

Message from Pastor J.T.

October 14, 2026

Pastor JT is spending some time with his family during his children's fall break from school, so we are sharing the latest message from the Bishop Curry of the ELCA:

Celebrating Our Diversity

Dear beloved children of God,

As a church, we collectively continue to celebrate the diversity with which God has created the world. Scripture tells us that, from the very beginning, we were made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). In the book of Acts, many were gathered in one place when the Holy Spirit came upon them. Each was given the power to witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:32-33). In 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, the human body serves as a metaphor, demonstrating that a healthy Christian community relies on the many distinct gifts and qualities of each unique member — emphasizing unity through continuing to be a connected church.

I am thankful to serve this church in the office of presiding bishop. I am also grateful for my experience as an activist and leader in communities and congregations that are at the margins. Whatever our role and wherever our place in the church, God calls us to develop trusting relationships with our neighbors. In the service of Affirmation of Baptism, the presiding minister asks, “Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism ... to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 236). Striving for justice involves learning about underlying causes of division and inequity. It is a commitment our church makes because of baptism.

Celebrating diversity and striving for equity, inclusion and accessibility for all reflect this baptismal call. The words “diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility” and the initialism “DEIA” mean different things to different people. For the ELCA, as church together, these terms reflect our “delight in the fact that the people called, gathered, and enlightened” by God represent such a wide array of identities, backgrounds and life stories (ELCA social statement *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*, 1993, p. 3). The terms remind us of the gospel vision of community, in which all are truly welcome. They are terms this church has chosen to include in its teachings and constitutions as reflections of our faith in God, who creates, redeems and sustains all people.

Everyone matters in this church. I have celebrated with synods and congregations as they build communities that reflect the people and neighborhoods around them. I have worshiped in places where many languages are spoken and people from different backgrounds feel welcome. Together we have expanded our understanding of what it means to be church through relationships with companion churches around the world and through relationships between congregations in rural, urban and suburban settings here in the United States. We are joined together through holy baptism, through which God calls us to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. “Diversity,” “equity,” “inclusion” and “accessibility” are reflections of justice when it is fulfilled. Like many saints before us have said, justice is the form love takes in society.

The road is long, but we go forth in faith, trusting in the risen Christ and inspired by one another for the work ahead. Let us continue in the covenant God has made with us, to serve all people in love.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yehiel Curry', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America