



# Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

## Mission Memo #453

April 23, 2019

Second Sunday of Easter (April 28, 2019)



In spite of all we have heard and all that we have seen, it is often hard to believe. Because it is hard to believe, we will invest ourselves in the Easter mystery for fifty days (a week of weeks). Because it is hard to believe, John the evangelist will provide sign after sign celebrating Jesus' victory over death. Because it is hard to believe, the Lord Jesus will return to us again and again in the mystery of the holy communion, inviting us to touch and taste his presence, and offering us his peace.

### Readings

- [Acts 5:27-32](#) - *The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus*
- [Psalm 118:14-29](#) - *You are my God, and I will exalt you. (Ps. 118:28)*
- [Revelation 1:4-8](#) - *Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead, is coming*
- [John 20:19-31](#) - *Beholding the wounds of the risen Christ*

### Can I Get a Witness?

The texts for today explore what it means to be a witness: the power of seeing and experiencing the resurrection firsthand. For those of us who weren't there in person to witness Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, a question persists: How do we give witness? How have we experienced Easter firsthand? What do we need to see, to touch, to hear in order to believe?

The witness given in our readings today is extraordinary. "Doubting" Thomas comes up with one of the most powerful, concise creeds in all of scripture: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Peter and the apostles affirm their belief in Christ at great risk to themselves and their families. The Spirit is at work, giving ordinary, doubting people extraordinary boldness to declare the core beliefs of Christian faith. God works in surprising ways, through unexpected people, to share the good news of Easter. With the Spirit's help, we can give witness too.

## **The Tragedy of Human Trafficking: Information, Conversation, and How you can help!**

On Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, from 7-9 pm, the Faith & Justice team of Luther Memorial Church in coordination with the Women's Ministries and in collaboration with the "Dreamcatcher Foundation" will be sponsoring "The Tragedy of Human Trafficking: Information, Conversation, and How you can help!". Brenda Meyers-Powell and Stephanie Daniels-Wilson will help us gain awareness in recognizing and understanding human trafficking. This is an important subject. The event will be held in the All Purpose Room of Luther Memorial Church, 2500 Wilson Ave, Chicago. Donations of gift cards would greatly benefit clients of the foundation!!! (Consider Target, Wal-Mart, Kohl's, Burlington Coat Factory, etc.)



## **Scholars of ELCA International Leaders Program Gather in Chicago**

Every year, recipients of scholarships from the ELCA International Leaders Program gather in Chicago to discuss a variety of topics related to their experiences. This year, 43 participants, including 25 International Women Leaders scholars, met from Feb. 28 through March 4 under the theme "A Place at the Table." Among the topics discussed were diversity in leadership and creating churches that are centered by acts of inclusion. You can learn more about the [International Women Leaders initiative](#) and [support this ministry with a gift today](#).

## **ELCA Church Council approves measures addressing sexism, embracing authentic diversity**

The Church Council of the ELCA met at the Lutheran Center in Chicago April 4-7. The council, which serves as the ELCA's board of directors, took action on a variety of matters designed to help move the church's mission and ministries forward.

Council members voted to recommend to the [2019 Churchwide Assembly](#) adoption of the proposed social statement ["Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action"](#) and the related



implementing resolutions. They expressed appreciation to the task force and churchwide staff for their six years of service in development of the social statement.

The council also recommended to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly the report and recommendations of the task force for strategic authentic diversity. This is in response to actions taken by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly directing the Church Council to develop a strategy to equip congregations and synods to work toward becoming a more authentically diverse church.

The Church Council also requested that the churchwide organization lead broad fundraising efforts throughout the ELCA focused on the priorities of Future Directions 2025 and affirmed the continuation of the task force that was formed to consider income strategies and potential future campaigns to grow resources for the church. The council approved continuing fundraising for programs that have proven donor interest and where the churchwide organization has an ongoing obligation: ELCA World Hunger, ELCA Fund for Leaders, International Women Leaders, Young Adults in Global Mission, Missionary Sponsorship and Lutheran Disaster Response. ([Click here for MORE](#))



Three Sides is a monthly podcast featuring stories from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). As a church that believes God is calling us into the world - together, Three Sides will present diverse voices from across the ELCA. Listen as we share unique stories from the many expressions of this church.

- From our members whose lives are grounded in faith, love of God and neighbor.
- From our congregations that work every day to share the love of Christ with all God's people.
- From our global companions and partners that join us as we work to build up Christ's church throughout the world.

The Podcasts began in July. Visit <https://www.livinglutheran.org/podcast/> for more information as well as links to past webcasts and news of upcoming ones.

### **Churches' work to further Sustainable Development Goals**

A parallel event at UN Commission on the Status of Women highlights work of the ecumenical "Waking the Giant" initiative

(LWI) - Ecumenical development experts from around the world, meeting at the [United Nations](#) in New York, have been showcasing their work in [breaking taboos in Tanzania](#), [advocating for peace in Colombia](#) and [enhancing food security for hungry children in the United States](#).

At a side event on 12 March, organized during the 63rd session of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women, participants gave an overview of the LWF's "Waking the Giant" initiative, which aims to connect member churches to the [2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

In particular, they announced the upcoming launch of an "SDG Toolbox" for churches and related organizations, to connect their ongoing work to specific SDGs, targets and indicators. This resource is due to be launched in June and will be available on the [LWF/Waking the Giant website](#).

Mikka McCracken, National Coordinator of "Waking the Giant" in the United States, represented the only target country from the global North involved in the initiative. She explained: "The [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#) (ELCA) is participating in "Waking the Giant" to learn with and from other churches and countries. In addition to the initiative's five target SDGs, we are also focusing on SDG 2: Zero Hunger since 1 in 12 people in the United States don't know where their next meal will come from at some point during the year, including over 12 million children". ([Click here for MORE](#))

#### 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 <a href="mailto:Mariah.Heinz@LSSI.org">Mariah.Heinz@LSSI.org</a> or visit <a href="https://www.lssi.org/">https://www.lssi.org/</a>
May 9, 2019	Lutheran Day 2019 - Illinois State Capitol, Springfield	For more information contact Joy Medrano 847.635.4653 or <a href="mailto:Joy.Medrano@lssi.org">Joy.Medrano@lssi.org</a> or visit <a href="https://www.lssi.org/">https://www.lssi.org/</a>
May 12, 2019	Good Shepherd Sunday 2019, All congregations statewide	visit <a href="https://www.lssi.org/">https://www.lssi.org/</a>
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>