



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## **An open letter to the Muslim American community**

Dec. 11, 2015

Dear Muslim Sisters and Brothers,

Grace and peace to you. I am writing on behalf of many Christians in this country who wish to share a word of solidarity, love and hope with you in these difficult days.

In this season of Advent, we, your Christian neighbors, are preparing to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who commanded that "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart ... [and] you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31, NRSV).

In our love for you, our Muslim neighbors, we are distressed by the ways in which you are being forced to bear the fears held by many in our nation. Therefore, we renew our commitment to find even more effective ways to protect and defend you from words and actions that assault your safety and well-being. We believe God calls us to resist what is divisive, discriminatory, xenophobic, racist or violent, and we want you to look to us as allies and friends.

The global refugee and migrant crisis and the acts of terror committed in this country and around the world are challenges that demand our collective efforts and our common prayers. Therefore, we will seek to stand shoulder to shoulder with you as agents of peace, justice, understanding, welcome and reconciliation for the sake of the world that God so loves.

In this holy season, when we anticipate the light that the darkness cannot overcome (John 1:5, NRSV), we are reminded of God's gift of life abundant for all. Together with you, we are committed to building a stronger society based on the dignity of each human being, the value of diversity, the holiness of creation and the common good. We pledge our partnership and invite our local communities into continued dialogue and engagement to this end.

In peace,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America