



Dear colleague in ministry,

On **Sunday, Sept. 11, 2016**, congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will again join together for "**God's work. Our hands.**" **Sunday**. Whether we clean parks and roadways, visit the elderly and homebound or bake cookies and write thank you notes for first responders, this dedicated day of service celebrates the work you do every day and gives us the opportunity to share God's love with all people.

The 2016 "**God's work. Our hands.**" **Sunday** will also mark the 15-year anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States.

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director for ELCA Domestic Mission and former bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan New York Synod at the time of Sept. 11, shares the story of an ELCA pastor who served as a fire department chaplain.

"When the first plane hit the first tower he rushed across the Brooklyn Bridge to the site where firefighters were mustering," said Bouman. "He was asked to anoint the heads of firefighters with oil with the sign of the cross, for those who wanted this baptismal remembrance. They then rushed into the building. Survivors making their way down the smoky stairways remembered those brave rescuers, heads glistening with oily crosses, rushing to rescue, baptized for this moment."

Reflecting on this, ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton said, "In baptism we have been marked with the cross. We are the ones who go into the broken places of the world. We are the ones who, by showing up on 'God's work. Our hands.' Sunday, shine the light of the cross in our communities."

Now is a good time to begin exploring opportunities for your congregation to participate in "**God's work. Our hands.**" **Sunday**.

As you begin making plans for the day of service, we ask that you register your congregation. This will help us share and tell stories about the good work that we do together. [Click here to register.](#)

Visit ELCA.org/dayofservice where you will find helpful resources for your planning for 2016. This includes an updated study guide designed for congregations to discuss what it means to serve with a joyful heart. You'll also find the 2016 version of the toolkit, bulletin inserts, posters and more. A new worship resource will be available later this spring.

[Old Lutheran](#) will once again have T-shirts available for purchase. The bright-yellow shirts provide a wonderful visual impact across the ELCA. The deadline for ordering your congregation's personalized T-shirt with Old Lutheran is Aug. 19.

If it's not possible for your congregation to participate on Sept. 11, please consider another day for your service activities.

Following the 2015 dedicated day of service, the Rev. Jason Adams, pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church in Las Vegas, described what the day meant for his congregation. "Of course, in our vocations we are serving neighbors every day, but when we are serving together, we are growing together as the people of God."

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday celebrates who we are as the ELCA – one church, freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor. We look forward to doing this work together again this year.

God's peace,



Christina Jackson-Skelton
Executive Director, Mission Advancement
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Watch how some members shared God's love with their neighbors during the 2015 day of service.



St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Whittier, Calif.



Bethel Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.