



# Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

## Mission Memo #495

September 16, 2020

### 16th Sunday after Pentecost (September 20, 2020)



Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

#### Readings

- [Jonah 3:10-4:11](#) - *God's concern for the city of Nineveh*
- [Psalm 145:1-8](#) - *The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Ps. 145:8)*
- [Philippians 1:21-30](#) - *Standing firm in the gospel*
- [Matthew 20:1-16](#) - *The parable of the vineyard workers*

#### **Discomfort: Sign of Grace?**

Poor Jonah. The guy never could get comfortable. He was uncomfortable with his God-given call to preach to Nineveh; he was uncomfortable in the arms of the sailors as they hoisted him over the boat's edge and tossed him into the sea; he was uncomfortable as the ocean's raging waves flung him about like flotsam; he was—undoubtedly—uncomfortable in the fish's belly; and he was uncomfortable and downright angry with God's mercy on the people of Nineveh. Jonah had a hard time getting comfortable with himself, and, even more so, Jonah was uneasy embracing the wideness of God's grace.

The same can be said about the laborers in Jesus' parable here in Matthew 20. The laborers who came in the early morning hours grumbled against the landowner because they were paid the same as others who started later and worked fewer hours. These laborers are ill-at-ease with the landowner's choice "to give to this last the same as I give to you." Like Jonah, they are uncomfortable with the

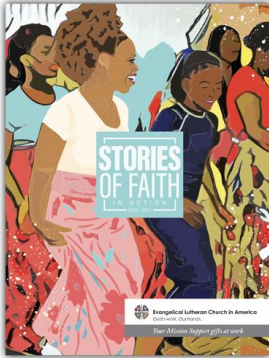
unchecked mercy offered by the landowner/God. God doesn't play by our rules, and that can be very discomfoting for us all.

Our discomfort with grace manifests itself in all sorts of ways. It can be discomfoting for us to engage the poor and the outcast of our society. It can be discomfoting for us to welcome immigrants into our communities. It can be discomfoting to address the pervasive racism that still surrounds us. And it can be very discomfoting for us to open our lives to the transforming power of the cross of Christ, whereby "the last will be first, and the first will be last" (Matt. 20:16).

Could it be that the more uncomfortable we become with the reckless love of God, the closer we are to understanding the meaning of grace?

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## 2020-2021 Edition of "Stories of Faith in Action"



This annual publication illustrates how God is at work across the ELCA through your generosity. It highlights how a portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church — particularly the ways the ELCA nurtures vital congregations, raises up leaders and grows the global church. Most importantly, it's one way we say thank you for your faithful generosity to your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — by showing your offering at work.

[Dive into the latest edition](#), which is now available digitally and includes:

- A special message from **ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton**.
- Nine inspiring stories from around the country and world.
- Your **2019 financial report on Mission Support** — the portion of your offering your congregation shares with your synod and your synod shares with the churchwide organization.
- A story-based devotional for use at Bible studies or committee meetings.

[Click here](#) to view and use the SOFIA flipbook or visit [www.elca.org/SOFIA](http://www.elca.org/SOFIA) now to:

- Download a color PDF or black and white printable PDF of Stories of Faith in Action for use at your next council, finance or congregational meeting.
- Download one-page black and white printable of stories from this publication.
- Download a copy of "Where does my offering go?" to share with your congregation.
- Find video resources connected with Stories of Faith in Action



According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) an average of 22.5 million people were displaced by climate or weather-related events between 2000-2018. And the numbers keep rising—the International Organization for Migration estimates that by 2050 there will be 200 million climate-displaced persons.

**So what can we do?**

The refugee resettlement and environmental communities must come together to address the challenges that exist in assisting climate-displaced people and propose next steps for advancing legal frameworks, public campaigns, and policy decisions. As one of the oldest and largest resettlement agencies in the U.S., Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) will bring together a panel of experts to explore the unique intersection of climate change and forced migration.

We are invited to join LIRS on September 23 at 11 a.m. EST for "Climate Migration: Addressing the Crisis," a virtual panel held as part of Climate Week NYC. Panelists include Prof. Walter Kälin, Former Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Faye Matthews, Legal Policy Advisor for the Gulf and Mississippi River Delta Restoration Programs at National Wildlife Federation, and other speakers.

[Click here to register](#)

**Lutheran Disaster Response**

As wildfires rage across the West and hurricanes devastate the Southeast, we remember, give thanks and support the effort of Lutheran Disaster Response. It brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need. Learn more of ongoing efforts at <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response>

## "God's Work. Our Hands." Sunday



Did you and your congregation join in the day of service? Recognizing the great needs of Food Pantries in this time of COVID, on Saturday and Sunday Lord of Life did a "drive by" collection for WINGS,



Schaumburg and Hanover Township food pantries. Here is a bit of the action in the rain and a part of the collection.



### Coming Events:

	Event/Activity	Resources
Sept 26, 2020	<b>Metro Chicago Synodical Women's Organization Virtual Annual Meeting</b>	For registration and more information <a href="#">click here</a>
Oct. 3, 2020	<b>Metropolitan Chicago Synod, a special virtual event</b>	For more information visit <a href="http://www.mtselca.org">http://www.mtselca.org</a>
Oct. 10, 2020	<b>LSSI True Friend Gala</b>	Click to <a href="#">register</a> , or contact Mariah Heinz <a href="mailto:Mariah.Heinz@LSSI.org">Mariah.Heinz@LSSI.org</a>
June , 2021	<b>Mission Moments - 33rd Annual Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, a virtual event</b>	For more information visit <a href="http://www.mtselca.org/assembly/">http://www.mtselca.org/assembly/</a>
August 14, 2021	<b>35<sup>th</sup> Annual Lutherdale Fest Quilt Auction</b>	For more information visit <a href="https://www.lutherdale.org/">https://www.lutherdale.org/</a>
July 24-28, 2022	<b>ELCA Youth Gathering - Boundless: God Beyond Measure, Minneapolis, Minnesota</b>	<a href="https://www.elca.org/YouthGathering/COVID19">https://www.elca.org/YouthGathering/COVID19</a>
August 8- 13, 2022.	<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>