realize we are moving into months that may change our path a bit, however, we are prepared to do what is needed to keep everyone safe and in compliance.

Our SSCDC School Board has met twice during Covid-19. I am looking forward to our next meeting. Meeting with the School Board is very foundational for me as I receive wisdom through teamwork from our members. It was a very quiet October as we canceled Aebleskiver. I miss the hustle and bustle of our church members and yearn for the activities that used to take place here. I miss YOU!

This is a special meeting as we honor Barbara Johnston for her 6 years on our board, the last several being our President. I am so thankful to have worked with Barbara and receive her kind and practical guidance. She was the wind beneath my wings and helped me to realize confidence as your Preschool Director. She will be missed! Thanks be to God for your service Barbara.

We welcome Bill Schraft this month as our School Board President. I very much look forward to his guidance and support of our School Board as he returns to this role! Pastor Jim, Kathy Allen, Margaret Schraft, Mary Kelly, and Sandra Eldridge continue as School Board Members for this school year.

In October we arranged our only Senior Housing (Multigenerational) event to parade around their home as they watch from their windows. Children will be able to parade safely, parents get to attend at a social distance, and children will Trick-or-Treat at the office doors. This way we will share cheer and provide the children and families with a safe alternative to celebrate. We will also send Thanksgiving cards to the residents.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving! However, you celebrate, God will be at the table with us all, which brings us together in gratitude!

Peace be with you. Kathy Berens

## News from the Congregation . . .

(Please send us a note to keep up with each other these days!)

### **With Gratitude from Susan & Ken Gross**

*You can take our grandson's (Nicolas Gross) name off the prayer list. The many prayers this 1 lb 10 oz preemie received were fabulous and effective. After 109 days in the NICU at Kaiser Walnut Creek and 5 days after his due date, Nico came home last week. He is almost 9 pounds and is doing amazing. Ken and I have seen him twice, and feel he is a miracle.*

*His family and many friends will never forget him in their prayers, but he can be taken off the church's list. Thanks be to God for him 🙏*

### **Thank You! From Jean Petersen and Mark Baker**

*Mark and I are extremely grateful to you for permitting us to "camp" in the Fireside Room last month. It was very much appreciated! "Evacuation" would not be my activity of choice, but your kindness and generosity made it tolerable. God Bless!*

### **Greetings from Renee Rice**

*What a crazy 8 months it has been?!? I spent the first few months learning how to be a school administrator from home, now I am back at school working but without students. I turned 40 in August and had a small celebration, it was great being surrounded (although socially distant) by friends and family. My nieces both just had birthdays, Amelia is 9 and Abby is 13.*

*I miss seeing everyone at church!! Stay safe and be well!!*

### **Greetings from Mary Gilbert**

*Thank you for sending the DVD's of worship, the sermons, bulletins etc..to me. I really miss church on Sundays. Thanks again.*

### **Greetings from Joanne Freymuth**

*Hope all is going well. You both (Pastor Jim & Leslie) keep very busy! I do watch the Sunday service even on Tuesday or Wednesday or sometimes even a month old! I hope you all have a good outdoor gathering. My best to all.*

### **From Sandi Crouser**

*I got a good laugh from this quote in "The Empress File" by John Sandford—"There's nobody more righteous than a guilty Lutheran with a reasonable excuse!"*

### **From Charles Eldridge**

*After his wife Sandra asked him if we could include him in the Prayers on Sunday: "I'll take every prayer I can get!"*

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## **Benevolence Donations (Individual and Church)**

<b>2020 through September</b>	
<b>Am. Fdn. Suicide Prevention</b>	<b>\$305</b>
<b>SS Scholarships</b>	<b>\$380</b>
<b>Live Oak Resource Center</b>	<b>\$245</b>
<b>Habitat for Humanity</b>	<b>\$470</b>
<b>Mt. Cross</b>	<b>\$410</b>
<b>World Hunger</b>	<b>\$245</b>
<b>Housing Matters</b>	<b>\$315</b>
<b>CLU/PLTS</b>	<b>\$335</b>
<b>Lutheran Campus Ministry</b>	<b>\$470</b>
<b>SS CDC</b>	<b>\$290</b>
<b>El Salvador Sister Parish</b>	<b>\$200</b>
<b>Lutheran World Relief</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>ELCA Synod</b>	<b>\$750</b>
<b>COPA</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>
<b>Lutheran Immigration</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,915</b>
<b>2020 Benevolence Target (10%)</b>	<b>\$14,658</b>
<b>% of Target</b>	<b>40%</b>

**Treasurer Notes ...**  
**Budget Information · September 2020**

	September	September	YTD	YTD	Net
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	
Contribution Income	\$12,661	\$11,833	\$108,093	\$109,585	\$-1,492
Facility Use Income *	\$538	\$1,535	\$9,270	\$13,811	\$-4,541
Investment Income	\$3,808	\$3,750	\$34,488	\$33,750	\$738
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$17,007</b>	<b>\$17,118</b>	<b>\$151,851</b>	<b>\$157,146</b>	<b>\$-5,295</b>
Expenses	\$18,575	\$19,292	\$170,969	\$175,753	\$-4,784
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$-1,568</b>	<b>\$-2,174</b>	<b>\$-19,118</b>	<b>\$-18,607</b>	<b>\$-511</b>

\* Includes Child Development Center facility use @ \$300/month + Miscellaneous Income.  
 Contribution income for September was above budget (*thank you!*), but we're falling behind with Facility Use Income; we're helped by somewhat lower expenses, but still running with a deficit larger than expected. A Paycheck Protection Program loan in the amount of \$59,300 was granted to St. Stephen's and the Child Development Center.

