



# Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

## Mission Memo #480

June 2, 2020

### 1st Sunday after Pentecost (June 7, 2020)



Though the word *trinity* is not found in the scriptures, today's second reading includes the apostolic greeting that begins the liturgy: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. In the gospel Jesus sends his disciples forth to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. More than a doctrine,

the Trinity expresses the heart of our faith: we have experienced the God of creation made known in Jesus Christ and with us always through the Holy Spirit. We celebrate the mystery of the Holy Trinity in word and sacrament, as we profess the creed, and as we are sent into the world to bear witness to our faith.

#### Readings

- [Genesis 1:1--2:4a](#) - *The creation of the heavens and the earth*
- [Psalm 8](#) - *How majestic is your name in all the earth! (Ps. 8:1)*
- [2 Corinthians 13:11-13](#) - *Paul's farewell to the church at Corinth*
- [Matthew 28:16-20](#) - *Living in the community of the Trinity*

#### **Celebrating Our God beyond Understanding**

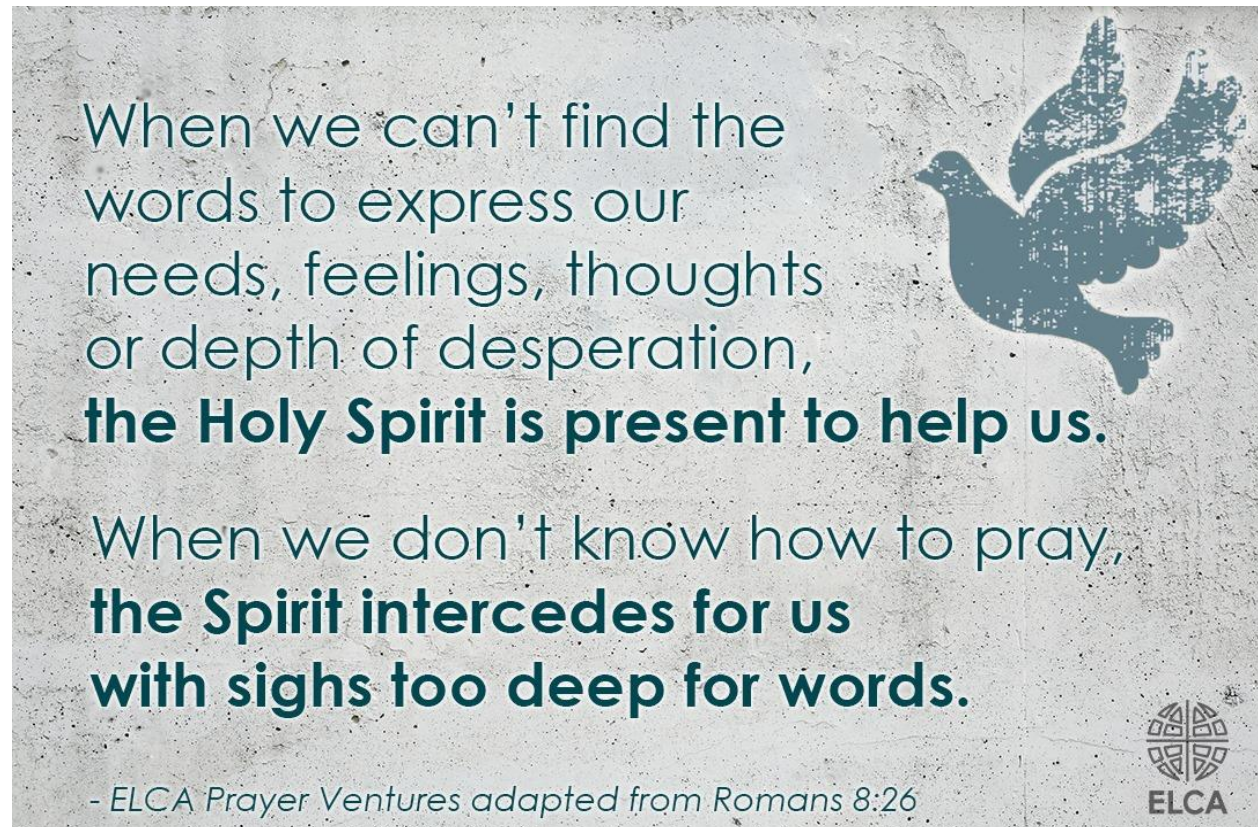
The festival of the Holy Trinity celebrates the wonder of relationship with God while leaving us distinctly dissatisfied with our limited understanding of what God is. While guarding against the idolatry of language, we survey our scripture, doctrine, creeds, and symbols of our heritage. Equally important, we pray for God to inspire fresh, innovative ideas of God in the present moment.

Today's gospel contains one of the few biblical references to the trinitarian formula. As the eleven are commissioned to make disciples, baptize, and teach, we are invited to consider our calling to influence the world with the good news of God's love. The text from Second Corinthians also includes a kind of naming of the Holy Trinity in an affectionate sign-off of a personal letter. With the psalm praising God the creator and sustainer of all creation, Genesis 1 relates the first

of two creation stories, this one an ancient liturgy celebrating God as a divine plural.

