



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



SERVICE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday

On Sunday, Sept. 11, congregations will observe "God's work. Our hands." Sunday. Our church – and our world – continue to live through the COVID-19 pandemic. Physical distancing has changed the way we worship and serve. But the need is great, and God's church is at work.

In this resource you'll find service project ideas and considerations for safely supporting your community in the time of a pandemic. Acts of service can happen anywhere: you might contribute to an online project from your home or volunteer in person keeping a safe physical distance and wearing a mask.

We encourage you to plan your day of service in compliance with local health guidelines. The safety and well-being of your volunteers and those you serve is a top priority. Follow all local guidance regarding physical distancing, mask-wearing, maximum gathering size and building capacity limits.

As church, we are guided by our life in Christ to share the love of Jesus and serve our neighbors – even if such acts of service look different during a pandemic.

Plan: Identify community needs and congregational resources

As an ELCA congregation, you already have valuable connections in your community and experience serving your neighbors. In planning your event, consider what gifts and tools your congregation already has and what relationships have already been cultivated. How might a parking lot or temporarily vacant church building be an asset? How can you support people who are experiencing food insecurity as a result of the pandemic?

Meet virtually with organizations, congregations, social service providers or interreligious partners 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.

This year, as you plan, consider especially those who are essential workers and health care providers, as well as those who are homebound, unemployed, isolated or grieving.



Service Projects at Home

Arrange for **meal deliveries** from restaurants. Place an order on behalf of anyone in your community who could use a meal, and coordinate with them ahead of time about what they would like from the menu. Be sure to inquire about allergies and dietary restrictions.

Write cards or letters, or send care packages. Every community has people who are always ready to serve. Express your gratitude for emergency workers, teachers, frontline health care workers, postal and delivery workers, those in the military, and all essential workers, remembering especially members of your congregation.

Start a pen pal program for older adults in nursing homes to connect or reconnect with members of your congregation.

Call or video-call seniors or those who are homebound or isolated. Include the whole family by doing things such as:

- Reading books to children (or having them read to you!)
- Playing “show and tell” with items nearby
- Playing an online game together
- Sharing favorite memories of your church community

Start a conversation partnership with someone learning English as a second language. Reach out to a local organization that supports immigrants and refugees, and offer to participate in video calls.

Pack hygiene kits for people experiencing homelessness.

Participate in a 24-hour prayer chain. Members of your congregation can sign up for 30-minute increments around the clock to pray for a world in need.

Assist with digital record-keeping. Use a scanner or smartphone to help digitize your congregation’s files or archival material.

Outdoor and Physically-distanced Service Projects

Identify members in your congregation or community who could use some help with yard work. Then roll up your sleeves and get to work with activities such as:

- Lawn mowing
- Window washing
- Raking
- Chopping wood
- Clearing brush
- Painting
- Weeding
- Planting
- Washing cars
- Clearing gutters

Pick up litter to care for creation and beautify your community.

Walk through a **prayer labyrinth** or consider adding one to the church grounds as an act of service.

Engage with ELCA Advocacy on a range of topics and initiatives:

- **Take action** on racial justice through items on the [ELCA Anti-Racism Pledge](#).
- **Visit the [ELCA Advocacy Action Center](#)** to send messages directly to your representatives on vital issues affecting our communities.
- **Find up-to-date actions** on the [ELCA Advocacy Blog](#).

Drive-through Service

Deliver meals or groceries to folks who aren't able to go out. Ask them to supply a list, or arrange to fetch a curbside-pickup order on their behalf. Drop off a home-cooked meal or bring over a takeout order. Be sure to inquire about allergies and dietary restrictions ahead of time.

Gather donations of food or hygiene products, using your congregation as a drop-off site. Check with local shelters or food banks about particular needs. Does the food bank have a truck? Inquire about arranging a time to park it at the church for easy donation collection and transit. Can members with large vehicles shuttle donations to a distribution site?

Create or order **lawn signs** with a positive message. Encourage community members to stop by the church, grab a sign and place it in their yard to inspire hope throughout your city. [Check out how Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Leesburg, Va., did this for "God's work. Our hands." Sunday 2017.](#)



Organize

Use digital tools to help you connect with others, then find a time to meet and facilitate sign-ups. Remember to consult local health guidelines about group size and indoor capacity limits.

- Use [Zoom](#) or [Google Meet](#) for video conferencing.
- A [Doodle](#) poll allows group members to find consensus on a meeting time.
- [SignUpGenius](#) allows people to sign up for a time slot on a schedule or register their participation.
- [Meal Train](#) can assist with organizing meal delivery.
- Continue to share your pictures and stories on social media with [#GodsWorkOurHands](#).

