

# “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday Toolkit

Sept. 13 | 2020



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



# INTRODUCTION

*Together* in Jesus Christ we are  
freed by grace to live faithfully,  
witness boldly and serve joyfully.  
#GodsWorkOurHands

## What is “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday?

Scheduled for Sept. 13, 2020, “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) – one church, freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor.

This year our church – and our world – are living through the COVID-19 pandemic. Physical distancing has forced congregations to cancel in-person worship and move to virtual services. We miss gathering with family and friends to share God’s love in person.

But amid this devastating situation we continue to be **church together**. Throughout the ELCA we are witnessing the love and concern God’s people have for one another. During this time, our congregations continue to support ministries that assist vulnerable people in their communities.

These acts of service allow us to explore one of our most basic Lutheran convictions: *All of life in Jesus Christ – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God’s grace.*

On “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday we come together to restore and reconcile our communities. **You do this kind of work every day** –loving your neighbors and making your community a better place.

Mark your congregation’s calendar for **Sunday, Sept. 13**. If your congregation cannot participate on Sept. 13, please find another time that works best.



## “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday — We are church together

As Ephesians 2:8-10 reminds us, God has created us by grace to live in union with Jesus Christ and has prepared us to live faithful, fruitful lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus Christ, God has reconciled us to God and to each other. As we gather around word and sacraments, this life in Christ defines, shapes and guides us as a community of faith, the church. By God’s grace we can and do live confidently and generously in this community of faith and in service of others.

ELCA vital congregations work to strengthen their relationships with God, nurture relationships with each other and create a strong presence with their communities. **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday** is one way for congregations to build on these connections.

Service opportunities are endless, so ELCA members and congregations should research service opportunities that make sense for each congregation and its capacity. The idea is to deepen the members’ experience in their community and enable congregations to play a critical part in addressing community needs.

As you explore service opportunities, consider partnering with other congregations in your region or synod. These partnerships may broaden the scope of your service project and nurture synodical connections.

We are church together for the sake of the world, and the ELCA is committed to fostering unity among all God’s children. One way to live out this commitment is to develop ecumenical and interreligious relationships in your community. **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday** offers a unique opportunity to cultivate these relationships. Inviting other churches and religious groups to join in your day of service can lead to more activities together throughout the year.

*The partnerships you develop with other congregations, your synod and your interreligious neighbors can deepen your relationship with God, with others in your congregation and with your community.*

The service day should not be seen as replacing worship. You are encouraged to host your service event after worship, or you and your congregation can arrange for a brief worship service at the site you’re serving and welcome others to worship with you. Consider partnering with other ELCA congregations in your area! The possibilities are endless.



# I. ORGANIZE

As an ELCA congregation, you already have valuable connections in your community and experience serving your neighbors. Perhaps you already organize an annual clothing drive or host a community meal. Maybe your congregation has a quilting ministry that makes warm blankets for those experiencing homelessness or partners with a Lutheran social service organization in the community or state. Has your congregation collaborated with another congregation or participated in interreligious activities within the community?

Whatever the case may be, before you begin to plan your event, consider what gifts and tools your congregation already has and what relationships have already been cultivated.

## TO START

Bring together those people in the congregation who can help make your dedicated day of service happen. Does your congregation have a:

- youth group?
- worship team?
- health team or parish nurse?
- small-group fellowship and group leaders?
- social ministry, or hunger-and-justice team members?
- a men's group or a chapter of Women of the ELCA?

Brainstorm about what works best for your congregation. What kinds of outreach, evangelism or mission work do these groups already do? What ecumenical or interreligious partnerships already exist for your congregation? Pass out 3-by-5-inch cards to the congregation and invite members to write down organizations, agencies or ministries with which they're connected. This will help leaders identify those organizations and agencies that welcome volunteers.

Is your congregation large enough that each group should have a separate project? If so, how many projects would be appropriate?