That God is beyond our understanding may be both troubling and comforting. The temptation may be to attempt to apprehend the idea of God with our intellect, offering the worshiping assembly a showcase of various models for God. The result is usually disappointing and feeds our bias toward intellectualism. Another possibility is to celebrate God's presence in all its glory and colorful wonder and our belonging to this wonder-full God.

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When we can't find the words to express our needs, feelings, thoughts or depth of desperation, **the Holy Spirit is present to help us.**

When we don't know how to pray, **the Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.**

- ELCA Prayer Ventures adapted from Romans 8:26

ELCA

## **ELCA reaffirms commitment to combat racism and white supremacy**

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8).

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reaffirms its commitment to combating racism and white supremacy following the recent murders of Black Americans. Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Dreasjon (Sean) Reed, and George Floyd were our neighbors. Ahmaud Arbery was chased down, shot, and killed by a retired police officer and his son while jogging in Brunswick, Ga. (Feb. 23, 2020). Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old emergency medical technician, was shot eight times by Louisville Metro Police Department officers who entered her apartment while

serving a "no-knock warrant" (March 13, 2020). Dreasjon (Sean) Reed, a 21-year-old from Indianapolis died after being shot at least eight times by an Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department officer (May 6, 2020). George Floyd was killed by police in Minneapolis while begging for his life, a block away from Calvary Lutheran, an ELCA congregation (May 25, 2020). As the Conference of Bishops, we condemn the white supremacy that has led to the deaths of so many unarmed Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color in our country. We grieve with, pray for and stand in solidarity with the families and friends of all whose loved ones have been and continue to be victims of injustices run amok, racist violence and the insidious venom of white supremacy.

The ELCA's social policy [resolution](#), "Condemnation of White Supremacy and Racist Rhetoric," adopted by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, states: "As persons called to love one another as God has loved us, we therefore proclaim our commitment to speak with one voice against racism and white supremacy. We stand with those who are targets of racist ideologies and actions." As church, together we must work to condemn white supremacy in all forms and recommit ourselves to confront and exorcize the sins of injustice, racism and white supremacy in church and society and within ourselves as individuals and households.

On May 21, the ELCA Southeastern Synod hosted a [webinar](#): "Becoming the Body of Christ - Condemning White Supremacy" in response to the killing of Ahmaud Arbery. This is one of many strategic opportunities happening across this church to address white supremacy and racist rhetoric. On June 17, we will gather again as church to commemorate the Mother Emanuel 9 and to repent of racism and white supremacy. An online ELCA prayer service, including leaders from across the church and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton as preacher, is being planned for June 17, 2020, marking the fifth anniversary of the martyrdom of the Emanuel 9. We encourage congregations to reaffirm their commitment to repenting of the sins of racism and dismantling white supremacy that continue to plague this church by marking this day of penitence with study and prayer leading to action. <https://www.elca.org/emanuelnine>

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop

Deacon Sue Rothmeyer  
Secretary

The Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew  
Bishop, New Jersey Synod  
Chair, Conference of Bishops

All other members of the  
Conference of Bishops

## **LWF General Secretary writes to ELCA Presiding bishop**

(LWI) - The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has expressed grave concern over racism and systemic violence against African Americans and other people of colour in the United States of America, following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis this week.



"Knowing that no words can sufficiently offer comfort, I would like to express my heart-felt sympathy and solidarity with the family of Mr. Floyd," wrote LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr Martin Junge in a letter to [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#) Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. This violence "is a sign of brokenness and injustice that must be addressed urgently," wrote the LWF General Secretary. The sin of racism must be countered, and that is what we are called to as churches.

"Your voice and actions, as well as the witness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to counter racism and to stand against those who perpetrate it while ministering healing to those wounded by it, make a difference," wrote the LWF General Secretary, expressing his gratitude to Bishop Eaton and the ELCA. "We pray for you and stand with you in your ministry, asking you to let us know how we can, as your communion of churches, walk with the ELCA as it addresses this deeply traumatic incident, speaks out and works against racism to heal communities and nation."

## **ELCA observes national day of mourning**

On Friday the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), called on the church to join with faith communities across the United States in lament and remembrance, and on our elected leaders to observe Monday, June 1, as a day of mourning to honor the more than 100,000 people who have died from COVID-19.

"I encourage all of us in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to join together across faith lines in this time of collective mourning," Eaton said. "This weekend our Jewish neighbors will remember God's covenant, our Muslim neighbors will recall the reception of the Quran, and as Christians we will celebrate the power of the Holy Spirit present among us. In the significance of these days in our traditions, our faith communities will collectively lament and remember the more

than 100,000 lives that have been lost to COVID-19. We join together in prayer for the healing of this nation, and for the world that God so loves."

The day of mourning calls on all religious communities to come together in observing this historic moment in their own traditions and practices. A [toolkit](#) and other resources are available for local religious leaders and mayors.

"We are united - as individuals, as communities and as a nation - in our grief," said Kathryn M. Lohre, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for ELCA ecumenical and inter-religious relations. "The interfaith community has recognized this and claimed this moment as a time to come together as the Christian family and with our neighbors of other religions and worldviews, to mourn the tragic loss of over 100,000 lives. The faith communities also call upon our elected leaders to designate June 1 as a national day of prayer and remembrance, as a time set aside for national mourning."

Federal and local governments were also called on to observe the day of prayer and remembrance by the lowering of flags, moments of silence and other methods of reflection.

**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.