



Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

Mission Memo #500

October 21, 2020

21st Sunday after Pentecost (October 25, 2020)



Jesus' summary of the law in today's gospel echoes our first reading from Leviticus. We are called not only to love God with heart, soul, and mind, but also to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is out of such deep care that Paul shares the gospel with the Thessalonian

community. In the confession of sins, we acknowledge that we have not loved God, neighbor, and self; yet we gather to hear the word of forgiveness and to be strengthened by word and meal to be signs of God's love and mercy in the world.

Readings

- [Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18](#) - *Holiness revealed in acts of justice*
- [Psalm 1](#) - *Their delight is in the law of the Lord. (Ps. 1:2)*
- [1 Thessalonians 2:1-8](#) - *The apostle's tender care for the Thessalonians*
- [Matthew 22:34-46](#) - *Two great commandments: love for God and neighbor*

Jesus Is Really into Relationships!

Love God, love neighbor, and love self. Jesus is really into relationships! Oftentimes, even if unintentionally, we put loving self first, and because "we are bound to sin and cannot free ourselves" we usually do a poor job of actually loving ourselves. This means we have less love to give to neighbor and even less for God. Jesus puts relationship with God first. He doesn't do this to make us last but so that we can fully understand love and relationship the way God desires it for us.

Today's readings give us insight into the ways God desires us to be in relationship: by being just in all our dealings with others, by not being lead astray by the wicked, by sharing the gospel with humility and tender care, and by loving God and neighbor. It might sound simple, but relationships are far from simple. Relationships are complex creatures with complex issues. Even the best relationships include struggle.

People in our congregations struggle with relationships each and every day. Love should be an easy thing, but it takes work and effort to love God, love others, and love oneself. The psalmist uses the image of trees planted by streams of water to describe people who "delight in the law of the Lord." These are not weak, brittle,

or dying trees; these are strong trees that prosper. Our faith plants us, nourishes us, and strengthens us to love.

How can we be like trees planted by streams of water? In what ways can the church help people to make and maintain healthy relationships? How do we encourage self-worth and humility? This is an excellent day to ask these questions, to create forums where answers can be discussed, and to remind one another how much God truly loves us.

A Milestone Reached



The week is the 500th issue of the Mission Memo, a significant milestone for any publication. As we reach this milestone I would like to remember, acknowledge and give thanks for Mary Anderson who began the Memo while serving as Mission Interpreter Coordinator for the Metro Chicago Synod. Mary was an important part of many organizations within the church and the community. She loved seeing the church at work in the world and sharing the stories of what we are doing. She especially enjoyed the ELCA videos as they became available and said that rather than watch TV, she preferred to watch the stories told through those videos. Mary passed away earlier this year, but as Mission Interpreters we carry forward her love of telling the great stories of the church at work in the world. Thank you Mary, for beginning this venture.

[Great News from Syria](#) - Humanitarian aid for refugees, feared destroyed in Beirut explosion, found intact

Three 40-foot shipping containers filled with humanitarian aid that included thousands of handmade quilts and baby-care items, which were reported as destroyed in the August 4 explosions at the port of Beirut, Lebanon, have been found intact and are ready to be distributed victims of the blast and refugees.

Authorities assumed the containers were lost in the historic blast that killed more than 200 people and laid waste to parts of the city. It took several weeks for longtime Lutheran World Relief partner Anera to gain access to the port, locate the containers and check their contents. While other Anera shipping containers were heavily damaged, the three containers of quilts and kits were apparently stored behind a concrete block building that helped spare them from the blast. A fourth container, which was on a ship offshore when the

explosion occurred, has since been delivered. The contents of all four containers have been transferred to a warehouse and will be distributed to families displaced by the explosion, as well as to refugees living in Lebanon, principally from Syria and the Palestinian territories. Anera representatives [took this video](#) of the remarkably intact boxes of aid.

