



# Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

## Mission Memo #479

May 28, 2020

### Day of Pentecost (May 31, 2020)



Pentecost derives its name from the Jewish festival celebrating the harvest and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai fifty days after Passover. Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate the Holy Spirit as God's presence within and among us. In Acts the Spirit arrives in rushing wind and flame, bringing God's presence to all people. Paul reminds us that though we each have different capacities, we are unified in

the Spirit that equips us with these gifts. Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on his disciples, empowering them to forgive sin. We celebrate that we too are given the breath of the Holy Spirit and sent out to proclaim God's redeeming love to all the world.

### Readings

- [Acts 2:1-21](#) - Filled with the Spirit to tell God's deeds
- [Psalm 104:24-34, 35b](#) - Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth. (Ps. 104:30)
- [1 Corinthians 12:3b-13](#) - Varieties of gifts from the same Spirit
- [John 20:19-23](#) - The Spirit poured out

### God Gives More than Enough

It is the "first day of the week" (John 20:19), the day of the new creation, but to those locked away in the upper room in fear, the world is as it always has been. So entrenched are they in the ways of grief and guilt that the Risen One in their midst needs to offer his life-giving invitation twice: "Peace be with you." The logic of the new age is peace, not retribution; forgiveness, not vengeance. With the invitation to new life comes also the means: the gift of the Holy Spirit, breathed upon them and within them. Just as the Father sent Jesus into the world, so now are these disciples sent as witnesses to God's saving work.

Pentecost is therefore the crowning achievement of the Jesus story. Now, more than ever, these huddled disciples would have just cause to sing the "Dayenu" ("It would have been enough") verses from the Passover seder meal, but revised: It

would have been enough for the Word and wisdom of God to have been born in the flesh . . . Dayenu! It would have been enough for the Word to grow to adulthood and share his stunning parables about God's gracious activity in the world . . . Dayenu! It would have been enough for this Word to say to his enemies, "Father, forgive them" . . . Dayenu! It would have been enough for this Word to have died on a cross for us . . . Dayenu! It would have been enough that he rose again in blessing, not vengeance . . . Dayenu! But now, beyond what we would even expect—the Word becomes our word and it is written on our hearts at Pentecost . . . Dayenu! It is enough, and more than enough to enflame our ministry of reconciliation in a world in need of a healing word.

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## LWF World Service Annual Report



Through the [Lutheran World Federation \(LWF\)](#) we are part of a global communion of Lutherans coming from 148 churches, representing over 75.5 million Christians in 99 countries. LWF World Service (WS) is the humanitarian and development arm of the LWF. It is particularly well known for its timely, compassionate, and professional humanitarian work, and for its field presence in hard-to-reach areas. Its work is people centered and community based. Above all, WS works with the most vulnerable, and in order to claim and uphold their rights, we engage proactively with local government and community structures. A defining feature of World Service is its local rootedness and

global connectivity, linking local community voices with international dialogue, advocacy, and peace work.

The LWF World Service Annual Report 2019 was recently released. It gives an overview of highlights from LWF World Service work in 2019 featuring emergency response, livelihood, quality services and protection work. There are many great stories to share that show how the LWF through its diaconal arm has been supporting vulnerable people in 25 countries worldwide. The report includes chapters on advocacy, the Augusta Victoria Hospital, as well as the audited financial report. [Click here](#) to download the report.

## [A Week to Remember Interconnectivity of All Life](#)

Ruth Ivory-Moore, ELCA Program Director, Environment and Corporate Social Responsibility

What do a Malayan Tiger, Santa Catalina Island Rattlesnake, Ridgeway Hawk, Hawksbill Turtle and Eastern Black Rhino have in common? For one thing, each animal plays an important role in balancing and maintaining healthy ecosystems. But also, each of these animals is classified as critically endangered – that is, facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild due in large part to human activity.\* In the ELCA resource, "[Why Lutherans Care for Creation](#)," we are reminded that the key tenet of Lutheran ethics has been faith active in love. "When we expand the definition of 'neighbor' to include the plant and animal life that surrounds us and upon which we depend, we are called to embrace not only the 'two kingdoms' of church and society but also the 'kingdoms' of the plant, animal and geologic worlds – the entire orbit of our life" (pg. 5). Yet humanity's greed and selfishness seen in various activities such as poaching, black-markets and deforestation have played a key role in causing these creatures to be nearing extinction.



May 15th was [Endangered Species Day](#), a day set aside to recognize the national conservation efforts to protect our nation's endangered species and their habitats. This week of May 18th marks the fifth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, a letter from Pope Francis to all Roman Catholic bishops subtitled "on care for

our common home." In this encyclical he reminded that "[p]eace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism" ([Laudato Si](#), p.92). [CLICK HERE](#) to read more.

## [Ecumenical Call to Common Prayer](#)

As we approach the twentieth anniversary of our full communion agreement, "[Called to Common Mission](#)," we give thanks to God for the partnership we share with [The Episcopal Church](#). In the coming months, we will pray for and with one another, seeking spiritual renewal in these challenging times, and revival for the common mission we share.

From Pentecost Sunday through the first Sunday in September, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and her Episcopal counterpart Presiding Bishop Michael Curry welcome congregations and individuals to regularly pray "A Prayer for the Power of

the Spirit Among the People of God." This prayer - crafted by a team of Lutheran and Episcopal prayer leaders in light of the COVID-19 pandemic - will connect us in common prayer and revive us for common mission, wherever and however we may be gathered. ([Click here](#) to read more of the blog on the Ecumenical Call to Common Prayer page.)

### **An idea for sharing stories during virtual worship**

Georgia Brown Suranofsky, a Mission Interpreter Coordinator in Pennsylvania shares a way to share stories of mission during our virtual worship experience, "In my congregation at Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bangor, PA at what would be during offering time we offer stories in Acts of generosity. Just a short 3 to 4 minute video and then during the week our pastor communicates a story. The stories are not just what's happening in the Synod and the ELCA but stories about outreach around the community as well."

### **Physically returning to Church**

While the Church has not been closed, we have not been able to worship in person. Did you see the [Physically Returning to Church : Restoring MCS Webinar](#)? Bishop Curry and others provide guidance on steps needed to return to being physically together for worship. If not you can watch it on the MCS YouTube channel at the link below. Thanks to the presenters for their amazing work!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TfG3uOFedo>

You may also be interested in Bishop Eaton's interview on CNN on May 26 to discuss navigating a return to in-person worship.

<https://www.facebook.com/Lutherans/videos/2643382989262260/>

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

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

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