



# Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

## Mission Memo #475

April 28, 2020

### Fourth Sunday of Easter (May 3, 2020)



Today is sometimes called "Good Shepherd Sunday." Jesus is called the "gate" of the sheep in today's gospel. The risen Christ opens the way to abundant life. He anoints our heads with oil and guides us beside the still waters of our baptism. Each Sunday he spreads a feast before us amid the world's violence and war. We go forth to be signs of the resurrection and extend God's tender care to all creation.

#### Readings

- [Acts 2:42-47](#) - *The believers' common life*
- [Psalm 23](#) - *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. (Ps. 23:1)*
- [1 Peter 2:19-25](#) - *Follow the shepherd, even in suffering*
- [John 10:1-10](#) - *Christ the shepherd*

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### An Abundant Life

Abundant life is promised to those who follow Jesus. But what is meant by abundant life? Some Christians, and much of contemporary American culture, interpret an abundant life to mean the "good life" of many fine things, an opulent lifestyle. Much of our economy and leisure time revolves around consumerism—shopping and buying things which we hope will make us happier and our lives better. But an abundance of things does not necessarily lead to an abundant life.

What does Jesus mean when he says that he came so that we may have an abundant life? Psalm 23 provides us with a good illustration of what Jesus is promising to his followers. The psalm imagines an abundant life not in material terms but in relational terms. An abundant life is one lived in the presence of God, in the company of the Lord. Whether one is in green pastures or the darkest valley, there is nothing to want, because God is present. We are in the gracious and generous care of our Lord through times of material abundance and in times of want and scarcity. This relationship between our Lord and us who are his followers is a relationship with one who knows us abundantly, who knows us by name, and who knows what we truly need to be fulfilled. The image of Jesus as our shepherd

reminds us that he is with us at all times, and our relationship with him provides us all we need.

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## Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

### The situation:

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), a new respiratory infection, has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). As of April 28, more than 3.1 million people around the world have tested positive for COVID-19, and



nearly 220,000 people have died, according to WHO. There have been a total of 1,035,765 cases in the US with 59,266 and 142,238 people who have recovered. In Illinois there have been over 48,000 cases and 2,125 people have died.

### Our response:

Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is responding to this pandemic here in the United States and around the world, including:

- Across the United States, LDR is providing support for ELCA World Hunger's Daily Bread grants, which are supporting congregational feeding ministries as they do the critical work of providing those who are in need in their communities with food.
- In New Orleans, LDR is aiding the expansion of Bethlehem Lutheran Church's community meal program, which targets the at-risk population who are impacted at this time.
- In Southern California, LDR is supporting Care Connection Network, a social ministry organization, to serve older adults and people who are home bound by delivering food and essential supplies, in collaboration with congregations in the Pacifica Synod.
- In China, we helped provide medical supplies including ventilators, protective face shields, disposable gloves and more, as well as daily necessities such as food.
- In Italy, through the ELCA's companion church, the Chiesa Evangelica Luterana in Italia, LDR is providing Betania Evangelical Hospital in Naples, Italy, with support and medical gear and supplies.

- In Palestine, LDR is working with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem and the Holy Land to provide food and necessities to families whose livelihoods have been impacted.
- In Sierra Leone, we are supporting the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone so the church can participate in a national response plan with the government.
- LDR is also working with the Lutheran World Federation and the ACT Alliance to support their global responses.
- For additional responses in the US visit <https://blogs.elca.org/disasterresponse/3847-2/>

As the situation develops, LDR will continue to be in communication with companions and partners at home and abroad to assess the needs and provide support. We anticipate this public health crisis will escalate in coming weeks and will affect many more people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in our communities. Here in the U.S., we stand ready to work with Lutheran social service organizations affiliated with LDR and with ELCA synods to address the needs of those impacted.

### **What you can do:**

#### **Pray**

Please pray for our nation and the world as we face uncertainties. May God's healing presence bring peace and hope in this time of need. Pray that God will deliver comfort to those who mourn the loss of loved ones and strength to those who are working diligently to care for affected communities. [For more prayer suggestions, click here.](#)

#### **Give**

Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response's general account enable us to respond quickly whenever and wherever disaster strikes. [Give now.](#)

#### **Connect:**

To learn more about the situation and the ELCA's response:

- Sign up to receive Lutheran Disaster Response [alerts](#).
- Check the Lutheran Disaster Response [blog](#).
- Like Lutheran Disaster Response on [Facebook](#) and follow @ELCALDR on [Twitter](#).

## Women of the ELCA postpones triennial convention, gathering



With no Covid-19 vaccine on the horizon, Women of the ELCA's executive board voted to postpone the organization's convention and gathering until August 2021. The executive board met by video on April 25. "We are postponing not canceling," said Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director of Women of the ELCA. The Eleventh Triennial Convention

is being rescheduled for August 3-5, 2021, in Phoenix. And the 2020 "Just Love" Gathering is being rescheduled to August 5-8, 2021. [Click here](#) for more,

## Earth Day, 2020

ELCA Presiding Bishop [Elizabeth Eaton](#) issued a message on Earth Day, April 22. "Established in 1970, Earth Day launched the modern environmental movement, spurring development of landmark policies for a creation in crisis and defining a path toward a more sustainable planet," the message read, in part.



"In this 50th anniversary year, under the theme 'Climate Action,' the [ELCA] is joining the [Earth Day Network](#) as a featured faith partner. This partnership expresses our deep love for God's creation and a Lutheran understanding of our profound responsibility for it."

The message continued: "Globally, we are dealing with two interconnected crises, the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing climate change. Both demonstrate the profound consequences of our disrupted, broken relationship with the natural world." [Read the full message.](#)

## Coming Events: We look forward to the day we can again meet in person

	Event/Activity	Resources
June 5-6, 2020	Mission Moments - 33rd Annual Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Tinley Park Convention Center	For more information visit <a href="http://www.mtselca.org/assembly/">http://www.mtselca.org/assembly/</a>
August 8-13, 2022.	2022 Churchwide Assembly Columbus, OH at the Greater Columbus Convention Center	For more information check <a href="http://www.elca.org">www.elca.org</a>