



Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

Mission Memo #467

August 13, 2019

10th Sunday after Pentecost (August 18, 2019)



The word of God is a refining fire. Jesus is the great divide in human history. He invites our undivided attention and devotion. Today, in the assembly, we are surrounded by "so great a cloud of witnesses." In the word and in the holy communion we are invited yet again to look to Jesus, "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

Readings

- [Jeremiah 23:23-29](#) - *God's word is like fire, like a hammer that breaks rocks*
- [Psalm 82](#) - *Arise, O God, and rule the earth. (Ps. 82:8)*
- [Hebrews 11:29--12:2](#) - *The faith of the Hebrew people, a great cloud of witnesses*
- [Luke 12:49-56](#) - *Jesus brings fire on earth and has a baptism with which to be baptized*

The Reality of Division

Throughout the Gospel of Luke, Jesus calls on his hearers to turn their hearts away from greed and instead to generosity, to turn away from anxious self-preservation and instead to faithful self-giving. But such practice rubs against humanity's deepest-seated sin, so conflict is born out of Jesus' peace-filled activity. Jesus' words and actions had already pitted him against the religious leaders and will lead him to the cross. Now, in today's gospel, Jesus speaks to the reality of that division.

His words unsettle us, yet they are spoken for a reason. In the reading from Jeremiah, God challenges the prophets who dole out lies and deceit and asks, how long until they turn their hearts back to me? This is a question of compassion and yearning for a restored relationship. Likewise, although Jesus' words are incendiary and speak of broken relationships, they are meant to prompt the people's faithful response: to lay aside anxiety and greed and to turn their hearts to the treasures of God's promised kingdom, where Christ takes division upon himself on the cross.

While fully aware of the realities of conflict and division, we are to live as hopeful people, praying fervently for God's compassion and for the restoration of right relationships.



Highlights from the 2019 Churchwide Assembly

Here are a few of the many things that took place at the Assembly.

- The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton was re-elected presiding bishop on the first ballot. Eaton is the first ELCA presiding bishop to win re-election on the first ballot. She was elected to a first term as presiding bishop at the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Pittsburgh.
- Sue Rothmeyer, a deacon who has served as executive for administration with the Office of the Secretary, was elected secretary of the ELCA. She replaces the Rev. Wm "Chris" Boerger, who will retire at the end of his current term. Ms. Rothmeyer is a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Chicago, and lives in Oak Park, Ill.
- The assembly approved 26 en bloc memorials on topics including gun violence, engagement in the Holy Land and income inequality.
- A Declaration to People of African Descent was presented to representatives of the African Descent Lutheran Association. "This apology is a recommitment to the process of right and equitable relations within this church, and the flourishing of Christ's church universal," Eaton said after the declaration was read. "This recommitment means working toward a deeper understanding of slavery and its legacy, of institutional and structural racism, of white privilege, and of attitudes and foundations of white supremacy. It means praying for the renewal of this church as disciples of the living Christ." Eaton said the ELCA will name an annual Day of Repentance for congregations, synods and the churchwide organization.
- The assembly adopted "A Declaration of Inter-religious Commitment." Following the vote, Bishop Patricia Lull, chair of the task force that developed the statement, said, "Our church has just declared that, because we are Lutheran, we are called to the work of inter-religious relations. As we are called, so also are we sent."
- Approved the triennium budget proposal. It includes a current fund spending authorization of \$68,378,325 for 2020, a current fund income proposal of \$68,553,034 for 2021 and \$68,507,018 for 2022; and an ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$21.5 million 2020, and an income proposal of \$21.5 million for 2021 and for 2022.
- Voted to commemorate June 17 as a day of repentance in the ELCA for the martyrdom of the Emanuel 9—the nine people who were shot and killed June 17, 2015, during a Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C.

- Adopted a resolution to condemn white supremacy, calling all ELCA congregations to engage in "study of the structures and rhetoric that empower and fuel racism and white supremacy and to take to heart the teaching of Scriptures, so we may all be better equipped to speak boldly about the equal dignity of all persons in the eyes of God."
- With a vote of YES-863; NO-26, the Assembly adopted the amended proposed social statement "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action" as a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Accordance with the "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (2018).
- As has been reported, and in some cases misrepresented, in the national news, the Assembly voted to approve a memorial that declares the ELCA a sanctuary church. The ELCA is the first North American denomination to declare itself a sanctuary church body. As a sanctuary church the ELCA is committed to serving and supporting migrant children and families in communities across the country.
- 50th Anniversary Celebration - 2020 is the 50th anniversary of Lutheran Churches in the US voting to remove barriers to women's ordination. The 2019 Churchwide Assembly serves as the kickoff for the celebration, with resources for congregations and synods being launched daily, and a special presentation on Friday morning. The Friday night banquet on Aug. 9 featured a panel of speakers reflecting on the impact of the ordination of women on the whole church. Speakers reflected on the 50th anniversary of the ordination of first women in the church, the 40th anniversary of the ordination of the first women of color, and the 10th anniversary of the church's decision to remove the barriers to ordination for people in same gender marriages.

