

PRESIDENT'S LETTER  
FEBRUARY 2022  
LOOKING AHEAD IN HOPE

Christian education and faith formation are constant continual processes of looking ahead. We may be planning for Lent and Easter before Epiphany is over. We are looking forward to the season of Easter sometimes long before the season of Spring arrives in our area. We may be thinking of Pentecost and noting where the red construction paper is stored. We save the red for Reformation Sunday even when that day is well ahead on the calendar. All Saints Sunday, Christ the King, and then we are in the season of Advent and a new church year begins.

The seasons of the church year don't always exactly correspond to the seasons of nature. I remember an Easter egg hunt done in the snow, the colors of the eggs really stood out and they were collected in record time! The seasons of the church year propel us forward, to think of those celebrations and faith forming activities that are yet to be. The seasons of the church year fill us with hope and anticipation, and for those of us in planning and leadership roles, sometimes dread and anxiety. We are managing and juggling a lot these days, with constantly evolving practices, while trying to build faith in many ages and in widely different situations. Anxiety is normal.

I am entering a new phase of my life and call. When you read this, I will be a retired deacon. I left my last position at the end of January. I look ahead with some anxiety, but also with hope. I feel excitement, but also emptiness. I will miss the people I worked with and the routine I had. There is a new routine that is forming, and new relationships that are coming. I do not know the entirety of the yet to be. I spoke of this in my last letter, how we create the old and the new and the yet to be.

Caring for creation is an act of hope. We act in the present, in the hopes it will provide a benefit in the future. I coordinated a day camp in Nampa, Idaho in my last call before retiring. We planted trees in a city park as a part of connecting with nature. I went to that park the other day and visited the trees that we planted. I could see growth even in the middle of winter. The branches were bare, there were no leaves, but the trees were bigger than when I had last visited.

Faith formation and caring for creation have a lot in common. We act in hope even when we cannot see the result. We plan for growth even though we may not be able to measure it in obvious ways. We are moving forward, even when we do not feel ready. It is wonderful that we have each other, through this network and other relationships, to walk together as we look ahead in hope.

Diane McGeoch, Newly Retired Deacon  
President, Christian Education Network of the ELCA