## How to use this toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan your **"God's work. Our hands." Sunday**.

Each section contains checklists, examples and discussion questions to help you best utilize your congregation's gifts, talents and ministries, so that you spend Sept. 13 working together in the way that makes the most sense for you.

This designated day of service extends the important ministry your congregation already does. Use this toolkit to find your own take on "God's work. Our hands." Sunday, get creative about serving your neighbors and celebrate what we have accomplished and will continue to do together.

What started as a one-day event has expanded throughout the church year, with members dressed in yellow "God's work. Our hands." T-shirts helping their neighbors and serving those in need.



Also, consider the abilities of your members. What kinds of service projects are inclusive? Consider service opportunities that take into consideration people of different ages and abilities.

Invite the children of your congregation to get involved. A Sunday school class can reach out to other children in the community or in congregations in other cities. Encourage a class to start a “pen pal” relationship with another Sunday school class in a different location and share what they love about their respective congregations and communities.

- Designate leaders to plan and organize your service project.
- Communicate with the congregation about the day of service. Additional resources to help promote your day are available at [ELCA.org/DayOfService](https://www.elca.org/DayOfService).
- Document your day on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.
- Reach out to other ELCA congregations in your area. Can you partner with them?

## Ideas that worked

For the second year in a row, Immanuel Lutheran Church in Killeen, Texas, chose Friends in Crisis homeless shelter as its project.

Several weeks before the day of service, the congregation started collecting items from the center’s wish list. The center had three major needs – detergent, bleach and deodorant. As the donations began piling up, a member of the congregation made regular deliveries to the shelter. Immanuel’s chapter of Women of the ELCA purchased additional items.

On the designated day of service, 47 volunteers wearing yellow “God’s work. Our hands.” T-shirts were commissioned during worship. At the shelter, volunteers assisted with daily house maintenance, sweeping, mopping, cleaning bathrooms and laundering bed linens to make up the shelter’s 80 beds.

## Order

Order “**God’s work. Our hands.**” Sunday T-shirts and other items from Old Lutheran! You can personalize your T-shirts with the name of your congregation. Shirts are available in English, Spanish or Arabic. Visit [Old Lutheran](https://www.oldlutheran.com), email [customerservice@oldlutheran.com](mailto:customerservice@oldlutheran.com) or place a toll-free call (United States only) to 877-653-5884.

Immanuel's confirmation class and youth group assembled the hygiene bags given out to first-time clients of the shelter. The youth also created single-load detergent bags for clients to use in laundering their clothes at the center.

The volunteers brought homemade desserts from members of the congregation to share at the center.

Reflecting on the day of service, Phyllis Sawyer, Immanuel's fellowship director, said, "We've been serving the community now for 129 years – and I believe we are doing God's work here in Killeen, Texas."

## Inter-religious partnerships

Members of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Mercer Island, Wash., spent the afternoon of Sunday, Sept. 11, 2016, with their Muslim and Jewish neighbors, cooking and serving a meal for more than 50 people who lived in a tent city on the grounds of Temple B'nai Torah in Bellevue. The tent cities move every 60 to 90 days and usually find a home on the grounds of a local church.

"We recognize when we are together in an interfaith event that we hold more in common than we do in differences," said Deanna Wildermuth, a pastor of Holy Trinity. "And especially in events like this – the prepping, sharing and eating of food unites us because it's common, even if we are cooking meals that aren't familiar to us."

For Kathy Fisher, the congregation's director of intergenerational ministry programs, "**God's work. Our hands.**" Sunday is not just a day. "It's something we are doing every day," she said. "We are representing who we are no matter where we go, whether we are Jewish, Lutheran or Muslim. The God that we worship expects us to take care of each other and to be around our fellow man and to help out."

## Questions for discussion

1. What service projects has your congregation undertaken in the past? What worked? What didn't? Why?
2. What gifts and talents in your congregation could be used in serving your community?
3. What partnerships do you already have with congregations and organizations in your community? Could any of these be built into your dedicated day of service?



