



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

Evangelism

The simple act of sharing the good news of God's love in Jesus.

Building a Culture of Evangelism in Your Congregation

Who is Jesus? There was a time that this would have been an unheard-of question, but today it is normative for many. What would your life be like today if no one had introduced you to Jesus? What would be missing? Comfort? Fulfillment? Wholeness? Blessings? Assurance? Peace? Hope? Love?

When we choose *not* to share our faith, we deprive others of experiencing those things that have become so critical in our lives. **Evangelism is not an optional enterprise for the church.** It is *not* a holy recruitment effort to get more people in the pews. It is the core calling of the church – “**Go**, and tell what you have seen and heard.”

Evangelism isn't focused on the needs and well-being of the church; it is focused on the needs and well-being of the world. This concern for the world begins with a concern for the community immediately surrounding your congregation.

More than ever, our communities need to hear the Good News of Jesus. More than ever, our communities need to encounter the crucified and risen Christ. For those who are not a part of a faith community, that encounter may well come through us. More than ever, our communities need what we have to offer. Let us find creative ways to share the riches of God's grace!

Where do we begin?

Prayer

- + Include in the prayers of the church a petition for God to reveal and bring into the lives of the congregation those who need to encounter Jesus.
- + Pray for the congregation to receive a spirit of courage to share the Good News.
- + Pray for members of the congregation, that they might be presented with opportunities to share their stories of God's presence in their lives.
- + Pray for discernment as the congregation moves forward in its effort to become more focused on sharing God's grace, mercy and love with those who are not members.
- + Regularly include in the prayers of the church petitions for the concerns of the community immediately surrounding the congregation.

Ask Good Questions

- + Where is God calling this congregation to be more fully present in the world?
- + Where is this congregation already engaged in the task of evangelism and outreach?
- + What is God calling you to do/be in this work of evangelism?
- + Who are our neighbors and what would the good news of Jesus look like for them?
- + How do our efforts connect with the ministry of Jesus for the sake of the world today?
- + What is the role of technology in our evangelism efforts?
- + What other questions should we be asking?

Listen

- + How is God calling this congregation to be transformed?
- + Where is the Spirit leading this congregation to become?
- + Which neighbors, community leaders, and friends of the congregation could you listen to in order to hear the real challenges and questions that are “out there”?

Congregational Culture Change

- + Make the sharing of faith stories an integral part of congregational activities.
See the downloadable resource entitled “Faith Stories – Creating Opportunities to Share Your Faith” at elca.org/evangelism
- + Engage a small team from your congregation to be a “community listening team,” identifying and meeting with various community leaders to listen to what they experience as the challenges and opportunities that exist in your community. Consider inviting this team to regularly report to the church council about what they are hearing, and what they think God might be nudging the congregation to consider as a result.
- + Identify members of the congregation who have a strong faith and the willingness to share their experience of God’s grace in their lives, and give them the opportunity to do that. Consider occasional “faith story” moments in worship, Bible study, or other activities. Consider inviting these individuals to share their stories via brief video in social media posts put out by the congregation. Make sure each faith story social media post also includes a simple question, inviting those who watch to post their reflections as well.
- + Pay attention to the language used about church activities. Practice talking about what God is doing through the congregation, not what the congregation is doing.