



# Mission Interpretation

Telling stories of our hands doing God's work

## Mission Memo #577

Oct. 25, 2022



Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work.

Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission.

### Readings

- [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) - *I will write my law in their hearts, says the Lord*
- [Psalm 46](#) - *The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. (Ps. 46:7)*
- [Romans 3:19-28](#) - *Justified by God's grace as a gift*
- [John 8:31-36](#) - *Jesus says, Continue in my word and you will know the truth*

### Good News All Over Again

The desire to privatize the free love of God for all creation seems stamped on the human soul. While Lutherans learn early on in their faith formation about the abuses of the church through the sale of indulgences in the sixteenth century, the scriptures for Reformation Day remind us that the desire of religious people to claim ownership of what God freely gives is nothing new.

We hear the self-righteous bickering of the Israelites behind the prophet Jeremiah's declaration of a new covenant between God and humanity, one that erases any claim to special access, because we shall all know God. For the early church the question was whether there was any longer a need to observe the religious laws and customs of Israel, and the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian community. Paul reminds us that we are justified by faith in who God is, a God of grace, not by virtue of who we are.

Yet we forget this fact over and over again, like the Jews who insisted to Jesus that they had "never been slaves to anyone," forgetting their bondage in Egypt (John 8:33). We, too, lose sight of our bondage to systems of oppression and the

unjust hierarchies they create. We, too, fall prey to thinking we are better or less than others because of arbitrary categories assigned to us at birth.

Reformation Day reminds us that our impulse to contain God's grace in structures of our own making cannot hold back God's determination to claim the whole world in a love as encompassing and intimate as words written on our hearts. That was good news for the Israelites in exile, for the early church in Rome, for those living during the Reformation, and for us today. Reformation Day reminds us that the words God spoke at creation when God made the world and called it good, become good news for us each time we hear them.

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**European fuel shortage: Refugees and hosts face a challenging winter**

The European Union is a world leader when it comes to replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. The World Economic Forum reported early in 2022 that the EU had "passed another milestone in the race towards a zero-carbon future," sourcing 22 percent of its energy from renewables in 2020 - ahead of the 20% target the bloc had set in 2009.

But that won't be enough to keep Europe warm this winter, as a fuel crisis the likes of which hasn't been seen since World War II grips the continent.

The Russian supply of natural gas to Europe has fallen nearly 90 percent since this time last year. The shortage, coupled with inflation, rising costs for electricity, and a shortage of hydroelectric power due to

drought, creates something of a perfect storm as temperatures fall and demand rises. There have even been reports of people hoarding wood to burn for warmth.

For churches and others hosting refugees from Ukraine - some 7 million have left the country to find safety elsewhere in Europe - the impact will be compounded. In Krakow, Poland, for example, a Lutheran congregation has had a dozen families living in its parish hall for more than six months. Their utilities costs had already increased significantly due to the additional use of water, electricity, and natural gas. Pastor Lukasz Ostruszka says he's praying for a warm winter. This is one of the many places that he church is at work in the world. [\(MORE\)](#)

**Climate Care - Help develop the Social Message**



Pastor Lukasz Ostruszka and his family with Svetlana (left), one of the refugees from Ukraine who is staying in the Lutheran parish in Krakow.



Climate change is shown to have major impacts on the world, including causing increasingly severe disasters. Acting upon a request from several sources, in November 2021 the ELCA Church Council authorized the development of an ELCA social message on climate care.

Social messages are ELCA teaching documents that address a focused social topic. They provide theological rationale and social analysis to foster discernment and engagement on a relatively narrow social issue. This project was authorized in light of the grim contemporary situation affecting our global home and the need for fresh action on the part of this church. It draws its framing themes from several social statements, particularly [\*Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice\*](#).

In line with standard [ELCA protocol](#), the project is being shepherded by the ELCA Director for Theological Ethics, working with a lead writer in collaboration with a group of reviewers. The draft social message is now available for public feedback! [Read the social message draft here](#) and then use [this survey](#) to share your input by Friday, December 2, 2022.

The draft will be edited, guided by the feedback, and presented to the ELCA Church Council to be voted on this coming spring.

## World Food Day Update

Every day ELCA World Hunger works together with a global network of partners and companions to find creative and sustainable solutions toward a just world where all are fed. World Food Day 2022, that was celebrated in mid-October, meets us in a season of complex global challenges that are driving a hunger crisis for nearly 193 million people.



The ELCA World Hunger recognized World Food Day by hosting a livestream video with Rick Steves. It highlighted many wonderful ministries from around the world whose stories need to be shared. One of the ministries he interviews is Light of Grace Church and Dasom

Bicultural School in Federal Way with Pastor Sang Soo Kim and Pastor Chong Kim-Chung (Jenny Kim). "Although we have made progress towards building a better Mission Memo 577

world, too many people have been left behind. People who are unable to benefit from human development, innovation or economic growth."(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) See the ELCA's World Food Day video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1wM4Mdhz6o>

## A YAGM Update

After a two-year pause, the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program is sending volunteers out into the world again. Mae Helen Jackson, Young Adult Outreach and Placement Manager, [gives a video update](#) about some of the ways the YAGM team is bringing the program up to date and making it more welcoming for everyone. YAGM is ready for you! Submit your application beginning Nov. 1 at [www.ELCA.org/YAGM](http://www.ELCA.org/YAGM).

	Event/Activity	Resources
October 29, 2022	Lutheran Social Service of Illinois (LSSI) 41st annual True Friend Celebration Union League Club of Chicago	For more information visit <a href="http://www.LSSI.org/TrueFriend">www.LSSI.org/TrueFriend</a> or email <a href="mailto:Mariah.Heinz@LSSI.org">Mariah.Heinz@LSSI.org</a>
Nov 5, 2022 at 3 pm CDT	WELCA 2022 Thankoffering Service on Saturday, Spanish translation will be provided.	Advance registration is required. <a href="#">Register to attend.</a>
Nov 11 - 12, 2022, 9:30 pm to 5 am	Youth Ministry Network Ultimate Lock-In, Enchanted Castle, Lombard	For details visit: <a href="https://mcelca.org/youth-ministry-network-ultimate-lock-in-2/">https://mcelca.org/youth-ministry-network-ultimate-lock-in-2/</a>
June 3, 2023	MS Synod Assembly 2023 In Jesus Name - Make Disciples Q Center, St. Charles	For more information visit <a href="https://mcelca.org/who-we-are/synod-assembly/">https://mcelca.org/who-we-are/synod-assembly/</a>

Early voting is open in Illinois and most states. **Be sure to vote.** It is important for democracy and for our future.