## INCLUDE ADVOCACY IN YOUR DAY OF SERVICE

On “**God’s work. Our hands.**” Sunday, we put our faith in action – visible year-round and on this day as we respond to God calling us into the world to serve together.

Among our gifts of service that we dedicate to the glory of God, engaging in advocacy is a way to serve our neighbor. Through advocacy ministry, we form relationships with our policymakers and can stand up for policies that move us closer to a world that God envisions, where the health and safety of all people are prioritized. We advocate to end world hunger and stand up for policies that create opportunities to overcome poverty, promote peace and dignity, preserve God’s creation, and promote racial and gender justice.

### Making connections

Advocacy action is not dependent upon physical proximity. Should circumstances not allow for direct service activities, and to include members homebound for any number of reasons, advocacy action on your congregation’s day of service can include many participants in meaningful witness. It is a faithful way to serve our neighbors unencumbered by physical distancing.

Along with a direct service action, in accompaniment with community concerns at the forefront of your congregation’s awareness, and/or in amplification of a churchwide voice, our ELCA members can use advocacy in service to our neighbor on “**God’s work. Our hands.**” Sunday in many ways.

- Preparing nutritious food for a meal program? Clearing debris from a stream? Brightening the day of older adults at an assisted living center? Reflect on how policy intersects with the needs to which you are responding, such as food access, clean water protection and affordable care. Is there a policy consideration that could amplify your action in a systemic, long-lasting way?
- Have passionate congregation and community voices highlighted justice concerns where you are? Policy advocacy action may align with those concerns. State public policy offices and ELCA Advocacy national staff can help shape a policy-directed response.
- As affirmed by 2013 Churchwide Assembly action that launched the [ELCAvotes initiative](#), would your congregation like to act by engaging in local efforts to guarantee the right to vote to all citizens? Any participation by congregations in activities related to the electoral process must be strictly nonpartisan and abide by Internal Revenue Service guidelines. Find ideas in the [ELCA Advocacy Civic Engagement Guide](#) around our role as U.S. residents and as people of faith in ensuring that our election systems promote dignity and respect for all, such as sharing state voting regulations and hosting Get Out the Vote initiatives.
- Want to participate in a letter-writing campaign? The inequities that exist in our national and global health care systems have been tragically highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing ways that communities of color, immigrants and low-income communities have experienced the pandemic from unequal footing. Structural issues threaten us and our neighbors.

## Planning advocacy action

1. Determine the advocacy action(s) you will take on your **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday**. Collect informational materials and set up a table or booth to make it easy to participate.
2. Connect with a state public policy office in the ELCA Advocacy network, if your area has one, for guidance and help. A [map and contact list](#) are available on the ELCA website, and include offices in Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware/Maryland, Florida, Kansas, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin and states of the ELCA Southeastern Synod.


“Thank you, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania, for pointing Union Lutheran in York towards the excellent churchwide resources for ‘God’s work. Our hands.’ Sunday!” wrote the vicar of Union Lutheran Church in York, Pa. “Our letters on creation care and disaster relief [were] mailed this morning!”

3. Reach out to the ELCA Advocacy office at [washingtonoffice@ELCA.org](mailto:washingtonoffice@ELCA.org) to help you think about how you might conduct advocacy with a national scope around an issue with which you identify.
4. Craft your action with the help of ELCA Advocacy resources. Find suggestions for writing a letter to the editor, holding an in-district meeting with your member of Congress, working with the media and other tips at [ELCA.org/resources/advocacy](http://ELCA.org/resources/advocacy).


“I wasn’t sure how the advocacy letters would be received but was surprised and really pleased that we had a stack of letters to mail to the ELCA Advocacy office in Washington for distribution,” said the Rev. Brenda Martin of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Greenville, Pa. Martin also shared a conversation with a church member: “She said she’s been really upset about the divisiveness in the country, what’s happening in Washington, but doesn’t know what to do about it. So she’s feeling kind of frustrated and helpless. She appreciated that this was easy for her and helped her feel like she was contributing. She was really thankful she could take the letter template and add her own thoughts.”





