

THE EPISTLE

SEPTEMBER 2026

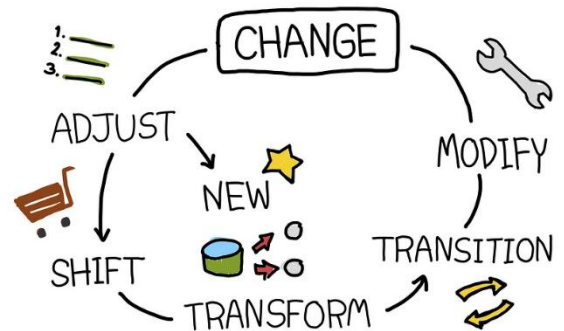
You may have noticed over the summer that we experimented with some different ways of worshiping together—some more obvious than others. As we move into the fall, we'll keep some of what we've been doing, return to some familiar things (including the traditional-language Lord's Prayer, for those who've told me how much you miss it!), and try a few new things too.



I've been thinking about what helps us learn, as a congregation and more generally. One fairly obvious answer is that we need some consistency. If everything is new at once, most of our attention goes toward figuring out what we're supposed to be doing. Familiarity gives us somewhere to start, and something to return to. Much of our worship this fall will feel familiar as we return to a pattern straight from the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP).

That doesn't mean our summer experiments were unsuccessful. One of the things I appreciate about changing familiar language for a season is that it makes me hear it again. Sometimes a change opens up something I hadn't noticed before. Sometimes I discover that the familiar words were doing something I hadn't fully appreciated. Both are useful things to learn.

We also learn better with support. Anyone who has learned to ride a bike, play an instrument, speak another language, or do almost anything that requires practice knows this. We start with more help than we will eventually need. We repeat things. We build on what we already know. We make the task a little easier while our brains and bodies are figuring out what to do.



You'll see some of that principle at work in our worship this fall. Over the summer we introduced some chanting to the Eucharistic prayer at our 10:00 service, one of the many ways we can add reverence and texture to worship through sound as well as words and movement. There is a learning curve, though, for both priest and congregation! This fall we'll experiment with adding some instrumental support to our chant. The extra support gives us a chance to become more confident with something that's still becoming familiar.

Some of our other liturgical choices this season have been made with particular attention to the service as a whole. Within the structure we inherit from the BCP, we're thinking about how music, movement, and pacing can help the different parts of our worship belong to one another, creating a cohesive movement as we gather, hear and respond to the Word, share in the Eucharist, and are sent back into the world. Some of those choices may feel unfamiliar at first, such as speaking where we usually sang, or singing where we didn't before.

I'm interested to know whether you notice, and especially whether you *feel* anything different, whether you can identify the changes or not. Does anything feel comfortably familiar? Uncomfortably new? Has something that used to feel unfamiliar started to feel natural? Notice where you feel drawn in, and where your attention wanders. If you have observations, I'd genuinely like to hear them.

Becoming more familiar with our foundations also feels timely as the Diocese of the Great Lakes prepares to elect our first bishop next month. We're still a young diocese, discerning what we want to carry forward from the dioceses that came before us and what we want to build together. It seems like an especially good time to know the tradition we've inherited well, even as we continue discovering what we will do with it. I encourage you to read more about the candidates on our diocesan website, and I commend to you the prayer in the box below written by the Rev. Mike Wernick, Bishop Search Committee Chaplain.

The liturgical shape we're settling into will stay largely the same through the fall, and Advent will give us our next opportunity to make some seasonal changes. In the meantime, we'll keep practicing. We'll rely on familiar things while we learn unfamiliar ones, add support where it helps, and pay attention to what we discover along the way.

