



# Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

## Mission Memo #499

October 14, 2020

### 20th Sunday after Pentecost (October 18, 2020)



In today's first reading God uses the Gentile ruler Cyrus to accomplish divine purposes. When the Pharisees try to trap Jesus, he tells them to give the emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God. To gather for worship reminds us that our ultimate allegiance is to God rather than to any earthly authority. Created in the image of God, we offer our entire selves in the service of God and for the sake of the world.

#### Readings

- [Isaiah 45:1-7](#) - *An earthly ruler as the instrument of God's will*
- [Psalm 96:1-9 \[10-13\]](#) - *Ascribe to the Lord honor and power. (Ps. 96:7)*
- [1 Thessalonians 1:1-10](#) - *Thanksgiving for the church at Thessalonica*
- [Matthew 22:15-22](#) - *A teaching on giving to the emperor and to God*

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### What's in Your Wallet? Not Enough.

Say the word stewardship in some congregations and people are protectively guarding their wallets faster than you can say "pledge card!" Unfortunately, too often we associate stewardship exclusively with issues of money. The good news is that God has little interest in our wallets. God wants our whole lives, wallets and all! Nevertheless, this week is prime time for stewardship campaigns in congregations around the country. The stewardship theme is reflected in our announcements, our prayers, our songs, and our readings. Today's gospel provides an ideal time to reflect on stewardship of all sorts—time, talent, and financial treasures.

The Pharisees approach Jesus in a thinly veiled attempt to trap him on issues of financial obligations to the Roman government. Their question of Jesus, simplified to the extreme, is "who gets your wallet?" If Jesus answered one way, he would be guilty of treason. If he answered the other way, he would have been considered guilty of heresy in the eyes of the religious leaders. Jesus responds by issuing a challenge of his own—give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God. This statement challenges us to ponder: if God created the world

and everything in it, what doesn't belong to God? God wants a whole lot more than just your wallet. God wants your life, wallet and all!



Lutherdale, one of our outdoor ministries, has been suffering due to COVID-19. As a result of the pandemic most programming this year had to be canceled. This has resulted in a loss of over \$700,000 in revenue. Significant austerity steps have been taken. Staff has been reduced and those remaining have taken a 50% reduction in salary. In spite of this, major challenges remain as many fall groups have canceled that will further reduce income. Sunday October 18 has been designated as a special day of giving to help provide emergency COVID-19 relief. The goal is to receive 760 gifts. A generous donor will match the first \$100,000 in contributions. Check the playlist [Lutherdale NOW - A Special Day of Giving](#). To give go to [www.Lutherdale.org](http://www.Lutherdale.org)

## **Faith Leaders Speak Out against Trump Administration's Decision to Cut Refugee Admissions Ceiling**

The Trump administration is proposing the annual refugee admissions ceiling be set at 15,000 in Fiscal Year 2021. In Fiscal Year 2020, which ended on Sept. 30, the annual refugee admissions goal was 18,000 refugees. According to Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, of that target, only about 65 percent were allotted admissions.



"At a time of unprecedented global need, [the] decision to further cut the refugee admissions ceiling is a complete abdication of our humanitarian and moral duty."

LIRS CEO Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, Christian Headlines ([Click here for article](#))

So far, LIRS supporters have sent more than **3,000 messages to Congress** encouraging them to welcome more refugees in 2021. But there's still time to make your voice heard. Send an email to your legislator through the LIRS action center

and tell them you **strongly condemn the record-low admissions goal** proposed by the administration and call for a robust refugee admissions goal of 95,000 in Fiscal Year 2021. Click to [Contact Congress](#).

## Healing Amidst Turmoil

A recent story on 60 Minutes focused on a program for Syrian refugee preschoolers to save them from a life of despair. Lutheran Disaster Relief supports the development of a Trauma Healing and Spiritual Counseling Program to address the mental health issues of those communities impacted by strife. Learn more about this ministry at <https://blogs.elca.org/disasterres.../healing-amidst-turmoil>



- What additional ways does your congregation or synod support those impacted by mental health issues. Share the story!

*Shared by Karen Kaufman, Ministry Resource Curator at ELCA*

## Experiments in Action: Tree of Life

The ELCA Innovation Lab "Experiments in Action" blog series is new. It features individuals and communities who are trying something new. Their current post features a story from Tree of Life, Minneapolis, MN a Lutheran church start-up that is queer-affirming, millennial-led, and for the spiritual but also slightly religious. [This post](#) is written by The Rev. Marissa Sotos, pastor at Tree of Life.

### Before Covid-19: Background

Before Covid-19, Tree of Life Lutheran was a millennial-focused mission start in the North Loop neighborhood of downtown Minneapolis that was turning toward intentional long term planning. We had established Evening Prayer and Dinner gatherings on the first Sunday of every month that were the anchor of our faith community's spiritual and social life, with a rotation of other gatherings throughout the month for service, yoga, theology on tap, etc. One major problem we faced was that to create opportunities for invitation, connection to newcomers, and a habitual pattern for participants we



needed to have our primary worship gatherings more frequently and make them easily accessible.

[Visit the Blog](#) to learn how COVID disrupted plans and how they adapted and are moving forward in ministry.

## Sharing in the time of COVID

[The MCS](#) has received over \$24,500 in donations from congregations and individuals to the MCS COVID-19 Congregational Relief Fund. We have been able to share over \$338,000 to fuel congregational mission and ministry in these times. Thank you for your gifts, and for helping us to share resources across the synod. We are the Metropolitan Chicago Synod together.

[Gifts are welcome online at this link](#) and are also welcome by mail, sent to the synod office.

Check out the [Metro Word flipbook](#) for more stories and events

### Coming Events:

	Event/Activity	Resources
Oct 18, 2020	Lutherdale NOW- A Special Day of Giving	Check the playlist <a href="#">Lutherdale NOW - A Special Day of Giving</a> .
June , 2021	Mission Moments - 33rd Annual Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, a virtual event	For more information visit <a href="http://www.mcselca.org/assembly/">http://www.mcselca.org/assembly/</a>
August 3-5, 2021	The Eleventh Triennial Convention of Women of the ELCA, Phoenix, Ariz	For more information visit <a href="https://www.womenoftheelca.org/eleventh-triennial-convention">https://www.womenoftheelca.org/eleventh-triennial-convention</a>
August 14, 2021	35 <sup>th</sup> Annual Lutherdale Fest Quilt Auction	For more information visit <a href="https://www.lutherdale.org/">https://www.lutherdale.org/</a>
July 24-28, 2022	ELCA Youth Gathering - Boundless: God Beyond Measure, Minneapolis, MN	<a href="https://www.elca.org/YouthGathering/COVID19">https://www.elca.org/YouthGathering/COVID19</a>
August 8- 13, 2022.	2022 Churchwide Assembly Columbus, OH at the Greater Columbus Convention Center	For more information check <a href="http://www.elca.org">www.elca.org</a>