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5. Utilize letter-writing templates to help you take action with other ELCA members to spotlight national attention on a just society that supports the health of all. Instructions and supportive resources can be found at [ELCA.org/resources/GWOH-Sunday](https://www.elca.org/resources/GWOH-Sunday). Bring your faith-based voice into our nation's conversation and policy decisions on this important issue.

“Participants stopped by our table prior to heading out to their hands-on activity. They became familiar with the issue, asked several questions and took the time to take action. Our group included about a half dozen young people,” said a volunteer staffing an advocacy table at St. James Lutheran Church in Gettysburg, Pa. “Several folks took materials along to share with others.”

6. Invite local lawmakers to your activity. In this moment and in the future, the invitation establishes awareness of your presence as faith-centered community partners.
  7. Take lots of pictures and tell your congregation's **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday** story! Share on social media and tag @ELCAadvocacy to help us connect.
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## II. PLAN

### Where do we start?

Now that you've spent some time organizing the leaders in your congregation, how do you decide what kind of service project you should tackle?

We are a visible church. Being a visible church expresses what the church has collectively said is important for our future:

*"A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world."* (Goal 4, ELCA Future Directions 2025)

How can your congregation become more visible in your community? What needs in your community and neighborhood can your congregation address? Who would be most helped by your service?

### Begin by listening to your community

Meet with organizations, congregations and social service providers with whom you already work. Let them know you're dedicating a day to serve and that you want to provide an opportunity for your congregation to give its time.

For example: In 2018, volunteers from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Somerville, N.J., joined together to help three social service organizations. Volunteers of all ages assembled tie blankets for a resource center that serves abused women and children. They filled backpacks with food for children in the county who may not have enough to eat on weekends. The volunteers also participated in the statewide program Stamp Out Despair by writing cards to detained immigrants and filling folders with stationery that detainees could use to communicate with family members in their home countries.

Perhaps there are organizations in your community with whom your entire congregation could partner for **"God's work. Our hands."** Sunday, making a more substantial impact than a few volunteers might.

Perhaps you can use **"God's work. Our hands."** Sunday to build new relationships in your community. Are there projects you've dreamed about but haven't found the time to pursue? Consider how activities might be broadened or continued throughout the year.

Still looking for an idea? Following are some success stories detailing the work of ELCA congregations and members across the country that has truly made a difference in the lives of their communities.



## III. SUCCESS STORIES

### Discovering connections

Elayne Werges, diaconal minister for Cross Roads Lutheran Parish (a four-congregation cooperative in the ELCA Northeastern Iowa Synod) said that **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday** has reminded her parish “that we are connected to a community outside of the four walls of the church building” and “that our call is to serve God and God’s people, especially those on the fringes, the hungry and the lost.”

