

A letter from the presiding bishop

**I will pour out my spirit
on all flesh; your sons
and your daughters shall
prophesy.**
(Joel 2:28a)

Dear Friends in Christ,

The ELCA recognizes the God-given dignity of all people and is committed to the full and equitable participation of women and men in church and society. God rejoices – and the world is blessed – when all have opportunities to flourish and freely share their gifts for the common good.

I am heartened that we as a church body are engaged in a concerted discussion around women and justice in church and society. The 2009 Churchwide Assembly authorized a social statement process, and the work will continue long after a social statement is brought to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Right now, however, are the years for focused conversations.

Whatever your experiences and perspectives, you are invited to use this study, “Faith, Sexism, Justice: Conversations toward a Social Statement.” It is a call to hear new things and to explore together how matters of justice and sexism intersect with faith. I encourage its widespread use across our church – in congregations, conferences, circles, social ministry organizations, campus ministries, youth gatherings, homes and classrooms. Your participation in this process is important because the feedback you share (due by Aug. 31, 2017) will help the task force continue to think together with our whole church when they sit down to shape the first draft of a social statement.

As a pastor who has served in congregations and in synodical leadership, I am quite aware that it can be challenging to have conversations on these complex topics that are so close to our homes, congregations and communities. I believe the task force has produced a study for these conversations that you will find spiritually enriching, engaging, respectful, clear and well-balanced.

As people of God, set free in Christ and brought together in loving community, we are called to work for justice and the flourishing of all God’s people. We can be confident that the Holy Spirit will faithfully lead us through this conversation. God bless you as you join in.

In God’s grace,



Elizabeth A. Eaton
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