



# Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

## Mission Memo #455

May 14, 2019

Fifth Sunday of Easter (May 19, 2019)



Easter initiates a new day. It anticipates a new heaven and a new earth. The risen Lord is making all things new. In the mystery of holy baptism God has made new people of us. Today the Lord Jesus invites us to see everyone in a new light—through the lens of love.

### Readings

- [Acts 11:1-18](#) - *Peter's vision: God give the Gentiles repentance that leads to life*
- [Psalm 148](#) - *The splendor of the Lord is over earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:13)*
- [Revelation 21:1-6](#) - *New heaven, new earth: springs of living water in the new Jerusalem*
- [John 13:31-35](#) - *Jesus gives a new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you*

### God's Beautifully Messy Community

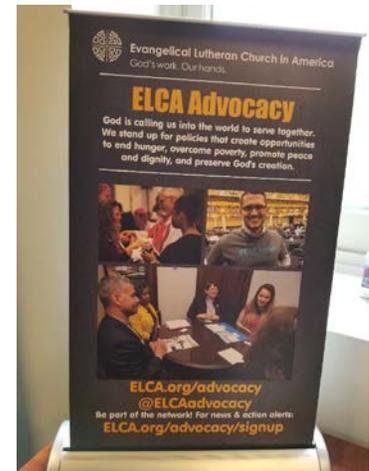
From abandonment to homecoming and from a narrow scope to a broader vision of God's realm, these are the promises proclaimed. The early church and our faith communities are called to engage this reality. A community of Jewish Jesus-followers overcomes fear and expands to include the much larger Gentile world. In the hymnody of the psalm the whole creation and her people are ushered into praise and the trumpeting of a new community. An exiled follower of Jesus sees in the midst of his situation a vision of the Holy One who proclaims a new heaven and earth, stripped of tears and death. Finally, Jesus shares that he will no longer be physically present with his disciples, and points them to a new way of being a community of love for one another. Through the depth of the texts for this day, people are invited to explore the beauty and the messiness of community. The church, like any other human organization, is filled with the challenges of what it means to live together (for example, who is welcome? What rules do people need to follow? How do we care for one another?). Unlike other human institutions, however, we are called to be centered and re-centered in the unapologetic love for

others. In our imperfection we are welcomed and called to invite others. We offer, in a spirit of humility, signs of welcome and love to others, just as God in Christ has been revealed to us.

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## ELCA Advocacy

Last week I was in Washington DC for meetings with Congress that were related to my work, but is also provided an opportunity to let others on "the Hill" know of the work of ELCA Advocacy. I also took the opportunity to stop by the ELCA office that is located near the Capitol at 218 D St SE, Suite 100 in Washington DC. If you travel to DC, I encourage you to include a stop at the Advocacy office in your plans. While there I was reminded of the many informative resources related to Domestic, International and Environmental issues as well as Advocacy Tool kits, ELCA Votes information and UN information that are all available on the [Advocacy Resource page](#) of [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org). They remind us that our faith calls us to learn more and speak out on issues affecting our vulnerable neighbors and the forces threatening creation.



## ICE arrests Racine student pastor

Immigration and refugee issues are frequently in the news, but they may seem to be somewhat distant for many of us. Events in the past week have shown that they are directly impacting the church. Pastor Betty Rendon, who serves at [Emaus Lutheran Church in Racine](#), was detained by ICE on Wednesday, May 8 and remains in custody. Her daughter, who has DACA status, was also detained and later released. Bishop Paul Erickson of the Greater Milwaukee Synod said Rendon was a "candidate approved for ordination" but could not be ordained until she had legal status in the United States. A doctoral student at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, "She was caught in this in-between time," Erickson said. "She's a good preacher and she was filling in as kind of an independent contractor ... but she was helping out, preaching some Sundays at Emaus in Racine." Rendon has been trying to receive asylum for several years and was recently rejected. After she was arrested, Rendon moved to appeal the decision. More details about this frustrating situation, including more on Pastor



Betty's need for asylum, and the robbery of her home when she was taken to jail are on the [Emaus website](#). Prayer vigils are being, or have been held for the Pastor and her family. It is another reminder of the need to work for solutions to the immigration and refugee issues that we face.

## EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN GUATEMALA



The Augustinian Lutheran Church of Guatemala's MILAGRO ("miracle") Women's Education Center is a place for young women from rural communities to continue their secondary education, faith formation and development of vocational and life skills — among them sewing, cooking, baking, carpentry, masonry, music and gardening — that will help them be financially independent in the future. This

important work is supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger. [Click here](#) to learn more of the work in Guatemala and around the world in the spring "Lifelines."

## Situation Report: Cyclone Idai and Kenneth in Mozambique

While it seems to have barely made the news in the USA, on April 25th, Cyclone Kenneth struck the northern coast of Mozambique. This storm came on the heels of Cyclone Idai, a storm that devastated the country and killed more than 750 people across southern Africa. Cyclone Idai and Kenneth are reported to be the worst weather-related disasters ever recorded in the southern hemisphere. Mozambique has never experienced consecutive storms of this intensity in such a short period of time and so far, about 2 million people have been affected by the combined devastation of these storms.

**SITUATION** Lutheran Disaster Response, in partnership with the ACT Alliance, Lutheran World Federation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique, is responding to the disaster by conducting a six-month relief operation to assist over 3,000 affected households in the vicinities of Chimoyo, Dombe, Namatanda, Buzi and Beira in Mozambique. Some of the activities include:

- Distribution of emergency shelter/house construction material
- Assistance with special needs
- Assistance with access to food
- Distribution of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) kits
- Distribution of water purification sachets

- Rehabilitation and/or disinfection of water sources
- Training of community health workers
- Organize a meeting with local partners and national members to strengthen capacities

Prayers and gifts to Lutheran Disaster response continue to be important for addressing these and other disasters.

**ONE MORE THING...** Through support from ELCA World Hunger and in partnership with our companion church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique, and the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa, the ELCA is supporting health projects that aim to reduce mortality due to malaria, HIV and AIDS, and other communicable diseases through clinics and home care, treatment, transportation to medical appointments and more.

### **DOMESTIC HUNGER GRANT APPLICATION OPEN!**

We often think of World Hunger programs as being something that we support in developing countries that are far away, but the church recognizes the needs and works to support local programs to address hunger needs as well. If your congregation works with hunger programs, here is a great opportunity to help support them. The application window for ELCA World Hunger's 2020 Domestic Hunger Grants is open through June 17!

[Domestic Hunger Grants](#) accompany congregations and their partners throughout the United States and Caribbean as they draw on the strengths of communities to address local issues such as food security, clean water, housing, job readiness, human rights, policy change, leadership development and more. Together, these ministries are part of a comprehensive approach to breaking the cycle of poverty and hunger — for good. Visit [www.ELCA.org/domestichungergrants](http://www.ELCA.org/domestichungergrants) to learn more about the grants and how to apply.

### **Coming Events:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event/Activity</b>	<b>Resources</b>
June 7 and 8, 2019	2019 MC Synod Assembly, Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Dr., Tinley Park, IL	For more information visit <a href="http://www.mtselca.org/assembly/">http://www.mtselca.org/assembly/</a>
Aug 5-10, 2019	ELCA Churchwide Assembly, at the Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee, Wisc.	For more information visit <a href="https://www.elca.org/churchwideassembly">https://www.elca.org/churchwideassembly</a>
Sept 8, 2019	"God's Work. Our Hands." Sunday At as many locations as possible	For information and resources see <a href="https://elca.org/dayofservice">https://elca.org/dayofservice</a>