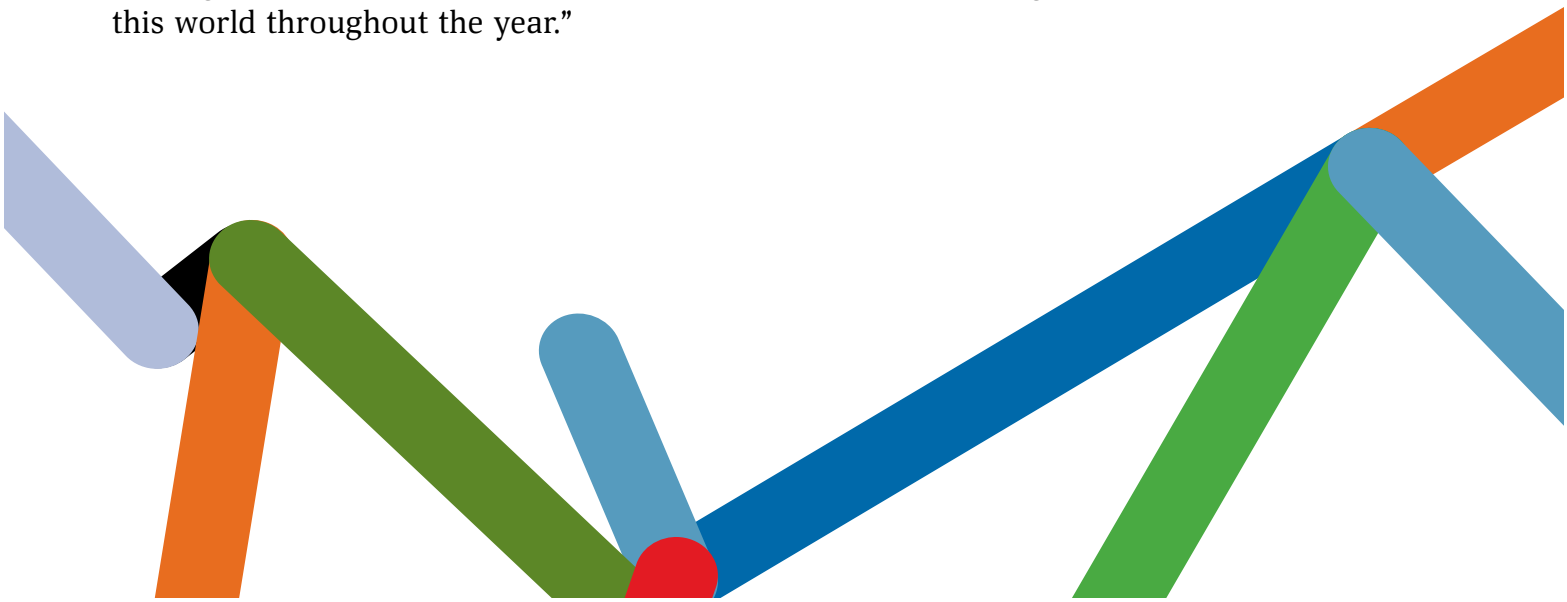
### God’s work, our hands from 4 years to 94 years.

Alyssa Weaver, a member of Peace Lutheran Church in Tomah, Wisc., describes its 2018 day of service:

“Peace Lutheran has been participating in “God’s Work. Our Hands.” every fall and spring since the fall of 2015 as a way to help our local community and remember that we are called to be God’s hands and feet in this world for our neighbors. We had approximately 60 members participate in projects – from some of our youngest members (4 years old) to our oldest member in her mid-90s.

“There were projects for everyone, including helping the local school district clear a trail through the woods at one of the elementary schools, stocking shelves at the local food pantry, assembling 105 ‘birthday bags’ for the food pantry, completing yard work for those in need and cutting quilt squares for Lutheran World Relief quilts.

“We ended our day with a potluck and fellowship together at the church that included our traditional and ‘famous to us’ Flip-Flop Chicken. We had a wonderful day growing with Christ, serving and loving as we were created in the image of God to do. Strengthened in God’s grace, Peace Lutheran Church looks forward to continuing to serve as God’s hands in this world throughout the year.”



## Serving our neighbors, sharing our lives

In 2018 more than 61 households from New Life Lutheran Church in Bolingbrook, Ill., participated in “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday. Volunteers donated items and helped with a variety of projects throughout the weekend. Almost 500 items were donated for birthday kits and goodie baskets for the community. In addition:

- Fifteen families received birthday kits from the food pantry to help celebrate a birthday in a fun and special way.
- Thirty baskets were delivered to the police station and five fire stations to show appreciation for those who serve and protect the community.
- More than 2,400 cans of vegetables were packed for shipping at the Northern Illinois Food Bank, which helps supply food pantries in northern Illinois.
- A car wash raised more than \$160 to benefit the DuPage Township Food Pantry. Three large bags of trash were collected from Knights of Columbus Park, contributing to a cleaner, healthier and more enjoyable community space.
- Three neighborhood homes had their overgrown yards mowed, weeds removed, bushes trimmed and kitchen cabinets replaced. The neighbors, who were unable to handle these projects due to health or finances, were grateful and relieved to have them completed.

