



South Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

February 2021 Newsletter Inserts

Siblings in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit! - You have heard me say it from the beginning and since then over and over again that as the church we will never be able to go back to normal as we learn to live with COVID. You may wonder: "What does that mean?" It means that even if we would be able to return to the church that we were prior to COVID, we would need to examine, if that is even what we would want to do. Prior to the pandemic I have heard you say, that you didn't like the way the church was and that you wished for it to be different. I want you to know that I hear you, that your synod staff hears you and that we are currently assembling a task force that works on revitalizing ministry as we learn to live with COVID in our midst and continue to be church and the people of God. The task force will be working on a framework that will help you in your ministry site to lean and live into revitalizing ministry in God's name in your context. Please watch for details to come soon.

Journeying in Christ with you,
Rev. Constanze Hagmaier
Bishop of the South Dakota Synod, ELCA

All Things New

Rev. Renee Splichal Larson

Happy New Year! The word "new" shows up a number of times in Scripture, and most often it has to do with God's activity. Let us start out this new year meditating on the following verses from Scripture:

Psalms 40.3 – "He put a new song in my mouth a song of praise to our God."

Isaiah 43.19 – "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

Isaiah 65.17 – "I am about to create new heavens and a new earth ..."

Lamentations 3.22-23 – "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning."

Ezekiel 36.26 – "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

John 13.34 – "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

1 Corinthians 11.25 – "In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'"

2 Corinthians 5.17 – "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

Ephesians 2.15-16 – "He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it."

1 Peter 1.3 – "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ..."

Revelation 21.5 – "And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.'"

As we enter into 2021 with all of its uncertainties, let us pay attention to the ways God is doing a new thing in your life and in the life of our church. When all else is uncertain, one thing is for certain: God's love for you in Christ Jesus our Lord. And this love always has the power to put a new song in our mouth, to give us a new heart and a new spirit, to give us new birth, and make all things new.

Work for Justice and Peace

Rev. Jonathan Steiner

"So that your child may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace." In these baptismal promises we lay out our hopes for what discipleship looks like, in response to the Good News that we have already been saved by Jesus Christ. These are our callings as people of faith.

If you, like me, are looking at the recent events of our world and wondering what to do about it, remember these promises. Remember that we have committed ourselves to trusting God, to knowing that even if the worst should happen, God's promise of resurrection still holds fast. Remember that we don't just say things, we act out the love of Jesus for our neighbors, being the manifestation of the body of Christ. Remember that we care for others rather than tear them down. Remember that we seek God's justice and peace, caring for the vulnerable and oppressed.

God has work for us to do as people of faith, especially in times where the world is chaotic. As a disciple of Christ, as someone filled with the strength of the Holy Spirit, let's continue to lift up these promises for one another. God is already at work, and is calling us into it.

40 Days of Giving with ELCA World Hunger - Lenten Resources

Over the last year, as the world has reeled from the effects of a deadly pandemic, we have seen the number of hungry people around the world rise, watched as food pantries and soup kitchens expanded to serve an ever-growing number of guests, and longed for the time when we "will hunger no more, and thirst no more ... and God will wipe away every tear from [our] eyes" (Revelation 7:16-17).

Thank you for all you are doing in your congregation and community to continue God's work and to share the grace and love of Christ. We invite you to continue your work by connecting your congregation to the church's global work to end hunger and poverty during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving, which begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17

To prepare, visit ELCA.org/40Days and download or order resources today.

Your leadership is crucial to our work together. Thank you for partnering with ELCA World Hunger during this important season in the church year. If our team can support you in any way, don't hesitate to reach out to us at hunger@elca.org.

2021 ELCA Fund for Leaders Scholarships:

The Fund for Leaders, a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), provides

scholarships for future ELCA pastors and deacons who attend ELCA seminaries. In 2021, the Fund for Leaders will once again be offering scholarships to seminary students — and we need your help to spread the word!

The Fund for Leaders has an open application process that allows all eligible candidates to apply online directly to Fund for Leaders to be considered for a full-tuition scholarship. These scholarships will cover the full cost of seminary tuition for the duration of coursework. Eligible candidates must have an offer of admission from one or more ELCA seminaries, be planning to enroll full time in fall 2021 and be in good standing in the ELCA candidacy process. Recipients of Fund for Leaders scholarships may apply their full-tuition scholarship to any ELCA seminary that has offered them admission.

The application period will be open from November 2020 to February 2021. If you know of promising and gifted people discerning a call to rostered ministry in the ELCA, please forward this email to them and encourage them to visit

ELCA.org/FundForLeaders today to learn more.

Check our website for specific dates and eligibility criteria.

By spreading the word, you will help ensure that future church leaders will be able to serve as the church needs and the Holy Spirit leads. Thank you!