



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

God is Our Refuge and Our Strength
ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton Weekly Video Message
July 24, 2020

Martin Luther based his famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress" on the words of Psalm 46, which says, 'God is a 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.'

Luther lived in uncertain and difficult times. The bubonic plague had returned to Wittenberg, the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe were at war with each other. Luther himself was a wanted outlaw. Yet, he drew strength and courage from the words of this psalm, and we can too.

Two things: God is our refuge and all the fear that we are experiencing now, the anger, the uncertainty, even the grief, all of that is safe to be expressed and lived within the refuge of God. And God is our strength, stronger than any force on earth or beyond, and that we understand that love is stronger than hate, life is stronger than death. We, too, are living in challenging times. We live in the middle of a pandemic, the COVID virus, but we also live in a pandemic of continued racial injustice.

Whatever we're feeling, whatever's going on, fear and joy, life and death, we have the promise of a God who is steadfast and is our refuge and strength.

This is a prayer from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

Let us pray: Oh God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, Amen.

Be well, dear church.