



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

January 2020

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult (Psalm 46:1-3).*

On Jan. 7, a magnitude 6.4 earthquake struck Puerto Rico. Aftershocks, some as high as magnitude 5.9, have continued to occur. The island is still trying to rebuild after the devastation of Hurricane Maria in 2017. The people of Puerto Rico are strong and resilient. Even so, two natural disasters of this magnitude can stretch the strongest to the limit.

The Rev. Idalia Negrón-Caamaño, bishop of the Caribbean Synod, reports that there is very little damage to the ELCA congregations. However, in the southern part of the island thousands of people are now homeless and some are still sleeping on the streets for fear of more structural damage from the aftershocks.

The Caribbean Synod and Lutheran Social Services of Puerto Rico are working alongside the Episcopal Diocese of Puerto Rico to bring relief to those hardest hit by the earthquake. We thank God for the courage and compassion of Bishop Negrón-Caamaño and her people — many of whom are still rebuilding after Hurricane Maria — as they aid their neighbors in need.

Throughout these days Bishop Negrón-Caamaño says she has been sustained by the words of Psalm 46, especially verse 10, in which God reminds us of God's faithfulness: "Be still, and know that I am God!" That is God's promise to us. May God continue to bring comfort and strength to the people of Puerto Rico.

Peace,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop