



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

March 24, 2026

Dear church,

It is hard to avoid the crushing news of the headlines and what they mean for individuals every day. Today, I am writing specifically to address the sexual and gender-based violence that is all too familiar to many of us. I know many of you who are survivors live with this trauma and that the news cycle of these stories can push you deeper into despair and anxiety. I want you to know that I hear you. I see you.

I can only imagine what you are feeling. I understand that the trauma of sexual and gender-based violence goes deep. This church stands with you to say that all forms of sexual and gender-based violence are wrong. At their roots, these forms of violence are dehumanizing misuses of power.

No one deserves this evil. All people are made in God's own image. The abusive actions of others cannot change this truth.

As the psalmist wrote:

"For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well" (Psalm 139:13-14).

All people bear the image of God. It is my prayer that those who have been abused will know the healing power of God's presence. It is my prayer that those who have wielded power to abuse another will come to know the gravity of their actions and, through the Spirit's power, seek repentance and reparations wherever possible.

As a church, we must continue to seek the welfare of all people for the sake of the abundant life Jesus came to give (John 10:10). We continue to, in the words of the Lord's Prayer, seek the reign of God "on earth as in heaven."

In Christ,

The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

To learn more about the ELCA's teaching on gender-based violence and steps that ELCA synods are taking to prevent abuse and support survivors, see the resources below.

- [ELCA social message on "Gender-based Violence"](#) (including Spanish translation and study guide)
- [ELCA social message on "Commercial Sexual Exploitation"](#)
- [ELCA social message on "Child Protection"](#)
- [ELCA domestic violence resources](#), including a study guide on resources for ministry sites
- Each ELCA synod provides boundaries training for its rostered ministers. Contact your synod office for details: [Sexual Boundary Violations report](#)
- [Sexual Boundary Violations synod assessment tool](#)
- If you or a loved one are experiencing violence or threats of violence, this [resource provides helpline phone numbers](#)