



The Elim Scribe



Give the Gift of Listening ~ Pr. Bruce

One of the best gifts you can give anyone is a listening ear. To pay attention and really listen to someone is to honor them and treat them as a person of value. When we have someone listen to us, we feel like we matter: that we are important. It is a great gift to give each other.

Genuine listening is not problem-solving. Sometimes, if we try to "fix" the one we are listening to, it short-circuits our listening process. Most people do not want to be fixed; they want to be heard. So ... simply listen. That is the real gift. Genuine listening includes paying attention to the other person's body language and facial features, so listen with your eyes as well as your ears. What are they saying? How are they saying it? How do you think they are feeling?

Active listeners also pay attention to their own body language. Focus on the person you are listening to. Face them, smile, or show concern in your response. Be genuine; cut out your own random thoughts as you listen. Listening is hard work; focus on the other person without your own thoughts crowding out their voice. Zoom in and don't prepare a response or rebuttal. Don't judge; just listen.

Let the other person know you are engaged, with comments like "Yes," "Uh-huh," "Tell me more," "Is this what you are saying...?" to acknowledge them and ensure you pay attention. Avoid the trap of relating to the conversation and then talking about your own similar experiences. Rather than help, it turns the focus on us instead of the other person. Inserting yourself too much can stop the conversation.

We all appreciate having someone listen to us and really care. Be the one who gives that gift to someone else today. It can be your act of kindness for the day!

My Hometown Ogden

Members of various faith groups in Ogden are partnering with the City of Ogden to identify areas of need and organize citizen groups to respond. In addition, it also provides an opportunity for building relationships as friends and neighbors across the denominational spectrum, working side-by-side with other service-minded people. My Hometown Ogden (<https://www.ogdencity.com/2231/My-Hometown-Ogden>) is ongoing, not a one-day event. Elim benefitted directly when a team cleaned up the shrubs and overgrowth around our church building on Saturday, August 13th. At a later date, the group will repair and repaint our utility shed. All members are encouraged to participate in these and other projects and get to know members of our community through My Hometown Ogden. In lieu of partnering with Ascension Lutheran Church for worship or projects on "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday, Sept. 11, helping "My Hometown Ogden" will fulfill our commitment to God's Work, Our Hands this year.

Pr Bruce ... on Sabbatical Leave

I have never run a marathon or even a half-marathon! Yet, most weeks, I do a 5K (on occasion, a 10K) every morning. November marks the end of my 6th year at Elim Lutheran. Serving both Elim and Christ United Methodist Church in Salt Lake City through COVID has felt like a marathon. I am tired. My creative juices and emotional energy are dry, and I need to rejuvenate. Thank you for this opportunity!

What are my sabbatical plans? First ... rest, not respond to crises. I won't be preparing worship services, writing sermons or articles. I won't be doing pastoral visits or pastoral counseling. I will enjoy life and nature and my family with Reba.

We will travel, taking my guitar to polish specific melodies. I will enjoy reading purely for joy, watching whales on the Oregon coast, and, then, having some Mackinaw Island fudge.

On the professional level, I hope to engage others in conversations about church and ministry, as we all face similar changes and challenges. I want to hear and compile other people's stories, hopes, dreams and fears. Learning from each other is always good; sharing that knowledge is even better.

And...Yes, I will be back. Thank you for this gift of time for renewal. God is good! All the time!

Staff Changes at Elim

Nancy Jorgensen has been invaluable in helping Elim through very challenging times, serving as custodian for 13 years. Recently, she added office work to her duties and helped manage details of security, parking lot issues, writing checks, homebound mailings, filing, etc. She has also served as congregational president. We are extremely grateful for her many years of dedicated church service and wish her the best!

Pastor Bruce has been preparing and printing the bulletins and doing many administrative tasks while we had no secretary in our office. In preparation for his sabbatical, the Church Council worked out details of hiring a church secretary. We are excited to have Christina Falk Buckius fill the position and welcome her whole-heartedly! Christina's office hours will be Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 9 am until noon.

The Church Council has also revisited our custodial needs and the job description, eliminating all outdoor responsibilities and reducing indoor requirements. After reviewing the updated job description, Nancy has made the decision not to continue in that position. We are in the process of seeking janitorial services. We have temporary help but will need to hire a person or service to meet the needs. If you, or someone you know, might be interested in this position, please call the office.

Getting To Know You

This issue, we break with the practice of introducing mature Elimites, in order to tell you a little about newcomers Austin and Christina Falk Buckius, particularly since they will be working for us. Christina will be our new secretary, and Austin will help with planning music for the services. Thank you to them both!

Austin and Christina are Colorado natives; both are 26 years old. They met while in high school in Arvada, started dating in 2011, pulled off a long-distance relationship while Austin attended college in Laramie, and were married in August of 2019.

Austin identifies as a "cradle Lutheran" who spent a year at Wartburg Theological Seminary, after having received bachelor's degrees in History and Religious Studies from the University of Wyoming in Laramie in 2018. He plans at some point to return to seminary to complete a degree, fulfilling a calling he felt as a student. Christina grew up with a Catholic background, attending Catholic school for grades 1 through 7. She began attending Lutheran services with Austin in the various places that they've lived.

Austin has worked at several jobs, including (in Iowa) as a mental health tech in a residential care facility for people with disabilities, as well as a bank teller (which he did not find challenging.) He also served as a children's church leader in Laramie, WY. He is currently working for Turn Community Services in Salt Lake City, with flexible hours in order to meet the needs of his clients. His passion is to help disabled folks navigate the world around them, and he's currently using table-top games as a therapeutic tool.

Christina's career aspirations involve writing, so she planned to get a degree in journalism, starting off at Metropolitan State University in Denver. An "existential crisis" resulted in her re-thinking that goal, and she began to consider copy-editing as a way to pay the bills and make a contribution to the field. She has since taken courses both online and at other institutions, and she has gained experience working for online companies (Upwork and Proof-it) as she hones her skills. She will soon be moving to the division of Proof-it that is responsible for editing novels. Her job has flexible hours, enabling her to be our secretary also.

Austin and Christina found that the flat Iowa landscape around Wartburg left them missing the mountains and feeling unsettled with the midwestern culture, so they decided to head west again. Given that it was also pandemic time, things were also tough financially, so they pooled resources with an old friend from high school, and all moved to Utah in 2021, assuming that it would be a short-term stay. Having landed in Ogden, they found many things that appealed to them - the mountains, downtown Ogden businesses (especially Lavender Vinyl for Austin), and Elim - and are currently looking to purchase a house to share.

Austin and Christina have somewhat "unconventional" family stories. Christina and her brother were both adopted. Austin grew up in a situation with shifted relationships that led to a truly blended family. He has 9 siblings or step-siblings that are both older and younger than he is. In addition, he has "adopted" several close friends into his family circle. Their current "family" includes their roommate and two cats - a younger Tesla (named for the scientist, not the car) and an older Kia.

Elim drew them into the fold, in part, because of our commitment to service in our community, which Austin had researched online. When he came into the church and saw the Gethsemane painting in the stairwell, it cemented his decision. That painting was also in his childhood church, and he loved it. He is anxious to help us continue to reach out to our community in multiple ways. We welcome them heartily!

