

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America share with the Church of Jesus Christ in all times and places the calling to be peacemakers. ... We share with people everywhere hope for a more peaceful and just world. ...

The Church — A Community for Peace

In publicly gathering to proclaim and celebrate God's Gospel of peace, the Church uniquely contributes to earthly peace. Its most valuable mission for peace is to keep alive news of God's resolve for peace, declaring that all are responsible to God for earthly peace and announcing forgiveness, healing, and hope in the name of Jesus Christ. In praying for peace in the world, in interceding for all who suffer from war and injustice and for those in authority, the Church acts for peace.

... Where the followers of Jesus **refuse to repay evil with evil** but turn the other cheek and go the extra mile (Matthew 5:38-42), where in their life together Christians' creative, nonviolent responses to hostile acts open up possibilities for reconciliation, the Church contributes to earthly peace. Where churches in different countries work in solidarity for human dignity, the Church contributes to earthly peace. Peace in the community of faith serves by example the ministry and message of reconciliation entrusted to the Church for the world (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). ...

By equipping the faithful to act for peace in all their communities, the Church contributes to earthly peace. ... in telling the biblical narrative, in teaching faith, hope, and love, the Church provides the basics of peacemaking for all of life. ... With its ministry of Word and Sacrament, the Church sustains believers in their conscientious decisions, including people who serve in the military and defense industries, and people who refuse to participate in all wars or in a particular war.

The Church is **a disturbing presence** when it refuses to be silent and instead speaks the truth in times when people shout out "Peace, peace," when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14). The Church is this presence when it names and resists idols that lead to false security, injustice and war, and calls for repentance. We therefore denounce beliefs and actions that:

- elevate one nation or any nation or people to the role of God;
- find ultimate security in weapons and warfare;
- ordain the inherent right of one people, race or civilization to rule over others;
- promise the perfect, peaceful society through the efforts of a self-sufficient humanity; and
- despair of any possibility for peace.

As **a reconciling presence**, the Church creates bonds among different peoples, whether local or distant. ... The Church serves reconciliation by countering religious movements—including ones claiming to be Christian—that preach and practice hate and violence, by challenging stereotypes of "the enemy," and by encouraging imaginative solutions to conflicts.

The Church is called to be **a serving presence** in society. The church serves when it holds power accountable, advocates justice, stands with those who are poor and vulnerable, provides sanctuary, and meets human need. ...

The Church as a community for peace is also to be **a deliberating presence** in society. ...

(Excerpted from the document *For Peace In God's World*, a social statement of the ELCA.)