



Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

Mission Memo #450

February 26, 2019

Transfiguration of Our Lord / Last Sunday after Epiphany (March 3, 2019)



Witnesses to the glory of God in the face of Jesus will be unable to avoid reflecting that glory in the world. It was true for Moses. It was doubtless true for Peter, James, and John. We pray that it will be true of all of us who see the glory of the Lord in the word and in the supper and who are being "transformed into the same image" by the Spirit of God.

Readings

- [Exodus 34:29-35](#) - *Coming down from Mount Sinai, Moses' face shone*
- [Psalm 99](#) - *Proclaim the greatness of the Lord; worship upon God's holy hill. (Ps. 99:9)*
- [2 Corinthians 3:12--4:2](#) - *With unveiled faces we see the Lord's glory as we are transformed*
- [Luke 9:28-36 \[37-43a\]](#) - *Jesus is transfigured on the mountain*

Lifting the Veil

The transfiguration is frustrating for disciples—past and present—who long for an unmediated experience of God. Jesus' glory is revealed, and then, just as suddenly, a cloud descends and the vision fades. And even though Paul contrasts the Christian's experience of God with Moses's veiled experience of God, he notes that we see the glory of the Lord "as though reflected in a mirror" (2 Cor. 3:18). Even with unveiled faces, we don't see directly, or even clearly. Even when God is revealed in shining glory, much remains veiled and hidden.

As he witnesses Jesus' transfiguration, Peter's understanding remains veiled; ours does too. The glimpses we get of God's glory—through the veil or reflected in the mirror—are expectation-shattering, alarming, overwhelming, and awesome. The love of God shines too brightly to view directly, and yet we do have the privilege of directly experiencing that love in baptism, in communion, in service to God, and in relationship with God's creation and our neighbors in need. The veils we contend with daily are the barriers that prevent us from truly loving those neighbors, caring for creation, and seeing the shining face of Jesus in the faces of people who

are different, hungry, difficult, enemy, invisible, or poor. God is always revealed in ways that surprise and confuse us, whether shining on the mountaintop or dying on the cross.

YAGM in Cambodia



We just returned from about 2 ½ weeks in Cambodia, visiting our daughter Stephanie who is YAGM Country Coordinator for Cambodia. While there we enjoyed worshipping at City Church in Phnom Penh. A special treat was that Stephanie delivered the sermon for the day. The congregation worships at Rainbow Hostel, a program of the church that provides safe, low cost housing for students.



The building also

includes the offices of the Lutheran Church in Cambodia. We also enjoyed the opportunity to again visit and share a meal with the Rev. Dr. Phil Baker, the ELCA Regional Representative for Theological Education who lives in Phnom Penh. Later we enjoyed a day of touring the city with Savannary Sin, a friend of Stephanie's who recently retired from Life With Dignity (LWD), LWD is the



NGO that leads many of the projects that the YAGM work with. LWD originated in 1979, through the Lutheran World Service (LWS) Cambodia (1979 -1992), a field program of Lutheran World Federation, which focused on emergency relief, demining and resettlement. In 1993, the program was renamed as Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Cambodia Program (1993 - 2010), and shifted focus to supporting rural development. [Click here to learn more about LWD.](#)



Another highlight was visiting with several of this year's group of YAGM. They are a great group of young people who are wonderful representatives for us in the world. You can see some of their activities on their [Facebook page](#). It is inspiring to see the church at work in the world. There are many YAGM alum who I know would be pleased to have the opportunity to share stories of their year of service.



Save the Date and Share the News

Please save the date **Sunday, Sept. 8**, for **"God's work. Our hands." Sunday**.

Our dedicated day of service provides us with an opportunity to be "church together" as we serve our communities in ways that share God's love with all of God's people. Since 2013 our congregations have



put their faith in action for “**God's work. Our hands.**” **Sunday.** [Watch](#) how volunteers from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Somerville, N.J., used their gifts during their day of service in 2018 and be inspired as you make your plans. Earlier this year a hymn contest was announced for “**God's work. Our hands.**” **Sunday.** The chosen hymn will become a year-round worship resource and should reflect on service as one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans. We are pleased to have received a number of original compositions as the March 1 entry deadline approaches. [Learn](#) more about details and contest rules. Save the date and visit ELCA.org/dayofservice for updates to our resources. And if your congregation cannot participate on Sept. 8, please consider another time. Regardless of when or what you do, please take and share pictures to help inspire others. You work every day to make your community a better place. We look forward to working together on “**God's work. Our hands.**” **Sunday.**

NEWS FROM ELCA ADVOCACY

[Love not fear lives out our Lutheran faith: ELCA AMMPARO stands against policies that hurt asylum seekers](#)

National policies can and should both reflect our Christian value of welcome and protect U.S. citizens. These two principles are not mutually exclusive. Our leaders do us all a disservice when they fail to acknowledge and honor this truth.

This week, the Administration signaled it would [expand its policy to return some asylum seekers to Mexico](#) while they await a decision on their case, known as the “Remain in Mexico” policy. Additionally, President Donald Trump declared a national emergency at the border to fund a physical barrier.

Children and families continue to flee their communities, and many are stuck at the northern border of Mexico due to changes in U.S. policy. Both the emergency declaration and expansion of Remain in Mexico policy will further traumatize them by increasing animosity and backlogs to the asylum system.

The national emergency declaration seeks to obtain \$8 billion dollars for a wall by transferring funds from a Treasury Department drug forfeiture fund, Defense Department drug interdiction program, and the military construction fund, among other sources. At a time when apprehensions at the southern border are at a historic low, the transfer of funds from other programs to the southern border is unnecessary.

A wall is not the solution to fixing immigration or addressing border security. We urge the President and Congress to work together for immigration reform that protects the rights and well-being of those who seek asylum here.

To learn more about a Lutheran understanding of immigration issues, read the [ELCA social message on "Immigration."](#)

To learn more about the policy to send asylum seekers to Mexico while awaiting their case, also known as Remain in Mexico, read this [Catholic Legal Immigration Network analysis](#).

To review a letter in which ELCA Advocacy joined over 50 other organizations outlining our specific concerns and asking Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen of the Department of Homeland Security to terminate the Remain in Mexico policy, see [post from the Latin America Working Group](#).

Synod Assembly Opportunity

Once again we will have the opportunity to provide Mission Moments at the Synod Assembly. If you have a special story of work that your congregation is doing that you would like to share, please let me know. Time is a bit more limited this year due to the election of our next Bishop during the meeting, but we will have six spots available. Please let me know ASAP so we can include you on our list.

We will also have a MI display table at the Assembly. If you would have time, especially during the breaks, to help at the display please let me know.

Coming Events:

Date	Event/Activity	Resources
April 27, 2019	LSSI Spring Fling 2019 - Westin Chicago Northwest, 400 Park Blvd., Itasca	For more information, contact Mariah Heinz 847.635.4656 or Mariah.Heinz@LSSI.org or visit https://www.lssi.org/
May 9, 2019	Lutheran Day 2019 - Illinois State Capitol, Springfield	For more information contact Joy Medrano 847.635.4653 or Joy.Medrano@lssi.org or visit https://www.lssi.org/
May 12, 2019	Good Shepherd Sunday 2019, All congregations statewide	visit https://www.lssi.org/
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
Sept 8, 2019	"God's Work. Our Hands." Sunday At as many locations as possible	For information and resources see https://elca.org/dayofservice