Almighty God, giver of every good gift and source of all wisdom, look with favor upon your Church in the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes as we seek the bishop you are calling to shepherd and to lead us: Grant to your people faith to discern, courage to choose, and unity to follow in the way of your Son; that guided by your Holy Spirit, all of our prayers may rise up to you, and we may continue to proclaim the Gospel and serve the world in love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Get to know our
bishop
candidates.**

**Visit the
Candidate Page**



*MEET the
CANDIDATES*



The Rev. Cn.
TERRI LYNNE BAYS



The Rev.
ZACHARY NYEIN



The Rev. Cn.
NURYA LOVE PARISH



The Rev.
HOLLY RANKIN ZAHER



August Worship Service Links



[10th Sunday after Pentecost](#)
[August 2, 2026](#)



[11th Sunday after Pentecost](#)
[August 9, 2026](#)



[12th Sunday after Pentecost](#)
[August 16, 2026](#)



[13th Sunday after Pentecost](#)
[August 23, 2026](#)



[14th Sunday after Pentecost](#)
[August 30, 2026](#)

Older services can be found here:
<https://tinyurl.com/sjeclivestream>

WE APPRECIATE YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT!

St. John's depends on the generosity of our friends and members. Pledges and gifts to St. John's can either be made by check and sent via US Mail to 405 N. Saginaw Rd., Midland, MI 48640, or by visiting tinyurl.com/Give2SJEC. This link will take you to a screen where you will enter the amount of your donation and designate a specific purpose or fund. Enter your email address as well, and you'll receive an electronic receipt.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
linking lives in the love of Christ

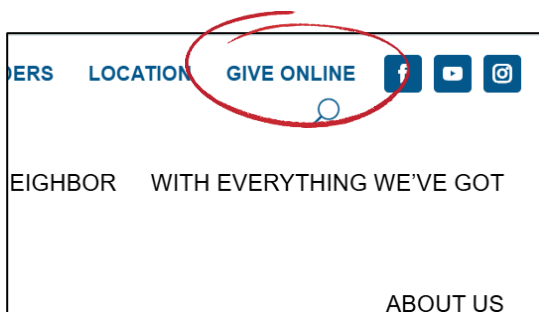
Welcome to St John's Episcopal Church

Giving Details

Give to optional memo + add more

E-mail Address

ACS Technologies [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Use](#)



You can also access electronic giving from the upper right-hand corner of our [webpage](#)... or by pointing your phone's camera at this QR code.



If you have any questions about your continued financial support of St John's, please call the church office and your call will be directed to the appropriate staff person. Thank you for your generosity!



the feast

bite-sized

ORDINARY TIME | SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

final bishop slate; meet and greets



The Rev. Cn. Nurya Love Parish has been added to our bishop slate as a candidate via petition. She joins the Rev. Cn. Terri Bays, the Rev. Zachary Nyein, and the Rev. Holly Rankin Zaher, bringing our final slate to four wonderful candidates.

The Transition Committee has announced details for the Meet and Greets with the full slate. These are holy conversations that will enable you to get to know the candidates better and get a sense of how the Holy Spirit is moving in our diocesan community. Visit our bishop search page at [greatlakesepiscopal.org/bishop-](https://greatlakesepiscopal.org/bishop-search/candidates)

[search/candidates](https://greatlakesepiscopal.org/bishop-search/candidates) to learn more about all four candidates, including bios and video, and find a Meet and Greet near you!



commission on ministry: inquirer's orientation

The Commission on Ministry is pleased to offer an in-depth session on **September 27** for inquirers seriously considering holy orders. This orientation, which will be led by COM co-chairs Ellen McVey and Rev. Lily Marx, will take place on Zoom



and must be attended by both the Inquirer and their Sponsoring Priest. Visit greatlakesepiscopal.org/inquirers to register.

application deadline extended: manager for mission & community engagement

The deadline to apply for the newest position on diocesan staff, the Manager for Mission & Community Engagement, has been extended until 12 noon on Tuesday, September 8.

Find the position description and instructions to apply at greatlakesepiscopal.org/jobs.



Scan to keep up to date on events and announcements at our online home for people, parishes, and ministries, greatlakesepiscopal.circle.so



[CLICK HERE to read the most recent full version of THE FEAST ONLINE.](#)

September



Youth Group begins **THIS SUNDAY** (September 13) at 9 AM in the Activity Room and will continue to meet every other week on Sunday mornings. Hope to see our Middle Schoolers and High Schoolers there!

Want to help or have questions, please reach out to Linda Germain (linda@sjec-midland.org) or stop by the office.

Children's programming also begins **THIS SUNDAY** (September 13) with Sunday School for children infant through 5th grade during the 10 AM worship service.



