



Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

Mission Memo #440

October 30, 2018

All Saints Sunday (November 4, 2018)



Of all three years of the lectionary cycle, this year's All Saints readings have the most tears. Isaiah and Revelation look forward to the day when God will wipe away all tears; in John's gospel, Jesus weeps along with Mary and all the gathered mourners before he demonstrates his power over death. On All Saints Day we celebrate the victory won for all the faithful dead, but we grieve for our beloved dead as well, knowing that

God honors our tears. We bring our grief to the table and find there a foretaste of Isaiah's feast to come.

Readings

- [Isaiah 25:6-9](#) - *The banquet of the Lord*
- [Psalm 24](#) - *They shall receive blessing from the God of their salvation. (Ps. 24:5)*
- [Revelation 21:1-6a](#) - *A new heaven and a new earth*
- [John 11:32-44](#) - *The raising of Lazarus*

Unbinding the Living

On All Saints Sunday we remember loved ones who have been laid in the tomb. We know the acute grief of Mary, Martha, and Jesus. We know the reality of death that lies so close. We know that at any moment the phone call could come with news we dread. We live forever in the shadow of death.

At the same time, we also know the little deaths that take place every day. We know the daily disappointments, the betrayal of a friend, a failure at work, a difficult and tumultuous marriage, the loneliness and pain of one longing for something more from life. Beyond that there are the near-constant reminders that much of this world is far from God's kingdom. How easy it is to look and see poverty and injustice, disease and despair all around. Like Lazarus, we are bound tightly in death's clothes: grief, disappointment, hopelessness.

Yet Jesus speaks the last word for us: "Unbind him, and let him go" (John 11:44).

This promise is bursting with resurrecting life. This word is spoken by the one who

became human and was put in a tomb, but broke through the pervasive stench of death. In the waters of the font, we hear our God speak this word to us. Lifting us out of the waters, God frees us from the binding rags of death and dresses us in the royal clothing of Christ. At the table, we feast with the God in whom we have waited, the God who swallows up death forever. The last word is not death, but life as a beloved child of God.

Clothed in the righteousness of Christ, God's people are called forth from the grave. Fellow saints rush forward to remove the rotting grave clothes. Together the people of God celebrate the hope and promise of resurrection, rising each new day to joyfully serve in the name of the one who is beyond death, Jesus our Savior.

ELCA presiding bishop responds to Tree of Life shooting

We learned with shock and sorrow of the mass murder at the synagogue in Pittsburgh last Saturday. Our thoughts and prayers go to the many impacted by the tragedy as we seek an end to the violence that infects our society. Bishop Eaton shared the following message relative to the tragedy.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I write to you with a broken heart - for the lives lost, wounded, and shattered by horrific hatred and violence at Tree of Life Congregation this morning. We join our Jewish neighbors and enter into mourning for all that has been lost. In our grief, God is our comfort. "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

From Pittsburgh to Portland, and around the world, Jews are living in fear. Anti-Semitism is on the rise. Public acts of hatred and bigotry against Jews are commonplace. As Christians, and particularly as Lutherans, we deplore and reject this bigotry. "We recognize in anti-Semitism a contradiction and affront to the Gospel, a violation of our hope and calling, and we pledge this church to oppose the deadly working of such bigotry, both within our own circles and in the society around us" (1994 Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community).

We are reminded that hate-filled violence knows no bounds - whether a Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, a Christian church in Charleston, or a Jewish synagogue In Pittsburgh. As people of faith, we are bound together not only in our mourning, but also in our response.

Therefore, in this tender moment of grief, let us reach out to those whose hearts are most broken - our Jewish neighbors. I encourage you to contact your local synagogue, or your Jewish colleagues, friends, and family members, to share your words of care, support, love, and protection. There may be specific acts you might

offer to demonstrate your care, such as when the members of Faith Lutheran Church surrounded Congregation Beth Israel of Chico, California, serving as *Shomrim*, or guardians, as they observed Yom Kippur following a hate crime in 2009.

Such simple acts can go a long way to demonstrate our love, as an extension of God's love. As we seek to heal the brokenhearted, we are assured that God is near. There is no greater promise in the face of grief.

In peace,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop, ELCA

Goal met: ELCA World Hunger's Global Farm Challenge

Thanks to the incredible generosity of Lutherans across the country, we've met our matching goal of \$515,000! Together, we've raised more than \$1 million for the agricultural work of ELCA World Hunger through the Global Farm Challenge. But the need continues. Continue to participate and donate as we work together to create healthier families, stronger economies and a future filled with hope at ELCA.org/GlobalFarmChallenge.



Dec. 1 is World AIDS Day

We as a church have been active in addressing HIV/AIDS since the formation of the ELCA. We are invited to join the global community on Dec. 1 to commemorate World AIDS Day. This is a day for a time of remembrance, awareness and commitment to action, especially in our calling to a strong and faithful response that's set forward in the ELCA Strategy on HIV and AIDS. Go to ELCA.org/hiv for World AIDS Day resources, including a bulletin insert, worship resources and a video message from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.

ELCA Disability Ministries offers Grants

[Always Being Made New: The Campaign for ELCA](#) gives us the opportunity to welcome people in all our congregations and ministries into full participation as baptized members of the body of Christ. thanks to the generosity of ELCA members



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Now,
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the campaign, Disability Ministries is launching a new initiative to fund as many as 25 grants at \$10,000 each to develop new mental health ministry plans.

ELCA Disability Ministries believes that there are many ways for a congregation to grow their awareness about mental illness, as well as learn how to foster healthy relationships that complement the services provided by mental health professionals for persons living with anxiety, attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, bipolar, depression, grief, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, trauma and other mental illnesses in ways that nurture a person's spiritual life and support their family members. The National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), Pathways to Promise, and Suicide Prevention Ministry have agreed to partner with the ELCA and are prepared to offer helpful resource materials, trainings, consultations and other learning opportunities about a variety of services that can be incorporated into the ministry plan.

We hope that you are as excited as we are about this opportunity, which was made possible by funds awarded to Disability Ministries from The Campaign for the ELCA. You may review the request for proposal [here](#).

Proposals will be accepted until Jan. 31, 2019, and funding is predicted to be a total of \$250,000 by January 2020. If you have questions, email us at Disability.Ministry@elca.org.

Mission Interpreters at Metro Chicago SWO

We were pleased to have the opportunity to share news of Mission Interpreters and many ministries of the church at the Annual Convention of the Metro Chicago SWO that had a theme of "Radical Hospitality, All are Welcome." Workshop presentations on AMMPARO, Refugee One and the InFaith Community Foundation certainly fit the theme..



Coming Events:

Date	Event/Activity	Resources
June 7 and 8, 2019	2019 MC Synod Assembly, Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Dr., Tinley Park, IL	For more information visit http://www.mcelca.org/assembly/
Aug 5-10, 2019	ELCA Churchwide Assembly, at the Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee, Wisc.	For more information visit https://www.elca.org/churchwideassembly