



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

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's 2020 Easter Message

I want us to consider that first Easter. There were no joyful celebrations or churches packed with parishioners. Instead there was fear and anxiety and crushing disappointment. They had seen their hope crucified. They had seen Jesus laid in the tomb, and now, when the women came, they were ready to prepare a body for death, for burial. We know that those first Christians couldn't understand what really had happened, how the world had changed utterly and completely. We're living in a time now when Easter celebrations will not be the same as they have been, when they might be more muted, when, in fact, we'll even long for each other more because we're physically distanced from each other. In Illinois, the CDC has determined that the peak of the coronavirus will happen on April 12. That's Easter. It's not lost on me that the forces of death are raising their strength and their head at the very moment when Jesus was raised from the dead. I think on this Easter, we can sing our alleluias nevertheless. We might be a little tentative at first, the way the women were when they came to the tomb or the disciples who were locked in the upper room. There might be a growing hope and strength in our alleluia as we realize that life is continuing and that God has a future for us. There'll be defiance in our alleluias as we take a look at death and all those deadly forces and say, "You will not win." And finally, there will be joy, the everlasting joy that God loves us completely and has brought us into eternal life. So Christ is risen, alleluia.