



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Dear Church,

Through full communion, we have grown in unity and fellowship over the past decade with the United Methodist Church (UMC). We are receiving and sharing gifts, strengthening the body of Christ, and deepening mission and ministry for the sake of the world.

Last week, in a flurry of misleading headlines, many of us read that the United Methodist Church had split. *This is not, in fact, what happened.* On Jan. 3, it was [announced](#) that an ideologically diverse group of leaders collaborated in a mediation process resulting in their unanimous support for a proposed agreement. If adopted, the [Protocol of Reconciliation and Grace through Separation](#) would result in the separation of the United Methodist Church. At this point, it still needs to come through the appropriate legislative mechanisms in order to be deliberated by the UMC General Conference in May. The proposed agreement is just that at this time.

Many of you may be pondering the good Lutheran question: What does this mean? For the UMC? For our full communion partnership? It is simply too soon to have clarity on those questions. I assure you that there are leaders, both ELCA and UMC, who are carefully and faithfully tending to these questions. My staff colleagues and I are in regular conversation with our counterparts. As actual decisions are made by the General Conference and details become clearer, we will share information and seek to interpret it.

For now, I invite your continued prayers for, and accompaniment with, our full communion partners. Reach out to your neighbors and let them know that you are walking with them and praying for them, for the unity of Christ's church, and for God's justice and peace for all people and creation. This is a time for deepening our commitments to the relationships at the very heart of our bond as siblings united in Christ.

In Christ,

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

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About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.5 million members in more than 9,100 worshipping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through

faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA's roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.

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