



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Bishop Eaton's statement on the Dakota Access Pipeline

As church together, we have been watching the situation regarding the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Several ELCA members have been present on the ground with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The ELCA American Indian Alaska Native Lutheran Association has issued a statement as have other local ELCA congregations. We have been in conversation with local synod bishops.

We recognize the complexity and the deeply personal significance of what is at stake for those living in the area. We have been looking at the situation in light of the Churchwide Assembly action to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, and our church's long-standing concern for respecting the sovereignty of tribal nations.

We welcome the joint statement from the U.S. Departments of Justice, the Army and the Interior issued on September 9, 2016. We are particularly heartened by the tenor of the statement from the departments and we affirm its concern that it is now "incumbent on all of us to develop a path forward that serves the broadest public interest."

The statement also read, "We appreciate the District Court's opinion on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act. However, important issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and other tribal nations and their members regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline specifically, and pipeline-related decision-making generally, remain."

I recognize there are people of deep faith on all sides of this issue with varied perspectives and I pray that we use this time wisely. We need to be in prayer, to express solidarity and to build relationships. We also need to take seriously the concerns of the American Indian community, initiate and/or continue local efforts to strengthen and expand partnerships, and deepen cross-cultural understanding.

Here is a link to the joint statement: U.S. Departments of Justice, the Army and the Interior joint statement: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/joint-statement-department-justice-department-army-and-department-interior-regarding-standing>.

In God's peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

Elizabeth A. Eaton
ELCA Presiding Bishop