In her report to the assembly, Bishop Eaton focused on the five goals of Future Directions 2025; A thriving church; an equipping church; a welcoming church; a visible church; and a well-governed, connected and sustainable church. Eaton told the assembly, "The church's unique mission is to preach the gospel purely and to administer the sacraments rightly. No other institution has been called by God to this ministry. The church is God's creation. The church is not what we do, it is not the organization we have created and maintain. The church is what God has made us - Christ's body in the world."

More information and live video of worship and the plenary sessions is accessible at elca.org/cwa.

LUTHERDALE 33rd Annual Quilt Fest

The [annual fundraiser](#) to support the Life Changing ministry of Lutherdale was a great success with generous donations of beautiful quilts by churches and individuals and a great turnout of active bidders. Three quilts sold for \$1,000 or more and the total for the 345 quilts included in the auction was \$37, 965. The silent



auction, craft sale, bake sale, food sales and more brought in additional funds.



The day also provided an opportunity to see the progress on the new Lutherdale Lodge. Thanks to generous donors and ELCA Mission Builders, the building will be completed in one phase and open in early 2020. It will be a great addition. Learn more at <https://www.lutherdale.org/capital-campaign/the-plan/>

Punitive public charge rule slated to take effect

The Trump Administration expanded public charge rule is a punitive measure that will stoke fear and increase suffering in immigrant communities. This new policy would impose an unprecedented income test on persons seeking legal entry to the United States and deny entrance if they are judged likely to be or ever in the future become a "public charge" entitled to assistance with nutrition, housing or healthcare. In addition, current lawful permanent residents may have their applications for citizenship denied solely based on using or ever having used certain public programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This policy will cause a cascade of negative impacts, including increasing hunger, blocking family unification and severely restricting immigration of people who want to come and contribute to our nation.

"This cruel policy change flies in the face of our commitments as a church to people seeking a new home here. Our social message on immigration commits us to 'work for policies that cause neither undue repercussions within immigrant communities nor bias against them,'" says the Rev. Amy Reumann, ELCA director of advocacy. "The public charge rule is an unneeded departure from current practice that prioritizes family unification and humanitarian needs and that values the vitality and contributions of all immigrants regardless of economic status." We support benefits for lawful permanent residents as a public good, as stated in the ELCA social message on "Immigration":

The rule will go into effect October 15, 2019, unless constrained by Congress or the courts. Please follow along with ELCA Advocacy as we continue to oppose this punitive and unnecessary rule change. [\(MORE\)](#)

SAVE THE DATE - Mark your calendar now and save the date. We will hold our next MI Gathering in the morning of **Saturday Sept 14** and our orientation for new Mission Interpreters that afternoon. The location and other details will be coming soon. See you then.

Coming Events:

Date	Event/Activity	Resources
Sept 8, 2019	"God's Work. Our Hands." Sunday At as many locations as possible	For information and resources see https://elca.org/dayofservice
Sept 19,	Concordia Place - A Taste for All	For more information visit

2019	Venue West, 221 N Paulina St Chicago, IL	https://www.concordiaplace.org/atasteforall/
Oct 19, 2019	Installation of Rev. Yehiel Curry as bishop of the Metropolitan Chicago,	For more information visit http://www.mtselca.org/
August 8-13, 2022.	2022 Churchwide Assembly Columbus, OH at the Greater Columbus Convention Center from	For more information check www.elca.org



A TASTE FOR ALL THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 6:00—9:00 PM

Our signature fall fundraiser, *A Taste for All*, will be held on Thursday, September 19, 2019 at Venue West in Chicago's West Loop neighborhood. We will honor Bishop Wayne Miller and Pamela Miller for their outstanding support of Concordia Place, and social justice across metropolitan Chicago. The event will feature delicious foods from a variety of Chicago's neighborhoods, live music, a silent auction, and open bar. *A Taste for All* is the premier fundraising event to support our mission to create involved communities where all our neighbors can gather, learn and grow. Concordia Place believes all people deserve to reach their full potential. Founded in 1981 as a small after-school program, today our multi-generational programs positively impact nearly 1,000 young children, teens, and seniors each year.

To learn more visit: www.concordiaplace.org/ATASTEFORALL. For sponsorship opportunities and tickets, please contact Anne Wilson, Director of Advancement, at awilson@concordiaplace.org or 773.463/1600 ext. 421.