



# Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

## Mission Memo #481

June 9, 2020

### 2nd Sunday after Pentecost (June 14, 2020)



Moses tells the Israelites that they are called to be a priestly kingdom and a holy people. Jesus sends out the disciples as laborers into the harvest. In baptism we too are anointed for ministry, sharing God's compassion with our needy world. From the Lord's table we go forth to proclaim the good news, to heal the sick, and to share our bread with the hungry.

#### Readings

- [Exodus 19:2-8a](#) - *The covenant with Israel at Sinai*
  - [Psalm 100](#) - *We are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture. (Ps. 100:3)*
  - [Romans 5:1-8](#) - *While we were sinners, Christ died for us*
  - [Matthew 9:35--10:8 \[9-23\]](#) - *The sending of the Twelve*
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#### **Celebrating Our God beyond Understanding**

In today's gospel reading, Jesus speaks of the church's mission with images drawn from daily life. The harvest is already plentiful, he says, but laborers are needed for work in the fields of daily life. What are we to do? We are to do what our worship invites us to do: let our conversation be shaped by the good news, extend Christ's peace wherever we find ourselves, and share our bread with the hungry.

It's an interesting juxtaposition of images in the gospel text, which begins with Jesus pitying the people because they are like sheep without a shepherd and concludes with Jesus sending the disciples out—like sheep among wolves. One could assume that the appropriate response of sheep surrounded by threats would be to assume a defensive posture. But we know that in today's context defensiveness about our faith is simply not effective as proclamation. Understanding the subtext of this story lies in remembering that sheep are pretty much unable to defend themselves. (Domestic sheep can die from panic!) Their only protection is, in fact, in the shepherd. Even though the apostles being sent out were to be wise as serpents, their job wasn't to defend themselves but to rely on that truth.

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## **This is the Day**

*"Out of my distress I called on the Lord" (Psalm 118:5).*

We are a nation in distress. We are a church in distress. The coronavirus has killed 103,000 of us. The virus of racism has taken hundreds of thousands more throughout our history. Now these two deadly viruses converge. Under this distress the veneer of equality has cracked and we see the pain, anger and frustration of those who have been denied the rights and dignity so many of us expect and often take for granted.

I have heard it said that slavery ended with the Civil War. Why don't people of color "just get over it." Here is the question we need to ask, "How do you get over something that isn't over?" The extrajudicial killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd that we have seen have laid open the wound in our country that has never been fully dealt with and has never healed. The officer's knee suffocating the life out of George Floyd "reminds us that blatant acts of intimidation, hatred, and violence continue" ([Freed in Christ](#) social statement, p 3).

Continued peaceful protests, vigils and demonstrations are not only legitimate but essential to move this country and this church to honest and deep self-examination. Just as the body of Christ is COVID positive, so is the body of Christ infected with racism and white supremacy. We cannot turn away from this truth. To deny it is dishonest and dangerous.

Let us stand with those peacefully protesting and acting responsibly. Looting and destruction of property does not further the cause of justice. Government has a role to uphold civil order while also a role to respect peaceful protest. There are those in law enforcement who are acting wisely, even while others have acted irresponsibly. I ask you to support the many people, including those in our church, who are working to de-escalate tensions between law enforcement, protesters and the community.

Psalm 118 continues: "I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (21-24). Christ, the cornerstone, has already broken down the wall that divides us. The time is now. This is the day.

In Christ,  
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Thanks to Barbara Brennan, a friend and Mission Interpreter Coordinator in the Western Iowa Synod for sharing this story of our Church at work and the important mission of Mission Interpretation/Storytelling..

### **No Guilt or Indecision Rather Gained Faith That God is Active and Alive Being a Missional Storyteller is a Blessing**

Today, our food pantry got another gift of money! Our pantry was running dangerously low of funds. In April and May, our food pantry has received over \$3,500 in donations. Other donations were just as unexpected. We were thought of when a semi load had more than a receiver purchased. The driver brought some of the excess to us. We were thought of when a semi overturned. We received 2 cases of eggs. Others have donated extra food that they had. Community members have given us food certificates to the local grocery store to share with our food pantry clients.

