



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

Living in charged times

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton Weekly Video Message

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It seems to me lately that we are living in particularly charged times. When people feel stressed by the pandemic, by the lockdown, by our never-ending election cycle, by the evidence of racial inequity in our country, it just gets to be too much. And so, sadly, we start to lash out at one another. In fact, I have had probably very nice people say to me that I should do things to myself that are anatomically impossible.

We should remember Luther's explanation of the Eighth Commandment: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. What does this mean? We are to fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead, we are to come to their defense, speak well of them and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.

So, I think the next time I am tempted to lash out or I am tempted to ascribe motive to someone I haven't even seen, [or have] just seen over Twitter, [I will]—and maybe all of us can—remember these words that St. Paul wrote to the Philippians: “Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Be well, dear church.