



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

A pastoral word on the verdict of Derek Chauvin's trial

The trial of Derek Chauvin, the former Minnesota police officer charged with the killing of George Floyd, has riveted our national attention these past weeks, and now a verdict has been reached. Together with people around the world, we have anticipated the jury's decision with troubled hearts. As members of the community of Jesus, we affirm that "if one member suffers, all suffer together with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26, NRSV).

No jury verdict can erase the pain of the Floyd family, and we share our condolences and pray for ongoing comfort in their suffering and for all whose lives have been touched by this tragedy. As people of the cross, we believe in the hope of the resurrection. Yet we cannot rush to Easter Sunday without reflecting on the oppression of Good Friday.

The murder of George Floyd is one of the many examples of the ongoing abuse of police authority. The extrajudicial killings of Brown and Black bodies must stop.

We recommit ourselves as a church to continue to fight against the sin of racism and to hold accountable unjust systems and structures that perpetuate injustices, including our own. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." The work of confronting these injustices is long overdue.

Let us together in our congregations and communities discern how we are being called in this moment to live out our baptismal promise to serve all people and strive for justice and peace.

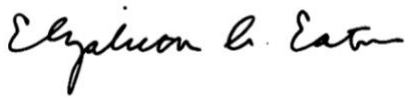
For further discussion, you can read the following sections from ELCA social statements and policy:

The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries, [elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Criminal-Justice](https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Criminal-Justice) (pages 9 and 13).

Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture, [elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Race-Ethnicity-and-Culture](https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Race-Ethnicity-and-Culture) (pages 4 and 5).

Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent, [Slavery Apology Explanation.pdf \(elca.org\)](https://www.elca.org/Slavery-Apology-Explanation.pdf) (page 2).

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The script is cursive and elegant, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

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