### AS YOU PLAN YOUR DAY OF SERVICE, ASK YOURSELF: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do the service projects we’re planning include everyone? How can children take part? Older adults? People with disabilities?
2. Are the gifts and talents of the congregation represented?

Get creative with the project you plan. How can you use the musicians, artists, quilters, chefs, teachers and other members of your congregation to both make an impact and bring everyone together?







## FURTHER THOUGHT

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You know what is most needed in your community, so whatever projects you choose are sure to have an impact.

Be sure to remind one another what this day is all about. Consider beginning your service day with a prayer or blessing. A worship resource designed for “**God’s work. Our hands.**” Sunday is available at [ELCA.org/DayOfService](https://www.elca.org/DayOfService).

Think about the safety of your congregation. Many nonprofit organizations have volunteers sign a waiver before allowing them to take part in projects. Consider having your own waiver on hand for volunteers.

## Questions for discussion

1. What kind of impact would you like “**God’s work. Our hands.**” Sunday to have on your community?
  2. What kind of impact would you like “**God’s work. Our hands.**” Sunday to have on your congregation?
  3. What needs in your community would you like to see met on “**God’s work. Our hands.**” Sunday?
  4. What will you do to ensure that your entire congregation can take part?
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## IV. SERVE

You've organized your congregation, planned a service project in your community and created a checklist of activities.

Now it's time to get the word out to the media about your congregation's efforts and participation in "God's work. Our hands." Sunday. This media outreach includes both traditional outlets, (newspaper, radio, television), social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other media tools your congregation uses.

Other tools are available to help you get the word out to your community, inviting neighbors to participate in your day of service. Door hangers, posters and postcards are available at [ELCA.org/Resources/GWOH-Sunday](http://ELCA.org/Resources/GWOH-Sunday).

### STEP ONE: GEAR UP


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Designate someone in your congregation to be the media contact. This person will communicate specifics of the service project to the local media, send updated news releases and make follow-up calls to media. This person will also help prepare two to three congregation members or staffers for interviews.

The goal is to generate media interest in **"God's work. Our hands." Sunday** and your congregation's community service as part of a larger service project across the country involving thousands of ELCA members, all engaged in doing God's work with their hands.

We hope this media outreach will result in stories either before the project or on the day of service.

**"God's work. Our hands." Sunday** is an opportunity for your congregation to publicize its evangelical mission and witness in the community. How are your members making a difference in the world?



## STEP TWO: PREP

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Use a news release (template offered below and on the resource page) to share your congregation's plan with local media. Plan to distribute your news release about two weeks before your congregation's day of service.

What makes a good story? Elements to consider:

**Interviews** – Choose two or three people in your congregation who will take part in “**God’s work. Our hands.**” **Sunday**. Ideally, have members from different age groups, as well as someone from the congregation’s staff.

Prepare these people to speak about your event by answering the following questions:

**Who:** Who are you? Who from your organization is participating?

**What:** What is this event about? What is the anticipated impact in your community?

**Where:** Provide information on where service activities are taking place.

**When:** Sept. 13, 2020 (or another date that your congregation has identified)

**Most importantly WHY?:** Why is this event important for your congregation?

The people you pick should be well-versed in your congregation’s mission and our denomination as a whole. The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.5 million members in more than 9,100 worshiping communities across the 50 states and 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.

If your service project is happening at a location such as a shelter or food pantry, some recipients may be reluctant to speak to the media, so you may want to offer interviews with a volunteer or person connected to the organization. Make sure to arrange this in advance with the organization’s spokesperson so they’re prepared to speak to the media.

