



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

Healing Can't Begin Until Racism Is Recognized
ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton Weekly Video Message
Jan. 15, 2021

January 15th is the actual date of the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. And Monday our country will take a day of observance, of celebration and, I think also, of reflection.

I remember that almost immediately after the assassination of Dr. King, people were calling for healing and unity and reconciliation. And I'm hearing those same cries now, after the terrible events of the mob storming the Capitol. "Healing ... we need healing and unity and reconciliation." No, I think we need to take a season to sit with this. Unless an infection is diagnosed, named and treated, healing cannot begin.

Now we've come again to a time that has got the entire country's attention, where we should be able to name, diagnose and begin to treat the infection that is racism. And to work on this together.

Dr. King wrote, "We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

And St. Paul wrote, "So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another."

These are not words meant to soothe or smooth over the reality of the work that we have to do in this country. They are words of challenge, and they are also words of truth.

We are all in this together. We can't ignore it. We can't dismiss any part of our population, but we may—and with God's help and the work of the Spirit—we may begin to take a close look at ourselves and then work toward the diagnosis, naming and healing of the infection.

Be well, dear Church.