



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Tending God's garden
ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton Weekly Video Message
Nov. 5, 2021

In 2013, Pope Francis issued his encyclical "Laudato si," or "Our care for our common home." And it got a lot of attention from other world religious leaders and faith communities. So I received a phone call from the religion reporter at the *Chicago Tribune* wondering if we, as Lutherans, and others were chiming in on this because the pope had issued an encyclical. I said, "Oh, no. Oh, no. We, in 1993, issued our social statement *Caring for Creation*. The benefit of the pope issuing an encyclical was that it became not just the boutique issue of the few but the faith issue for all of us."

In Psalm 24 we read, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it." This is not our planet. It's God earth that has been given to us as a gift. And we are called to be tending God's garden. And everything, whether we consider it to be animate or inanimate, is exactly filled with the Spirit of God.

Right now, in Glasgow, Scotland, COP26 is underway, where world leaders are discussing ways to care for our creation and to ward off the really dangerous and disastrous potential effects of climate change. This is something that we can participate in as well. We can do this in our homes, in our communities and in our churches. Check in your synod to see if you have a green team. Find ways where we can be very careful stewards of the gift that God has given us. Take a look at our 1993 social statement *Caring for Creation*.

This is a beautiful earth and our temporary home. Let's care for it.

Be well, dear church.