**Visuals** – Strong visuals can motivate media organizations to cover your event. Does your activity entail good visuals? If so, be sure to include vivid descriptions of what your members are planning for “**God’s work. Our hands.**” **Sunday**.

If your day of service will take place at a specific service location, what will be happening? Will members of your community be receiving goods or food? Will your church community be engaged with them? What is the activity?

**Details** – The more details you provide, the better your chances of stoking media interest in your story. Provide numbers: How many people do you anticipate will join in the day of service? Who will be affected by your congregation’s service?

# Template news release

## ELCA congregations work to improve communities

[Insert your city, state abbreviation] (ELCA) – [Insert your congregation’s name, city and state] is one of nearly 9,100 congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) participating in **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday** on Sept. 13. Across the country, thousands of ELCA members will be engaging in service work to make a positive change in their communities, build and deepen relationships, and share God’s love.

Members of [congregation’s name] are [describe your service projects and share the location of your service work (if it’s beyond your church building), the organizations and agencies you’re partnering with, and other details that communicate the positive impact on your community].

For more than 30 years, the ELCA has been deeply rooted in faith and in sharing its passion for making positive changes in the world. [Congregation’s name] joins with other ELCA congregations across the country to boldly participate in God’s work in the world – restoring and reconciling communities, and pursuing peace and justice.

“[Insert a quote or two from your members describing why the dedicated day of service is so important. Why are members excited about their participation?],” said [first and last name], a member of [congregation’s name].

More information about the ELCA is available at [ELCA.org](http://ELCA.org).

### About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

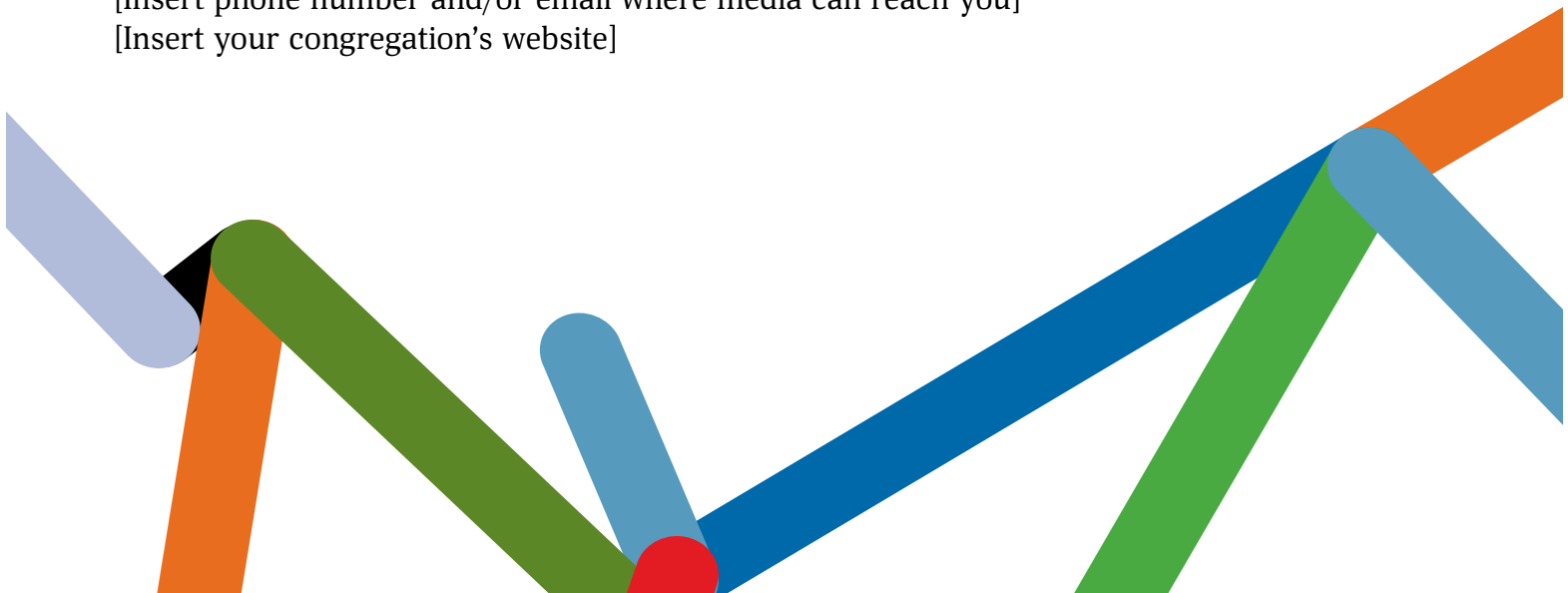
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For information contact:

