



Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

Mission Memo #504

November 24, 2020

1st Sunday of Advent (November 29, 2020)



Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

Readings

- [Isaiah 64:1-9](#) - *Prayer that God would come with power and compassion*
- [Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19](#) - *Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7)*
- [1 Corinthians 1:3-9](#) - *Gifts of grace sustain those who wait for the end*
- [Mark 13:24-37](#) - *The sudden coming of the Son of Man*

Old Problems and New Beginnings

By now the last of the leaves have likely fallen from trees in northern climes, and any still holding on look dry and dead. Snow has arrived, and its thick blanket shows the stains of city filth and grime, reminding us of the waste we are pouring over the land and into the water. This is the season we begin a new year in the life of the church and, as with our worship, we begin with a confession of our participation in the world's suffering.

Heavy hearts and burdened consciences will relate to Isaiah's confession, "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away" (Isa. 64:6). Then, just as the cold nights in the northern hemisphere reach their longest, Mark addresses us with promises that the signs of the coming of the Son of Man will include the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars. Hold on, there is hope!

The promise of Advent is that God is always at work in the world, bringing new beginnings and a new creation to people and powers long bent on destruction. Yet, because we live in the generation that exists between the “already” of Christ’s resurrection and the “not yet” of God’s full restoration of the creation, we cannot know when that final day will arrive. Instead of becoming preoccupied with the end times, we are counseled to live our lives in a state of preparedness—trusting that our home is God’s home and that God is coming once again to dwell with us. That trust is the strength that sustains us as we “wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:7).

Bishop Munib Younan Named Recipient of the Kenneth W. Bensen Award for Contextual Leadership

Rt. Rev. Dr. Munib Younan, Bishop Emeritus of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land will be this year’s recipient of the Kenneth W. Bensen Award for Contextual Leadership presented by OMNIA Institute for Contextual Leadership.

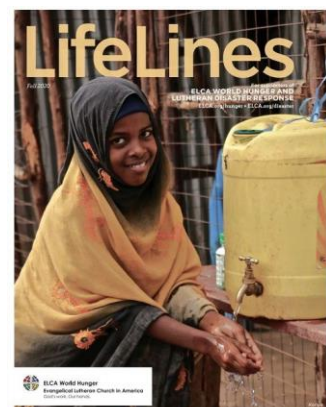


In his retirement, Bishop Younan continues to engage in the various ecumenical and interfaith initiatives in Jerusalem, some of which, he helped found and nurture. He continues to serve as an honorary president of the Middle East Council of Churches and is a recent past president of the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches. He is also a founding member of the Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land which comprises Jerusalem’s Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities, and provides leadership to the ecumenical Patriarchs and Heads of Local Christian Churches in Jerusalem.

Globally, Bishop Younan is the most recent past president of the Lutheran World Federation, a global communion of Lutheran churches with 145 member churches in 79 countries representing more than 70 million Christians, and is currently an honorary president of Religions for Peace International, a prominent interfaith organization dedicated to global peacebuilding. [\(MORE\)](#)

Making a difference in the world

The fall 2020 issue of LifeLines is now available. It offers stories of how our gifts to ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response are helping communities and



families in the U.S. and around the world. Many of the stories highlight ways that the church is helping to address the many challenges that the COVID 19 pandemic is creating in the U.S. and around the world. Note: [Print copies are available](#) in packs of 10. A flipbook version is available by [clicking here](#).

Two hurricanes in two weeks

Our neighbors in Central America have been devastated by Hurricanes Eta and Iota. Our mission partner, Lutheran World Relief (LWR), has staff on the ground already responding. LWR has been in the region for decades and will continue to remain long after this disaster response. Please [watch this video](#), pray for our neighbors in Honduras and beyond. We can give at www.lwr.org/storms20.



#SNOWSHOE AT LUTHERDALE

During the pandemic, families are seeking a safe space to rejuvenate and reenergize. When travel restrictions allow, Lutherdale provides a welcoming, safe space for families to make a day trip or stay overnight. With your help, Lutherdale can enhance its winter recreation activities. We are invited to help provide 14 pairs of snowshoes for people of all ages to explore the wonder of God's Creation in a safe, physically distanced activity. Youth, adults, and families can explore the grounds of Lutherdale, enjoy outdoor scavenger hunts, geocaching, and physical exercise during the snowy, Wisconsin winter. The Lutherdale Board of Directors is providing a matching opportunity. They will match Dollar-for-Dollar up to \$750. A total of \$1500 will provide 14 pairs of snowshoes to explore the wonder of God's Creation in a safe, physically distanced activity for youth, adults, and families.

Friends of Lutherdale can make a [#GivingTuesday](#) gift today via Venmo @Lutherdale or online at <https://www.lutherdale.org/support-us/> or by phone (262)742-2352



Just a reminder "Christmas gifts are here!" at the [ELCA GOOD GIFTS site](#). During this time of COVID it is a great way to shop and give a meaningful gift in honor of someone and you make a difference in the world.

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

Coming Events:

	Event/Activity	Resources
Dec 9 at 3pm CST	Beyond Borders and Barriers: Creating an Equitable World for Migrant Women and Girls	Click here for registration and more information
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