



# Rocky Mountain Synod

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

April 1, 2020

Beloved in the Rocky Mountain Synod,

ELCA Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, said at our Churchwide Assembly in August: “We are not a dying church. We are a changing church.” The threat of COVID-19 has pushed the church into an unsettling place of change over the last several weeks. Suddenly, we understand that “church” does not mean “building.” It means people. And we are connecting in ways never before imagined.

Because of COVID-19, we are grieving what we treasure most as church: gathering together as the embodied people of God, who are the hands and feet and voices of Christ, made alive in the world. We long for the time when we can gather together again to sing, and to pray, and to embrace as people who genuinely greet one another with the peace and presence of Christ.

Yet this we already know: that the church remains vital and alive, even while our buildings are silent. We are, all the more, *better together*.

As people of faith, what might it mean to practice generosity in the midst of a pandemic? As a synod team, we acknowledge that the uncertainty of this time may impact your household’s capacity to give financially to your congregation. We also know the ministries in our synod will continue and need our continued support. Our Rocky Mountain Synod Executive Committee has made a commitment to continuing their generosity through regular giving to their congregation. Monetary giving is one of many ways to practice generosity. Prayer, spiritual practice, and extending care to others in appropriate ways are all important expressions of faithful stewardship.

Indeed, ministry is continuing through your congregation in spite of the challenges posed by COVID-19. Your church and synod leaders are acting in faithful, innovative ways every day as they discern how best to support the needs of the community and the wider world. Your financial gifts make possible the important work that will continue happening through all three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (congregations, synods and churchwide) as well as through an abundance of ministry partners. The Gospel is still being proclaimed in many and various ways during this pandemic.

### **Christ's Church, Better Together**

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*A Reconciling in Christ synod*

Please identify one of the following means through which you can facilitate continued generosity at any level in your ministry context.

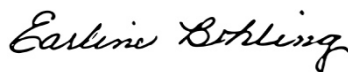
1. Mail a check to your congregation on a consistent basis.
2. Contact your bank to set-up automatic financial giving that comes out of your banking account and is mailed to your congregation on a regular basis.
3. Connect with your church leaders and request that online giving be an option. We as the ELCA have [partnerships with both Vanco and Tithe.ly](#), who both offer special rates for ELCA ministries.

We do not know how long the threat of COVID-19 will interfere with our ability to gather together in person. But we do know that Christ is present nevertheless: yesterday, today, and forever. As you live out these challenging times that are marked by grief for what has been, be gentle with yourself as you embrace the gifts of grace and gratitude that are already ours.

In faith,



The Rev. Jim Gonia  
Rocky Mountain Synod Bishop



Earline Bohling  
Rocky Mountain Synod Vice President

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