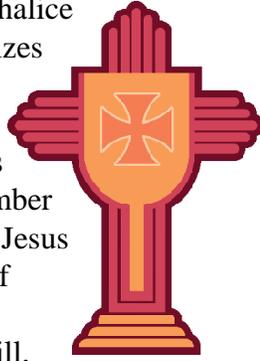


# March 2019

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## Christian Symbol

CHALICE & CROSS — The chalice with a cross rising from it symbolizes Christ's obedient suffering, even unto death. The cross is called a "passion cross," with pointed ends that represent suffering. We remember that in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus begged his Father that the "cup" of suffering be taken from him. But ultimately, he prayed, "Not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39, NIV).



## Tossed salad

On the "Three Sides" podcast (ELCA, Sept. 6, 2018), Wendy Davidson, a leader at the Kellogg Company, shares how her Christianity informs her work. Because her adult faith emerged from several denominational influences, she considers variety to be a strength, not only spiritually but throughout life.



Davidson encourages her co-workers to bring their unique personalities and ideas to the table to create a metaphorical salad. "It doesn't mean that the salad now becomes one homogenous blob; it is still distinctly the flavors of the salad ingredients," she says. "But they've all found a way to come together to make something that much more flavorful than they could have been all on their own."

Viewing church and our communities this way could be transformative. What if we welcome different people, invite ideas and resist melding everything into one giant blob? Then we can savor each "ingredient" and the resulting gourmet dish. Delicious!

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## The Comfort of our middle-C God

During college, while living in a boarding house, author Lloyd Douglas befriended a retiree. The man, a homebound former music teacher, shared a morning ritual with Douglas, who would walk down to the man's floor, open his door and ask, "What's the good news?"

Every day the man responded by tapping a tuning fork against his wheelchair and saying, "That's middle C. It was middle C yesterday. It will be middle C tomorrow. It will be middle C a thousand years from now. The tenor upstairs sings flat, the piano across the hall is out of tune, but, my friend, that is middle C!"

If middle C's pitch value isn't exactly 261.63 Hz, then your piano needs to be tuned. How comforting that dependability is for musicians — and their listeners.

Like middle C, God is steadfast and reliable. In this fast-paced world, praise God for the good news he declares to us: "I the LORD do not change" (Malachi 3:6).

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"You don't know how to pray? Put yourself in the presence of God, and as soon as you have said, 'Lord, I don't know how to pray!' you can be sure you have already begun."

—St. Josemaría Escrivá

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## Standing Tall

How does your physical stature — or lack of it — affect your daily life? Maybe you have to stoop under certain doorways. Or maybe you buy shoes that make you taller.

Now consider your spiritual "height." Do you, like young Jesus, strive to grow each day — in wisdom, if not in stature? What "giants" make you feel inadequate?

When "the battle is the LORD's" (1 Samuel 17:47), as young David told Goliath before slaying him, human size doesn't matter. Because we serve a "big" God who lives in us and works through us, we can stand tall and confident in his strength. No matter our physical height, let's use every opportunity to reach up and step out as Jesus' hands and feet.