

The ELCiC Long Term Study Grant is enabling me to pursue an undergraduate degree in fine art at Alberta University of the Arts. I am interested in developing my own artistic imagination and the artist imagination of God's people within the congregation and in the surrounding community. I continue to be inspired by the first chapter of Genesis describing the limitless creative power of God, beginning with the creation of light, continuing through the creation of everything on the earth, and ending with the creation of human beings in the image of this creative God. The Genesis creation story implies that people have a divinely given creative imagination and power. I believe that the exploration and cultivation of imagination and creativity are expressions of divine power at work within us and infuse our communal life with God's goodness.

During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, my studies inspired me to create a congregational art project, in which people are encouraged to engage in the art of textile weaving as an aid to spiritual mediation.

I assembled a 60" wide floor loom in the narthex of the church and gave individual lessons on the art of weaving. The church employed two students as interns over the summer, who were taught to prepare the loom for weaving by installing warp threads.



*Student interns Mikaela Rude and Janelle Hughes installing warp threading*

Once the warping was complete, congregants were invited to spend time weaving a variety of purple materials onto the warping thread.



*Hilary Gray during a weaving and meditation session*



*Work in progress*

Congregants reported that the opportunity to participate in the project was interesting, exciting, rewarding, beautiful, relaxing, and spiritual. The finished work (still in progress) will be sewn into two large fabric panels to adorn the sanctuary during Lent.

My personal artistic practice continues an exploration of Genesis. This year I created a piece entitled Genesis, which is serving as the basis for my final work in my ceramic studies. My Winter term 2022 work will use this small work as a model for a large-scale, mixed-media 8-foot x 20-foot installation. Below is an image and artist statement of that work.



### **Genesis**

ceramic, copper  
22" x 22" x 3"

Every object originates from a concentration of energy, matter, imagination and intention. Moving outward from a generative source, planets and stars spill into the universe, inventions flood the marketplace, music fills the airwaves, ideas become corporeal. Everything begins somewhere, springing forth from a creative source and birthed into being. Seeming to arise from nowhere in particular, every genesis heralds the appearance of a new world, evoking awe and wonder at the diversity and power of creativity itself.

Thank you to the Long-term Study panel for supporting this education and exploration.