



Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

Mission Memo #477

May 12, 2020

Sixth Sunday of Easter (May 17, 2020)



Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that in our gathering around the Lord's table the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in the world.

Readings

- [Acts 17:22-31](#) - *Paul's message to the Athenians*
- [Psalm 66:8-20](#) - *Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard. (Ps. 66:8)*
- [1 Peter 3:13-22](#) - *The days of Noah, a sign of baptism*
- [John 14:15-21](#) - *Christ our advocate*

Not Orphaned

"I will not leave you orphaned," Jesus promises us in today's gospel. God is not some ruthless heavenly spectator judging us as on reality television, relishing our failures, wishing to exchange us for a better or more attractive child, no curmudgeonly "Daddy Warbucks" in the sky. Rather, God comes to love us in Jesus, singularly loving and accepting, seeking our trust, promising to be ever-present with us in the Holy Spirit. This Holy Advocate moves us even when we don't recognize its power, even when it seems "an unknown God" (Acts 17:23). Though we might battle an elemental loneliness, we have not been abandoned.

Many life experiences can leave us feeling orphaned or abandoned. Family can ease that feeling but also magnify it if our family relationships are strained or if our families live far away. Think of those in your congregation who count deployed soldiers among their loved ones in recent years, or construction workers and tradesmen who need to live in hotels far away from their families to keep making money for their families in the recent difficult economy. The Internet, webcams, Skype, and social networking can link people across the miles but can further

aggravate loneliness and isolation when these substitute for real intimacy in our highly connected world. How do we experience this loneliness and this longing for home and belonging? How does Jesus' promise that he will not leave us orphaned speak to these real-life concerns?

When Jesus makes this string of promises in John 14, saying that he will remain with us in the Holy Spirit as our Advocate, it's hard to envision how this support comes to us sometimes. When we do not get to see or hear those we love, the simple gifts Jesus offers in body and blood, bread and wine shared with real warm neighbors have great power. Even when life keeps delivering bad news about how far apart we are from another, how broken our relationships are, "I will not leave you orphaned" is the godly reassurance that we are not alone.

LWF joins Pope Francis and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in call to global prayer on 14 May

(LWI) - LWF President Archbishop Panti Filibus Musa and General Secretary Rev. Dr Martin Junge have joined Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in a call for a worldwide prayer of believers of all religions on 14 May.

"Our world is facing a great danger that threatens the lives of millions of people around the world due to the growing spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic," says the letter of invitation from the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity which is extended to all religious leaders and peoples around the world.

The invitation continues with a call to believers, that they implore God "to lift this pandemic off us and the entire world, to rescue us all from this adversity, to inspire scientists to find a cure that can turn back this disease, to save the whole world from the health, economic, and human repercussions of this serious pandemic."

The Committee was founded following the signing of a joint document by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam Dr Ahmad Al-Tayyeb in February 2019 at a conference on Human Fraternity in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. Headed by a group of leaders and scholars of different faiths, the committee works to put in place the goals of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence set out in the joint document.



The LWF President and General Secretary welcomed the call to prayer, which "brings people of different faiths together, for the good of humanity," said President Musa and General Secretary Junge.

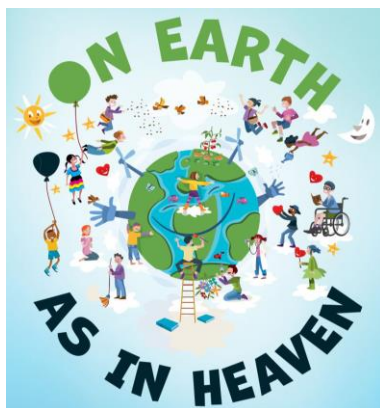
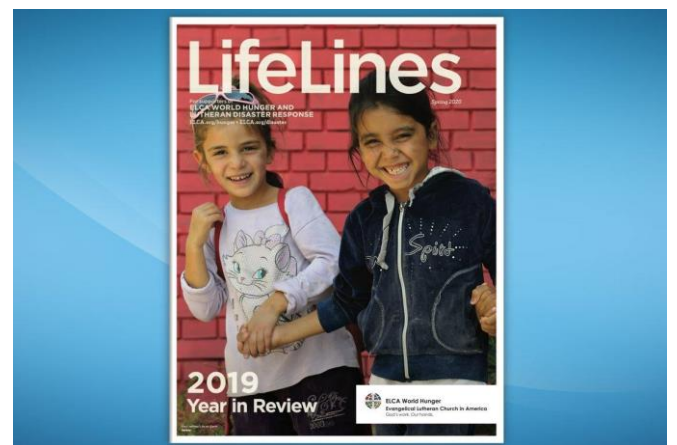
"The world needs unity and solidarity across borders to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to humble prayer and supplication to God, our faiths inspire us to persevere in supporting one another, health workers, and scientists who are working tirelessly for medical solutions."

[Click here](#) for more information and resources.

Lifelines provides Great Stories to Share

Find inspiration today through people's stories and ministries' statistics that are included in the new LifeLines "2019 Year-In-Review." It highlights the work of ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response and partner ministries here at home and around the world. For an on-line version go to:

<https://bit.ly/2WLbnz9>



NEW! ELCA WORLD HUNGER VBS Resources

Your community can still engage in this new VBS, even if you're not meeting in person. Games, crafts and stories are easy to adapt for kids at home. Join the [ELCA World Hunger VBS Facebook](#) group to learn, share and create ideas with others. Resources can be downloaded or ordered by [clicking here](#).

Lutherans Around the World Respond to COVID

The COVID pandemic is impacting people everywhere. In this time of crisis, we, the global Lutheran church, are demonstrating love for our neighbors. [Lutheran Disaster Response](#) has developed an interactive presentation about the COVID-19 responses from our global companion churches. [Click here](#) to check it out.

Rachel's Day



Rachel's Day is observed by Women of the ELCA annually on the first Sunday in May, though it can be observed any time of the year. [Read a blog about Rachel's Day](#), a time set aside to mourn the loss of our children and to renounce the forces of violence and fear. The Rachel's Day resource includes a litany for use in a special Rachel's Day service. For other free resources, visit welca.org/resources.

[Download the resource](#)

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

	Event/Activity	Resources
Postponed to Oct.3	Mission Moments - 33rd Annual Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Tinley Park Convention Center	For more information visit http://www.mtselca.org/assembly/
August 8-13, 2022.	2022 Churchwide Assembly Columbus, OH at the Greater Columbus Convention Center	For more information check www.elca.org

If you have stories of things your congregation is doing to help address our current challenges please send them to me (mic@mtselca.org) and we can share them through future issues of the Memo and on our Facebook page.