"It's been a roller coaster for all of us, and especially our quilters and kit-makers," said Melanie Gibbons, deputy director for outreach and engagement at Lutheran World Relief. "First, grief over the loss of items so carefully made and prayed over, followed by determination to keep quilting and making kits. Then joy over the news that the items not only survived but are able to be distributed!" "It's an incredible blessing to realize that now these items are in exactly the right place at the right time," she said. In addition to distributing the quilts and kits, Lutheran World Relief is also working to address immense shelter needs in the wake of the explosion, helping poorer families to repair and return to their homes. [\(MORE\)](#)

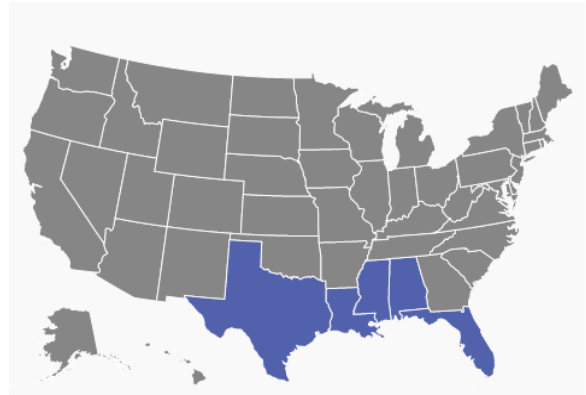
ELCA receives grant through Lilly Endowment's Thriving Congregations Initiative

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has received a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help establish the "Congregations Lead: Innovation Denomination" initiative. The program is funded through Lilly Endowment's Thriving Congregations Initiative. The aim of this national initiative is to strengthen Christian congregations so they can help people deepen their relationships with God, build strong relationships with one another and contribute to the flourishing of local communities and the world.

Lilly Endowment is making nearly \$93 million in grants through the initiative. The grants will support organizations as they work directly with congregations and help them gain clarity about their values and missions, explore and understand better the communities in which they serve, and draw upon their theological traditions as they adapt ministries to meet changing needs. The ELCA envisions a world that experiences the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. As ministry challenges and opportunities only become increasingly complex, congregations must be grounded in Lutheran faith practices and equipped and inspired to adapt and innovate for the future so that their communities may thrive. With a decline in membership and a demographic profile that does not reflect the diversity of the United States, the ELCA has embarked on a renewed purpose to invite more people into the way of Jesus. [\(Click to read more\)](#)

Situation Report 2020 HURRICANES

2020 has already been a busy hurricane season and there is still over a month left until it ends. In August, Hurricane Laura, a Category 4 storm, made landfall in Louisiana, causing substantial damage. On September 16th, a Category 2 hurricane, Sally, hit Alabama and Florida. The slow-moving storm dropped over two feet of rain in some areas. Six weeks after Hurricane Laura, Hurricane Delta made landfall less than 20 miles from where Laura hit on October 9th.



RESPONSE: Lutheran Disaster Response is engaging with Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response (Upbring) and the Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast and Southwestern Texas synods to respond to Hurricanes Laura and Delta, providing relief and assessing needs as they look ahead to long-term recovery in the area. Following Hurricane Sally, under the leadership of the Southeastern Synod, the synod and Inspiritus are working together to provide relief and clean-up assistance to survivors in Baldwin County, Alabama. Additionally, the Florida-Bahamas Synod is distributing relief supplies to survivors in Pensacola, Florida.

HOW WE CAN HELP

Give Contribute to Lutheran Disaster Response (Hurricane Response).

Pray Let us pray for the people who have been affected by the 2020 hurricanes. 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, Twitter, and Instagram. ([MORE](#))

ELCAvotes: Engagement before/during/after election

It is both privilege and responsibility for Lutherans in the United States to approach Election 2020 as faith-informed voters. Aware of needs and priorities in our own

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#ELCAvotes

**FIND READY-TO-SHARE
SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS**
@ELCAADVOCACY

Pick from the #ELCAvotes archived posts and look for new posts each Wednesday.

And **please use #ELCAvote** when you share your local activity so we can all benefit!

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lives and connected with our neighbors who are equally beloved children of God, "Lutherans care about government because it is a gift from God intended for the safety and flourishing of human life."* We are civically engaged, mindful that "too often and in too many ways, this gift has been abused."*

- *Do you have your plan in place for voting?*
- *Can you encourage and inform others through your congregation and/or personal circles?*
- *Have you reflected on election challenges - for vote casting and after Election Day - in our unique 2020 context?*

With mere days remaining in advance of Election Day 2020, [Click here](#) is a review of material associated with the [ELCAvotes initiative](#).

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

Coming Events:

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