[Insert name]

[Insert phone number and/or email where media can reach you]

[Insert your congregation’s website]







## STEP THREE: CONTACTING MEDIA, PITCHING YOUR STORY

Initial media contact should begin in August. You may not have all the specifics of your event, but you will have general information about **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday**. You can use a shortened version of the news release template for this initial media outreach. Most media professionals will love the idea that your congregation is participating in an event with such a wide outreach.

By the end of August, you should have more concrete details about your event, so begin pitching media more intensively.

Email the news release and make follow-up phone calls to each news desk to make sure it received your release and has included the event on its planning calendar.

Weekends tend to be slower in terms of news, so weekend news producers and editors look for interesting features for their papers and programs. Pitch the event to desk editors, reporters, producers – the more people in the newsroom who are aware of the story, the better.

For broadcast media, email your press release to the assignment-desk planning editor and the assignment desk. The planning editor will make sure the event is included in the main calendar of possible stories. Follow-up phone calls should be directed to the planning editor until a couple of days before the event; then, begin to contact the assignment desk to determine whether your activity is being considered.

Show producers decide which stories to air during their particular newscast, so be sure to contact the morning and evening news producers, to give your event a better chance of being covered.

Update the release as often as your plans develop and share this new information with the media.

Social media – Post **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday** event information as soon as you have a plan. Engage the community in your plans by asking for thoughts and suggestions as you develop the event. If you plan to partner with a service organization or community group, make sure you discuss social media plans with that group so you can share information about the project and share follow-up stories.

Update your pages as often as possible – you may want to ask some of the youth in your congregation to take on the social media updates.



## V. CELEBRATE

Plan a post-event activity!

Bring together your congregation and other groups that participated in **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday** to share in a gathering or meal.

Ask participants to share:

- photos,
- videos, and
- personal stories (What touched you about your service? Did you walk in someone else’s shoes today?)

Post these photos, videos and stories on your Facebook page and Twitter and Instagram accounts throughout the following weeks.

The ELCA churchwide organization would like to hear about your experiences. Please share with us your stories, your photos and the impact of your work. Send these to [livinglutheran@elca.org](mailto:livinglutheran@elca.org). When you send your stories and images, they may be shared on ELCA.org, in resource materials for the dedicated day of service and on the ELCA’s social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). Share and tag ELCA by using the hashtag #GodsWorkOurHands.

Please indicate if you do not want your stories and images to be used.

Thank you for using this toolkit! **“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday** is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.

*Go in peace. Serve the Lord!*



the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased in the UK (Mental Health Act 1983, 1990).

There is a growing awareness of the need to improve the lives of people with mental health problems. The Department of Health (1999) has set out a strategy for mental health care, which includes a commitment to improve the lives of people with mental health problems. This strategy is based on the following principles:

• People with mental health problems should be treated as individuals, with their own needs and wishes.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to participate in decisions about their care and treatment.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in the community, wherever possible.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to work, study, and take part in social activities.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in their own homes, wherever possible.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in their own communities, wherever possible.

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