



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

October 2019

Pastoral Message to ELCA members:

Accompanying the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong,
Hong Kong Lutheran Federation,
Hong Kong Christian Council
and all those living in Hong Kong

We, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, have witnessed protest demonstrations in Hong Kong in response to several decisions by the local authorities, together with ongoing concerns about the future of the territory. These include the introduction of a controversial extradition bill and the subsequent announcement that it will be withdrawn, and then several new regulations in response to the demonstrations during the intervening period which restrict civil liberties. Beyond this, there remain fears about their implications for rights, liberties and governance. The demonstrations which initially were very peaceful, have resulted in engagement with local police and recently have sometimes resulted in violent confrontations.

Members of the Christian community in Hong Kong hold varying views on the situation; some support the demonstrators while others oppose their activities.

I have sent a [message](#) to the churches and other people there in recent days.

Last month, the 72 Protestant and Catholic churches all over Hong Kong came together for an event, "Pray for reconciliation, healing, and a way out for Hong Kong." As the people of Hong Kong discern their future, I commend their Prayer of Commitment to members of our church. We pledge our solidarity with them in this time of turmoil and join in prayer for a peaceful resolution of this crisis.

Prayer of Commitment

Introduction: In Hong Kong, where social turmoil has brought rapid changes, we rely on the unchanging Triune God to make a commitment together:

Leader: We are baptized into Christ by faith and united in Him regardless of race, gender or status (Gal. 3:28).

Response: We are determined to be humble, gentle, patient, and tolerant, to be peaceful, to maintain the unity of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:2). We refuse to let political disputes or any differences to divide the body of Christ.

Leader: Over the past three months, many people in body and spirit, as well as the entire society, have been deeply traumatized. For this, we must confess our sins and pray for one another (James 5:16).

Response: We are determined to be diligent to follow Jesus Christ to heal the wounded physically and spiritually, and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to resist the power of evil (Eph. 6:12).

Leader: Everyone is created in the image of God. Each person's dignity must be respected.

Response: We are determined not to regard people as inhuman. We reject all words and deeds that degrade human dignity. We win through the Lord without hatred. We overcome evil with good (Romans 12:17).

Leader: The Lord commands us to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphans, and plead for the widow (Isaiah 1:17).

Response: We strive to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and love others as ourselves. We are determined to help those who are oppressed, regardless of political views; to defend the rights and interests of the minority groups, no matter the difference stances; to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God.

Leader: Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). The Lord hates lies and loves honesty (Proverbs 12:22; Psalm 5:6).

Response: We strive to witness to and practice the truth, to seek and defend the truth. We are determined never to confuse right and wrong, but to be blameless and to do no harm.

Leader: In the face of the current political stalemate in Hong Kong, violence has been spreading and people are confused and fearful about their future. But we still believe that the Lord is in charge of history, and we are convinced that the Kingdom of Heaven will be fully realized.

Response: We are determined, no matter what the situation, to hold fast to our conviction that love and faithfulness will prevail overall. We will not be moved because we know that no matter what happens, nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

Both: Amen

God's peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop, ELCA