



# Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

## Mission Memo #496

September 22, 2020

### 17th Sunday after Pentecost (September 27, 2020)



Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

#### Readings

- [Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32](#) - *The fairness of God's way*
- [Psalm 25:1-9](#) - *Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love. (Ps. 25:6)*
- [Philippians 2:1-13](#) - *Christ humbled to the point of death on a cross*
- [Matthew 21:23-32](#) - *A parable of doing God's will*

---

### An Invitation to Grace

It is so easy and so tempting to build ourselves up at the expense of others. "I can't imagine ever doing that." "How can people live like that?" "Who would do such a thing?" At some point we all think or say these sorts of things. Like it or not, we use these words to comfort ourselves at the expense of others. These words are a reminder that all people stand in need of God's grace.

Each of this day's readings shows us this reality. In the parable of the two sons, Jesus invites us to choose between two sons when neither fully does the will of their father. Here Jesus makes the point that we are all equally in need of God's grace. Ezekiel proclaims God's invitation, "Turn, then, and live" (Ezek. 18:32). This is an invitation that extends to all people, from a God deeply desiring a loving and life-giving relationship with humanity.

In Philippians, we are reminded of Jesus' act of grace on the cross, emptying himself, becoming sin so that all creation might be redeemed through him. In response, we discover a vision of the day in which all creation speaks with a unified voice, declaring Jesus Christ is Lord.

This is a day of confession and forgiveness. We confess our need for God, our distance from God, and our failures before God. In response, to our joy, we discover again the grace of God outpoured. All humans are in need of God's grace; God extends grace to all, and one day we will confess that salvation as one people. All of today's readings reveal the way in which all humans are equal in the eyes of God.

---

## **Christmas in July - part of "God's Work. Our Hands."**

The Social Ministry Committee of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Prospect Heights, sponsors an annual *Christmas in July* event. This year the entire congregation gave their overwhelming support to benefit the needs of two local elementary school districts. They provided all of the school supplies (and more) that were requested by School District #23, and enough hygiene products for 40 families in School District #21. In addition, a generous number of gift cards were also donated to each district for distribution to their families in need.



Both districts were very appreciative of the support from the church, especially as they see more families struggling this year due to the pandemic. The donations will help to make a difference in the lives of families in need within our community. This call to action during a very unusual and challenging time in our world has been a testament to our faith here at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10

## **Hunger in the Time of COVID-19: "Life For Today and Hope for Tomorrow"**

**Join in this online event that will raise funds for ELCA World Hunger**

When: Thursday, September 24 at 7 p.m. CT

Where: Zoom Webinar.

We are in a historic moment, facing a once-in-a-century pandemic, and a global change in hunger unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes. Domestically and internationally, hunger is increasing at alarming rates. At this event, you will learn about the unique ways ELCA World Hunger is responding. Our hosts will also discuss the ongoing root causes of hunger and poverty addressed in Rick Steves' recent



special *Hunger and Hope: Lessons From Ethiopia and Guatemala*. And you will hear from ELCA World Hunger partners on the front lines of the current hunger crisis, who will tell you firsthand how your gifts make a difference.

We are called by God to share hope in this time of challenge. Join us to face this global hunger crisis head-on and to continue moving toward a just world where all are fed.

Register for the Sept. 24 event here: <https://bit.ly/2PxqnOC>

## **Presiding Bishop responds to gross disregard for human life and dignity at private detention facility**

*"As Christ on the cross did not lose his dignity, but in fact revealed himself fully in vulnerability, every human who is being mistreated retains the image of God that confers dignity. A society should not deny a person's dignity for any reason." —ELCA social message "Human Rights," p. 4*

Bishop Eaton said: On Monday, Sept. 14, I learned of the very disturbing account of human rights violations against immigrant women in custody in the privately run Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla, Ga. The center is run by LaSalle Corrections under a contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The whistleblower complaint that was filed on Monday by a licensed nurse practitioner revealed a pattern of medically unnecessary hysterectomies and medical neglect that violated women. Too often, the Christian community has given its tacit or explicit consent to acts of gender-based violence.

As the ELCA we strongly condemn gender-based violence and violations of human rights wherever they occur. We pray especially for the courageous women who have come forward. We look ahead to the expeditious investigation of these reports by the Department of Homeland Security as urged by members of Congress, to be completed by Friday, Sept. 25, 2020. [Click here to read more.](#)

**Lutherdale needs us now.** On October 18, Lutherdale will hold a special one-day campaign for emergency *COVID-19* response. We need 760 gifts by October 18 to ensure we are able to continue providing life changing adventure for people of all ages, for generations to come. We will share campaign updates, video clips, and Lutherdale stories as the day of giving



approaches. Sign up at [www.lutherdale.org/about/enews-sign-up](http://www.lutherdale.org/about/enews-sign-up) to receive emails. On the day of the event, from 8am - 8pm, follow Lutherdale on Facebook @Lutherdale1944 to track progress, and to celebrate with our live celebration that evening.

**A Reminder** you can visit [ELCA.org/SOFIA](http://ELCA.org/SOFIA) today to download:

- A **printable PDF** (black-and-white or color) of "**Stories of Faith in Action**" for use in your congregation.
- Nine one-page black-and-white story printables to share in meetings, in newsletters or via social media.
- **Three videos** associated with stories from this publication.

**Coming Events:**

	<b>Event/Activity</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>Sept 26, 2020</b>	<b>Metro Chicago Synodical Women's Organization Virtual Annual Meeting</b>	For registration and more information <a href="#">click here</a>
<b>Oct. 3, 2020</b>	<b>Metropolitan Chicago Synod, a special virtual event</b>	For more information visit <a href="http://www.mtselca.org">http://www.mtselca.org</a>
<b>Oct. 10, 2020</b>	<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>
<b>June , 2021</b>	<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>
<b>August 3-5, 2021</b>	<b>The Eleventh Triennial Convention of Women of the ELCA, Phoenix, Ariz</b>	For more information visit <a href="https://www.womenoftheelca.org/eleventh-triennial-convention">https://www.womenoftheelca.org/eleventh-triennial-convention</a>
<b>August 14, 2021</b>	<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>
<b>July 24-28, 2022</b>	<b>ELCA Youth Gathering - Boundless: God Beyond Measure, Minneapolis, MN</b>	<a href="https://www.elca.org/YouthGathering/COVID19">https://www.elca.org/YouthGathering/COVID19</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>