While the church is closed to fight the coronavirus pandemic, our expenses continue. Thank you to those who have mailed contributions or made them online on our website.

**Special funds for the Organ, Piano, Hearing Impaired,  
 Solar Electricity and Narthex Bathroom**

	September	Reserve	Needed to Payoff
Organ	\$10	\$240	
Piano	\$20	\$290	
Hearing Impaired Equip	\$0	\$395	
Solar Electric Payback	\$194		\$15,659
Narthex Bathroom	10		Paid Off!!

**Provide Lunches for Volunteers**  
**Tuesday, November 24**  
 (4th Tuesday of each month)

Contact church office if you can provide Sandwiches, Fruit, Chips or Cookies



**SAVE THE DATE: Deck the Halls Virtual Online Auction**  
**November 21, 5-7pm**

Please consider participating in our auction and help us to continue to build homes, communities, and hope in the Monterey Bay area. [www.habitatmontereybay.org](http://www.habitatmontereybay.org) and follow the link to the auction on Facebook Live.

**Thursday Bible Studies**

Zoom with Pastor Jim  
 (check email on Weds. for link)  
 11am -12noon and 7:30 pm—8:30 pm (new time)

*We will be looking at the upcoming scripture readings for Sunday, to enrich our worship experience and uncover some of the deeper truths of our faith. As we grow in our faith, we grow in community.*

**Special Benevolence Offering**

**November—Santa Cruz al Salvador / Sister Parish**  
 “Building Relationships for Better Lives” See page 15

**October — Child Development Center = \$ 180**  
 (as of Oct. 22)

## Faith Responses to Climate Change

On September 16, 2020, a Founder's Day event took place in Berkeley at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. An announcement was made about the institution becoming a Center for Climate Justice and Faith. There was a celebratory atmosphere as the featured speaker, Bill McKibben, ([350.org](http://350.org)) a preeminent spokesperson for Climate Change issues, was introduced. What followed was a soft spoken, very humble, direct talk about what we face in Climate Change and what a faith response looks like.

After explaining that the world has about ten years to reverse highly accelerating temperature changes leading to catastrophic results, Bill named a number of behavioral changes for congregations and individuals to respond in faith and love.

We need to make a strong environmental witness by:

- a. standing up to "powers and principalities" by investing in a non fossil fuel portfolio in our congregation and personal financial lives.
- b. participate in direct action to stop destructive pollution
- c. vote for representatives who will implement changes
- d. preach from the pulpit about climate change at least once a month
- e. whenever the church has potlucks or other meals, be sure that whole food plant based foods are offered as a model of a positive faith response.

Another important action that one can take is to buy local and organic products and to utilize local farmer's markets regularly. Ultimately though, Bill said that "Market forces will not solve this, people need to come together."

At the end of his talk, Bill shared the phrase that connects much of what has happened in 2020 is "I can't breathe." May our love and actions rooted in faith help Earth to breathe again!

May God's grace and peace be with you,  
Steven Hendrickson



## ***Your Tired Body. Our Exploited Earth. They're Connected.***

By Melody Zhang - Sojourners

Climate change, racism, and environmental violence share the same last name: extraction. They find root cause in the same atrophying of our national moral character and loss of communal responsibility. We are really up against old problems that every so often like to present a new face; today in the ways of police brutality, of insurgent wildfires, or of acid rain.

We all participate in the economy of extraction when we practice the belief that our Earth has no dignity, no life, or inherent value apart from what we get out of it for utility and for short-term profit. We participate in this economy when we continue to strip the dignity from any sort of bodily — or embodied — work and exploit mainly Black and brown bodies for hard labor with criminally low wages and working conditions in exchange for comfort enjoyed only by some. We all fall prey to the logic of extraction when we engage mindlessly in consumerism and accumulation, whether through buying stuff we do not need or wasting what we have. There are a thousand ways to participate in the economy of extraction, and most of the time we do it in willful ignorance.

Yet this legacy of extraction cannot co-exist with God's dreams. In God's order of things, nothing is created in vain, nothing goes to waste, and everything is treated with care. God longs for and is working toward wholeness and healing, toward justice and restoration for all created beings. We know this and we want to participate in building this radical and sacred economy — one where each person and every created being is indispensable and worthy of care.

This election, we have some choices. We could carelessly take a pen and scratch in a few checkmarks in one direction in alignment with our favorite political ideology and think our responsibilities are done. Or we can welcome the ballot as an invitation to examine our lives and consider how we might carefully inhabit our homes and communities in the years to come.

So can we each take our vote on Nov. 3 not as the end, but as a vow toward a renewed beginning? Christ followers cannot be single-party or even single-issue voters; Our alignment is always and only to God: God's desires of wholeness and liberation. God's dreams of radical welcome. God's movement toward justice — especially for members of our community who continue to be oppressed by the relentless churning of the extractive economy. We are not called simply to "vote for climate"; our responsibility is to show up season after season, in the personal realm and the public square, as a people committed to care-giving and to building vital community, no matter our position in the world.