St. Martha's Guild is the hands and feet of the church in many ways. We are women who get together to socialize, but we also raise money and support many charities throughout the Tri-cities. We host the annual ladies Prayer Breakfast each fall, coordinate or provide food for funerals, and have speakers and social functions throughout the year. Please scan the QR code to access the meeting day/time Survey Monkey. Options include Sunday afternoons once per month, a weeknight once per month, or keep meetings on the 2nd Tues. of the month at 10 AM. **Note that the Sept. meeting has been moved to the 15th due to the holiday weekend.** If you would like to provide in-person feedback instead, please chat with Denée Koonce, Charlotte Jacqmain, Christy Hopper, or Michelle Spencer with your meeting day and time preferences.



Community

G₂ A₁ M₃ E₁

N₁ I₁ G₂ H₄ T₁

September **Game Nights** are Friday, September 11 and 25, in Williams Hall. Play our games or bring your favorites! Bring your friends or join in with us! All ages welcome!

SUNDAY, September 20, is our **MINISTRY FAIR** in Williams Hall! Representatives from a wide range of St. John's ministries will be available after both services to offer information and answer questions. Come and find a new way to share your time and talent!



Tai Chi, The 24 Forms, begins **WEDNESDAY, September 16**, at 5:30 pm in Williams Hall. Relaxed class atmosphere; beginners / previous students / drop-ins are welcome. Special community rate is \$5 per class. Tai Chi is a form of exercise that can improve muscle strength and flexibility as well as reduce stress, improve balance and increase oxygen levels. The slow, gentle, mindful movements of Tai Chi focus on weight shifts and balance. For questions and details, contact class instructor, Laurie McGuire, PT (989-839-9309 / lauramc1@charter.net)



Children & Youth Summer Fun and School Year Announcements



Summer Childcare is going well this summer. The children enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere. We worked on some of the crafts, played with sand, trucks, painted, sang, and just enjoyed each other's company. Playdoh kitchen was very popular this month with a full array of menu options. Have you ever had a pizza or smoothy made from playdoh...you don't know what you are missing! Some special sidewalk messages were left for our Childcare staff by some children enjoying a Sunday morning in the courtyard.



Sunday School and Nursery will begin normal weekly schedule as of September 13th. We will continue with our split classroom approach of having the lower elementary (pre-K-2nd grade) children enjoying Godly Play stories with Ms. Alicia and the upper elementary (3rd-5th grade) children enjoying lessons with Ms. Linda. Our nursery care team, Ms., Jenni and Ms. Leah will continue to engage our youngest friends with their morning fun. The staff and volunteers are looking forward to a year of new adventures. Please join us starting at 9:45am until the end of church service on Sunday mornings.

Youth Group will begin their bi-weekly schedule as of September 13th. We will meet in the Activity Room starting at 9am. Following youth group we would encourage our youth to attend the 10am service, help in the Sunday school rooms, or serve during service.



Things to look forward to this fall

September 13th – Youth Group begins 9am in the Activity Room
(every other week)

September 13th – Sunday School begins 10am downstairs

September 20th – Churchwide Ministry Fair in Williams Hall

September 27th - Blessing of the Animals

October 18th – Annual Trunk or Treat from 3-5pm

October 25th – Blessing of the Trick or Treaters at the 10am service



Vacation Bible School



Vacation Bible School was an amazingly fun-filled week with our Kingdom Quest Adventurers. Mother Alissa, Linda Germain, and Nykkoa Lurie collaborated to create a week of music, bible study, arts and crafts, activities, and snacks. Our theme was Kingdom Quest. What child doesn't enjoy video games and the quest for something bigger! Each day had a different approach to Jesus being

with the Adventurers. We wondered about Jesus being the way, being with me, Jesus being alive, and the Holy Spirit helping us. We had four groups of kids ranging from Pre-K to middle school. Each group had fun bonding and enjoying the events of each day together.



I hear the rock, paper, scissors hoop activity was very strategic with our upper elementary group. The Adventurers learned a song *Salt & Light* and performed it at church on August 9th. Thanks to our friends at Camp Chickagami we learned the motions and words to the song. We couldn't have had such a successful VBS without all our wonderful volunteers and behind the scenes help! Everyone that volunteered did amazing every day, helping to keep things running smoothly. Thank you all!