These gifts have motivated me to write this. In this time of the pandemic, we see on TV the lines of people in need of food. In the past, I would have felt guilty if I didn't try to do something.

I used to feel guilt and indecision about how much and where to give gifts in light of all the need in the world. I would see and hear the needs after a disaster, needs of the veterans and the homeless, needs children and families, needs of the hungry, and the list goes on. How and where do you help with all of the need? Sometimes, I didn't give because I thought what I could give was not enough to make a difference.

Then, I was asked to pick a ministry network when I was on the Western Iowa Synod Council. I thought I would pick the Tanzania network. I knew something about that network. But it was made clear to me that I was to pick Missional Storyteller then called Mission Interpreters. The words "You need to right a wrong kept repeating in my head". I knew instantly what wrong. Years earlier, as a church-council member, I had said we don't need to give to mission support. I hadn't remembered saying that but God remembered. He was reminding me loud and clear. I said yes to being a Missional Storyteller.

I have read many, many stories from many sources about how our mission support gifts are used from the undesignated mission support to the designated mission support like World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Did you know that your gifts in the offering plate as well as your gifts of time and talent are mission support? Your gifts to our Unity Lutheran Food Bank are mission support. You are making a difference in the lives of others through your church, synod, and churchwide. My offerings and your offerings together total nearly \$2 billion a year. A lot of lives are changed, hope is given, and

sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty are sought with the input of the people in need.

I have learned that I only need to give to the church. Offerings that stay in church, do the work and ministries of the church. **You are part of that.** Our councils give a portion of our offerings to as mission support to do the work and ministries of the synod. **You are part of that.** Western Iowa Synod sends a portion of this to churchwide. **You are part of that, too.**



Every time I look for new stories, I am blessed to find **HOW MUCH** we do all over the world. We are helping with this Covid-19 response here in the United States and elsewhere in the world. We are helping those with tornado damage and with disaster relief that happened in the recent past. We are helping veterans, homeless,

prisoners, families through Lutheran Social Services, refugees, and cancer victims in Palestine and Jerusalem.

Our churchwide partners with Lutheran World Relief. So, that makes you part of the work of LWR. Your quilts and kits go where the LWR projects are. The stories of children receiving school kits in Iraq that were once under ISIS control really impacted me.

We spread the gospel by planting churches and by church renewal efforts in the United States. We grow the church around the world accompanying people in our companion churches with opportunities to training leaders, with missionaries, with Young Adults in Global Missions, and with our partners in those regions. We support our ELCA seminaries, we offer events and leadership opportunities for youth and young adults. We provide resources and opportunities for networking for lay leaders. We along with Lutheran World Federation maintain an office in the United Nations. We address social issues and work for justice through advocacy. We support social ministry organizations, such as Lutheran Services of America, that impact the lives of 1 in 50 Americans. We do a lot and more.

So, no guilt or indecision, just giving in the offering plate and trusting that God will inspire the use of all our gifts to His glory and the benefit of others. All this while allowing us to see God in action and growing our faith through stories.

Barbara Brennan  
Missional Storyteller

## **LDR: SITUATION REPORT- CYCLONE AMPHAN**

On May 20, Cyclone Amphan made landfall in India and Bangladesh. It was the first super cyclone in the Bay of Bengal since 1999. Amphan caused 128 deaths and the

damage to homes and infrastructure made Amphan the costliest cyclone in the Northern Indian Ocean. In Bangladesh and eastern India, millions were left without power, including the entire city of Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal.

**RESPONSE**

With the support of Lutheran Disaster Response(LDR), Lutheran World Service India Trust is responding to Cyclone Amphan by providing food to families in the urban slums of Kolkata. LWSIT will also provide tarps for families with damaged roofs and assist them in connecting with the West Bengal government for aid in housing reconstruction.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

**Give**

Contribute to Lutheran Disaster Response (give where needed most) .

**Pray**

Let us pray for the people who have been affected by Cyclone Amphan. May God's healing presence give them peace and hope in their time of need.

**Connect:**

Share our posts on your social media sites and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

**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 current challenges in our congregations, communities, states or the nation 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.