



Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

Mission Memo #443

November 27, 2018

First Sunday of Advent (December 2, 2018)



Advent is about the "coming days." God's people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a "righteous Branch to spring up for David." The Thessalonians awaited "the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints." Our Lord's contemporaries hoped for the time "to stand before the Son of Man." With them we

eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of our Lord in word and supper.

Readings

- [Jeremiah 33:14-16](#) - *A righteous branch springing up from David*
- [Psalm 25:1-10](#) - *To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. (Ps. 25:1)*
- [1 Thessalonians 3:9-13](#) - *Strengthen hearts of holiness for the coming of the Lord*
- [Luke 21:25-36](#) - *Be alert for the coming of the Son of Man*

Don't Wait for the Kingdom—See It

As Advent begins, we look forward to the celebration of Jesus' first coming to the world in the light of a text that promises his final coming. We, like the gospel writer, Luke, live in the time between these two "advents" of Jesus. Today's gospel gives us guidance on how to live faithfully as we wait for Jesus to return. However, in this in-between time, it is easy for us to become distracted and lose sight of the promises of Jesus. Daily tasks and routines can lull us into apathy. Ease and success can allow us to ignore our spiritual needs. Struggles, setbacks, and disappointments can cause us to lose hope and fall into despair. But Jesus tells us we should not feel beaten down or defeated by the struggles of this world, but instead "stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28).

Jesus goes on to say that there will be signs, signs of new life and growth, such as the sprouting of a leaf on a fig tree in the summertime. These signs are

perceptible to us here and now. These signs help us know that God's kingdom is coming. In fact, they remind us that in Jesus, God's kingdom has already come near, and Jesus words will not pass away until this kingdom has fully come. We should live with our eyes focused on today's signs that demonstrate God's reign and trust that Jesus' redemption of the world will one day be complete.

'We are one in the Spirit. We are united in Jesus' name.'



"There is a safety and refuge in this place that is so, so very holy," proclaims the Rev. Kirsten Fryer. Fryer is an ELCA missionary serving as the pastor of an English-speaking congregation, [St. Andrew's United Church of Cairo](#). St. Andrew's houses, several ministries including St. Andrew's Refugee Services that

serves 25,000 refugees annually. [Learn more about her ministry and the work of the St. Andrews community](#) from the video report that can be shared, We can learn more about and support Kirsten along with the over 240 ELCA missionaries serving around the world by visiting ELCA.org/missionaries.

ELCA, Episcopal and Catholic Church leaders issue statement on East Jerusalem hospitals

[In a recent press release](#), the presiding bishop and Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), alongside the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church on behalf of its House of Bishops, and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' committees on International Justice and Peace and Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, [united to voice their deep concerns surrounding a move by the United States to begin halting humanitarian assistance to hospitals in East Jerusalem](#). To read an earlier report on the concern, [click here](#).



Meet the new executive director of the ELCA Domestic Mission unit

The Rev. Philip C. Hirsch was elected to a four-year renewable term as executive director of the Domestic Mission unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Hirsch was elected by the ELCA Church Council at its November meeting. His term will begin Feb. 1, 2019.



Hirsch has served as director for evangelical mission and assistant to the bishop in the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod since 2009. Before joining the synod staff, Hirsch served as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Fairfax, Va., from 1999 to 2009. Hirsch was pastor of Christus Evangelical Lutheran Church in Camden, N.J., from 1994 to 1999, and he served his first call at Epiphany Lutheran Church in Camden from 1990 to 1994.

"I am grateful for this opportunity to help serve and lead the church in its mission in the United States," Hirsch said. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the light of the world and the hope for our broken humanity. I look forward to helping our church grow in its ability to connect a younger and more ethnically and economically diverse people with the gospel. I am confident because I know the Holy Spirit always gives us wisdom, power and love far greater than the challenges we face."

[\(MORE\)](#)

World AIDS Day: December 1, 2018



On Dec. 1st, the ELCA has the opportunity to join with our neighbors around the world in commemorating World AIDS Day. On this day, we remember all who have been and continue to be affected by HIV and AIDS. We also take this day to raise awareness and recommit to a faithful and dedicated response.

World AIDS Day Resources:

- [World AIDS Day Worship Resource](#)
- [World AIDS Day Bulletin Insert](#)
- [A video message from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.](#)
- [Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, World AIDS Day Service](#)
- [Overview of ELCA HIV and AIDS Strategy](#)

Support a growing church: Effective outreach in Tanzania

As part of the *Campaign for the ELCA*, the ELCA is investing in a project that will support the development of an outreach training course at Tumaini University Makumira, facilitated by the school's professors and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania's deputy secretary general for evangelism. Students will learn to analyze their settings and utilize various evangelism strategies to most effectively conduct mission outreach efforts. Learn more by [selecting the Tanzania project](#) from the list of global ministries. While you are there, please check out the many other uplifting stories of our ministry around the world.

How do congregations support Young Adults in Global Mission?



Is your congregation interested in supporting young adults in their year of global service and discernment? Ever wonder how other congregations lift up this ministry and raise awareness around this important program?

Check out the YAGM page on the [website of Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis](#), which offers a great example of how to support and engage with this important ministry. Another way to provide support is through the **YAGM Endowment Fund**. Thanks to a major gift from a generous ELCA family, an endowment fund in support of the Young Adults in Global Mission program has been created. The endowment fund will support the program in perpetuity. Make a gift to the fund at ELCA.org/YAGMGive. Select "Young Adults in Global Mission Endowment" from the drop-down menu.

Coming Events:

Date	Event/Activity	Resources
December 2 at 1:00 PM	Churches and Communities Together Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Oak Forest, Illinois.	Click here for more information
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.mtselca.org/assembly/
Aug 5-10, 2019	ELCA Churchwide Assembly, at the Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee, Wisc.	For more information visit https://www.elca.org/churchwideassembly