Women Journeying Together

by Marnie Bash

We are beginning our study of the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis; we'll begin with the primeval history and then study the patriarchs – and matriarchs! Genesis is a long book, filled with many important stories; we won't be able to get to all of them, but we hope to get a good introduction to our ancient ancestors of faith.

Our schedule for the coming weeks:

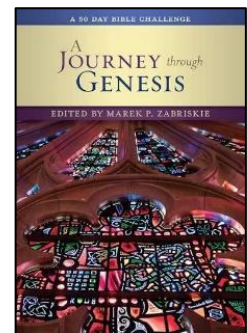
Sept. 10 – *Introduction and Beginning Again*

(we'll start in the church library between 12:45 and 1:15 on this occasion)

Sept. 17 – *Creation, Genesis 1:1-2:4*

Sept. 24 – *Adam and Eve, Genesis 2-3*

Oct 1. – *Cain and Abel, Genesis 4, and the Flood, Genesis 6-9*



We will be using parts of a couple of DVD series and a variety of reference materials as we explore these stories. Come and join us on Thursday afternoons, 1-2:30 in the Activity Room!

And don't forget to visit the *WJT* table at the Ministry Fair on September 20! See what else we'll be doing this year.

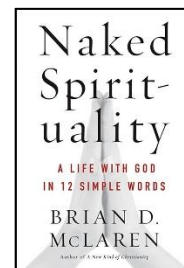
Women Journeying Together is a group of women who gather Thursday afternoons, 1:00 to about 2:30. Our discussions each week are mostly independent of one other, so you can come or miss as your schedule permits. We meet in the Activity Room on the lower level, just below the church office. We study, read, share, laugh a lot, and pray with and for one another. Occasionally we go out to lunch together. Women of all ages are invited. Come and join us for a particular study or "forever". Questions? Contact Marnie Bash, mpbash@ameritech.net or 989-839-9364.

Library News

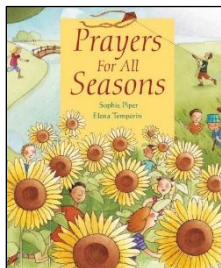
by Marnie Bash

The books on prayer and books of prayers remain on the Feature Shelves this month – with a few additions. Poetry and music are often prayer itself or the basis for prayer, and I have added *I Pray in Poems* by Dave Worster. Also, I have pulled several children's picture books based on hymns that also can feel like prayer – *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, *Song of Creation*, *God of the Sparrow*, and *Shout for Joy and Sing*. All of these can lead into prayer and praise of God.

So...what else do we have? I very much enjoy *Naked Spirituality* by Brian McLaren; using his own life and experiences he gently moves us from simple, repeated prayers to deeper and wider praying and various types of prayer to try. Worth reading even if you don't adopt all his ideas. *Beyond Words, 15 Ways of Doing Prayer* by Kristen Ingram takes us beyond just getting on our knees by offering different places to pray and by calling our attention to ideas often missed; a lovely little book that helps break us out of everyday habits.



Among books about prayer generally is the *Complete Idiot's Guide to Prayer* – simple, easy to read, but pretty thorough. There are two books about contemplative prayer on display, although there are several more in the library itself if you wish to pursue this topic. Out on the feature shelves are Basil Pennington's *Centering Prayer*, and *Contemplative Prayer* by Thomas Merton. Books about the Lord's Prayer include John Dominic Crossen's *The Greatest Prayer* and Don Underwood's, *the Lord's Prayer*. One book we thoroughly enjoyed studying in *Women Journeying Together* was Adam Hamilton's *The Lord's Prayer*; a book and DVD can be found in the Waring Room among the DVDs studies in addition to the one on the Feature Shelves.

