

Easter greetings, dear families and friends
of Augustana's Memorial Garden,



I invited Ellen Kastens to co-write this letter to you that steps cautiously into grief and boldly into grateful invitation. It's a tough balance as we invite you to give a gift to Augustana's Welcome 150: A Campaign to Renew Augustana. Renewing our facilities secures the Memorial Garden's congregational home now and for future generations, too.

When I welcome families and friends into the Memorial Garden for committals, I remark that we're fortunate to have this resting place of those who have come before us. A place to visit, reflect, and celebrate our loved ones. A place to remember the Easter promise of Christ's everlasting hope. My mother's husband of almost 25 years is at rest there. He was a spiritual mentor for me. I sat on the Jesus bench near his crypt praying and pondering just before my interview with the Call Committee to become Augustana's next Senior Pastor. I can see the Memorial Garden from my office as other people similarly visit their loved ones' resting places.

Augustana emerged from the pandemic with unique congregational momentum and faithful confidence in the good news of Jesus. With that confidence, we're celebrating Augustana's 150th birthday in 2028 with the Welcome 150 capital campaign to renew our facilities—grateful for the leap of faith made by Augustana's founders in 1878 and by those who moved the congregation to the very edge of an expanding city in 1959. Their bold vision inspires us! The projects prioritize accessibility, energy efficiency, hospitality, and worship renewal. Welcome 150 also includes a review of our habits and governance to better reflect the unconditional welcome we first received from Jesus so that God's welcome is our welcome of children and adults of all ages, abilities, and attributes.

Inspired by the generations of saints who have gone before us and motivated by our hopeful future as a congregation, I invite you to give a gift to the capital campaign. You can find Welcome 150 details on our website at augustanadenver.org/welcome-150/. Or call me at the church office (303-388-4678). I look forward to hearing from you.

Peace,

Caitlin Trussell, Senior Pastor

Meaningful gifts come in all sizes and are different for everyone. Each of our gifts combine for big impact. Thank you for yours!

Please fill out and return the enclosed Statement of Intent card or use the QR code to fill it out online.



There are many ways to give. Use the way that works best for you. Check, credit card, or a regular, ongoing gift from your checking account; IRA Required Minimum Distributions; appreciated stock, mutual fund, or other assets. Questions? Contact **Bill Crossen**, Finance Administrator, crossen@augustanadenver.org.

Ellen's Story

Back when the Memorial Garden was a mere vision and Augustana was raising funds to make it a reality, I was in my early 20s, and a final resting place for family wasn't a thought. I didn't contribute toward the fund and hadn't imagined the importance this sacred place would become to me just a few years after its completion. In 1991, and with three generations of my family worshiping at the church, my husband and I were the first ones in our family to place a loved one there—our precious infant son Tommy. A week later and unexpectedly, my mother joined Tommy, and several years after, my father. I am grateful for this sacred ground that I have come to love for its solace, comfort and beckoning nature. I often pop into the Memorial Garden at times of melancholy, joy, and those in between and share with my loved ones all that's happening in my life without uttering a word.

Augustana is the only church home I can remember. My family joined when I was two years old, and it soon became the backdrop for many of my life's moments. Today, worshiping in the same sanctuary pew where I sat with my family as a youngster and singing the familiar hymns that I sang alongside my parents so many years ago connects me to them anew. Singing hymns each Sunday with the collective Augustana family, I am supported, awakened to my past, and filled with the presence of God, ready to face life's weekly challenges.

One recent Sunday, our nearly three-year-old granddaughter clutched my hand and pulled me into the Memorial Garden. Alongside my husband and me, she mimicked our ritual of tapping our toe three times on Tommy's stone, then three times on my parents'. In a barely audible voice, Quincey chimed, "Tap, tap, tap, Grammy. Tap, tap, tap, Grumps." The music from the service moments before and this personal shared ritual with Quincey weave together our growing family's past, present, and future and unite us with our larger Augustana family.

As a young adult, I may not have contributed to the Memorial Garden, but I am so grateful for those before me who did. Now much older, and hopefully wiser, I support and pray for the Welcome 150 Campaign to keep Augustana thriving and to safeguard all that we cherish and hold dear.



Ellen Kastens, Augustana Member