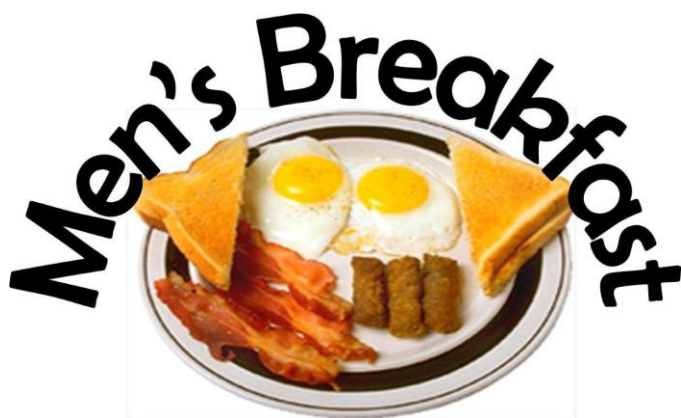


Prayers for children include *Prayers for All Seasons* by Sophie Piper and Elena Temporin, *Prayers to Read and Know* by Sophie Piper, and *Poems and Prayers for the Very Young* by Martha Alexander. As mentioned, these are all beautifully illustrated and lovely to look through as well as read.

Finally, we have books of prayers: *150 Opening and Closing Prayers* by Carl Koch, *Short Prayers for Busy Women* by Harriet Crosby, and *Daily Prayers for Busy People* by William O'Malley. As always, there are several more books of prayers in the Waring Room, including

several giving table graces.

As fall arrives and we settle back into regular routines, I hope you'll enjoy one or more of these books this month. Also, feel free to wander back to the Waring Room for more about prayer and praying. Happy reading!



Monday, October 5, 8:00 AM

Join us at the Big Boy Restaurant, 1513 S. Saginaw Rd., for our monthly **Men's Breakfast**. Once in the restaurant, walk through the big room to the smaller room located at the southeast end of the restaurant to find our table.

JOIN US for food and fellowship!!



Each month the *Prayer Corner* includes the church's prayer list as well as the anniversaries and birthdays for the month. The prayer list is updated weekly and included in the Sunday morning worship service bulletins, along with the *Daily Prayers for the Wider Church*. The most recent version can be found at any time by clicking the "[Announcements](#)" link on the SJEC web page:

<https://www.sjec-midland.org/>

Please keep the following people in your prayers...



Cathy Chang & Juan Lopez, Char Bakeman, Henry Youngquist, Julie, Vicki Leigeb, Bob Estabrook, Ed & the Patterson family, Daina A., Gordon E., Mary Jo Hudson, John Adams, Chris Schuster, and Arie Goudswaard.

Give thanks with those celebrating Sept. Birthdays...

2 – Ava Massey	21 – Josephine Thompson
3 – Jack Philo	25 – Emily Garlinghouse
5 – Ellen Woodard	Brenna Gruhzit
6 – Jerry Nielsen	Jim Jackson
11 – Anna Albright	Paul Tolly
12 – Denee Koonce	28 – Molly Miller
13 – Deanna Bryant	29 – Ellen McVey
15 – Janice Anderson	30 – Stephanie Kretz
17 – Eileen Germain	Jim Massey
20 – Tessa Kent	Shawn Wilson, Jr.

Contact the church office

989-631-2260 / office@sjec-midland.org

- To add someone to the prayer list
- Request receipt of the weekly Worship++ email
- Request receipt of the monthly Epistle
- To update your membership directory info

Give thanks with those celebrating Sept. Anniversaries...

2 – Stephen & Charlotte Jacqmain
 5 – Mike & Michelle Spencer
 6 – Vic & Toshia Albright
 13 – Jeff & Sheila Mesler
 16 – Ron & Jane Lacher
 18 – Charles & Marnie Bash
 19 – Fred & Chris Schuster
 21 – Tony & Linda Germain
 24 – Jacques Randolet & Lynn Pottenger
 26 – Denny & Jan Morden
 28 – Geoff & Karen Newhouse



Members of the congregation who have received Pastoral Care training are available all year for friendly visits. Members who are in the hospital, nursing homes, or homebound may request a visit from our team to receive communion, a comforting prayer shawl or a pocket cross. Team members include:

The Very Rev. Alissa Anderson and parishioners
Chris Esquivel **Chris Schuster**
Jan Marcou **Fred Schuster**
Pat Roush **Michelle Spencer**
Dave Schafer

Call the parish office (989-631-2260) with a pastoral care request. In the case of a pastoral emergency outside office hours, please contact **The Very Rev. Alissa Anderson at 616-540-9102 (cell)**.

Meet with Travis

I'd love the opportunity to connect with you. Whether you have a question, an idea, would like to discuss a ministry or parish project, or simply want to get to know one another, you're invited to schedule a time to meet.



Appointments can be scheduled at your convenience by scanning the QR code, at left, or by visiting:

<https://calendly.com/travis-sjec-midland>.

I look forward to spending time with you.



How to Connect with Mother Alissa

Schedule a time via Calendly

[CLICK HERE](#)



**Drop in Coffee Shop Office Hours
Thurs., 9-11 AM.**

During the month of August, you'll find her at Live Oak Eastside (2405 Abbott Rd.)



HEAD OF THE CHURCH – JESUS CHRIST
MINISTERS – ALL OUR MEMBERS

**To get in touch with any Clergy, Staff
Member or Member of the Vestry, call or
email the parish office:**

(989) 631-2260

office@sjec-midland.org

OUR VESTRY – OUR ELECTED LEADERS

Clergy

The Very Rev. Alissa G. Anderson*Rector*

Staff

Travis Fader *Director of Operations &
Organist/Pianist*

Linda Germain *Children & Youth Director*

Colleen O'Dell *Bookkeeper*

Ellen Woodard *Administrative Assistant*

Nick Lowthian *Sexton*

Vickie Densmore *Janitor*

Class of 2027

Eric Heglin, *Clerk*

Fred Schuster, *Co-Warden*

Class of 2029

Nykkooa Lurie

Mike Spencer

Class of 2028

John Adams

Doug Germain

Ann Wright, *Co-Warden*

WEEKLY OPPORTUNITIES AT ST. JOHN'S

Sunday

8:00am	Holy Eucharist	Sanctuary
9:00am	Fellowship Hour	Williams Hall
9:00am	Youth Group	Activity Room
10:00am	Holy Eucharist	Sanctuary & YouTube
11:00am	Fellowship Hour	Williams Hall
11:30am	Handbell Choir Rehearsal.....	Bell Zone
5:00pm	NA.....	McNab Room
6:30pm	Bible in the Basement (1 st /3 rd).....	Activity Rm

Monday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

8:00am	St. John's Men's Breakfast (1 st)	Big Boy
12:00pm	AA.....	McNab Room
6:00pm	Popup Bible Study	Library

Tuesday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

10:00am	St. Martha's Guild (2 nd)	Activity Room
10:00am	Samaritan Fund Clients	Library
1:00pm	Knitpickers.....	Williams Hall

Wednesday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

10:30am	Women's Bible Study.....	Library
12:00pm	Holy Eucharist..	Chapel (use office entrance)
1:00pm	AA	McNab Room
5:30pm	Tai Chi, The 24 Forms	Williams Hall

Thursday (Parish Office open 9am-3pm)

9:00am	Alissa's Drop-in Coffee Office Hrs.	Live Oak
10:00am	Love Knots (2 nd /4 th)	Williams Hall
1:00pm	Women Journeying Together .	Activity Rm.

Friday (Parish Office open 9am-noon)

12:00pm	AA	McNab Room
6:00pm	Community Game Night (2 nd /4 th)	Wms Hall

Saturday

12:00pm	AA	McNab Room
7:00pm	NA.....	McNab Room

The 10:00 am worship service is livestreamed on YouTube. At the time of the service, go to:
<https://www.youtube.com/@st.johnsepiscopalchurchmid8944/streams>. A live service will have a prominent "LIVE" badge on the video thumbnail or title indicating the video is currently being streamed live. Previous services can also be viewed here at any time.



***We joyfully gather to pray, worship, learn and serve as we seek to follow Jesus,
and invite all to join us on a sacred journey of hope and transformation.***

The next edition of **The Epistle** will be published in early October. The final deadline for submissions is Monday, October 5. Please consider submitting stories of your group's activities, or news of coming events and activities.

If you are not currently receiving an email notice to tell you that **The Epistle** has been published on our website, and you would like to receive one, please email office@sjec-midland.org.

If you prefer a printed copy of The Epistle, they are available in the church office, the narthex and each entrance into the church building.



St. John's Episcopal Church

405 N. Saginaw Road Midland, MI 48640

(989) 631-2260 office@sjec-midland.org

www.sjec-midland.org

Rector – The Very Rev. Alissa G. Anderson



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