

South Asia Regional Representative

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ELCA Global Mission

ADVENT NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2020



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

## ADVENT GREETINGS

Advent greetings to you all! It has been a strange “new-normal” year for all of us. It changed ways of worship, travels, meetings, conferences and even meeting our own families! The COVID-19 pandemic has changed almost everything in our lives, but yet the Gospel continued to be preached, in word and actions. As Presiding Bishop Eaton writes in her Advent Greetings:

*“We are at the beginning of a new year. The Advent texts are all about waiting and longing and expectation. They are also about justice and even about calling God to account. People are hungry, medical care and education are grossly unequal. God is faithful. To Abraham and Sarah. To Hannah. To Esther. To Ruth. To Elizabeth and Zechariah. To Mary. To us. God has torn open the heavens and come down.”*

In my own work this was so true, despite all the limitations and complexities we continued, in many ways intensified our work in the region responding to COVID-19 in several stages accompanying our companion churches, partners and communities in relief. We have also now began the second levels of responding to the challenges of livelihood focussing on the migrants, key-populations like HIV positive, vulnerable women and children too in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, etc. We were also parallelly responding to other emergencies like the floods in Cambodia; Northeast India; South India and work among the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

This newsletter comes to all of you with bouquets of my gratitude to the congregations, pastors and individuals for continued prayers, solidarity and concrete covenant support. Without this we couldn't have touched and transformed so many lives in the context of the pandemic. WE continue with our tag line, “God's work. Our hands”, and this “is a call to action.”

May you all have a safe and Happy Christmas. We pray that God will continue to protect us through in 2021 to continue to Worship and Serve!! We hope that the vaccine would come soon too.

## Snapshots of our work together in my region



Women receive flood relief materials organized by the Bodo Evangelical Lutheran Church in Assam.



Virtual call with companions across India to discuss and share about COVID-19 responses through Lutheran Disaster Response.

A gender justice virtual symposium titled ‘Mary, the Magnificat and the Witnesses of Women: From Obscurity to Power’ was organized by the Asia Pacific Global Mission team with companions across Cambodia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, India, Nepal and Indonesia.

Virtual calls with companions across Cambodia and India were made to respond to the floods in the regions through Lutheran Disaster Response.



*Humanitarian Food Emergency Response that was distributed in Pursat province in Cambodia to 80 families, including 48 women from 6 villages in Phteah Rong commune. The distribution was aimed to alleviate the hardships of the poor people who are experiencing severe deprivation after they suffered the effects of flooding in recent months. The food aid package included 50 kg of rice, ten cans of fish, 1 kg of salt, one bottle of cooking oil.*

*The project “Building resilience: Supporting the disaster affected marginalized community” is an initiative started in Nepal with the support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) on October 2020. The project aims to contribute to improve the living condition and build the resilience of disaster affected Dalit and marginalized community.*



*Meeting the HIV & AIDS collective implementation of LDR/ELCA COVID-19 key populations food security program.*



***Mercy & I wish you all a safe, happy Christmas and a blessed New Year!!!***



*In the new way we all find ourselves doing ministry, we can continue to be engaged in new and different ways, even beyond newsletter updates. Here are some suggestions and ideas that I would like to share with you for consideration.*

***“How can I support you?”*** considering the new VIRTUAL methods of communication and fellowship:

- *Would you like me to prepare and give a sermon (online) for you in an upcoming week?*
- *Could I write something more for your newsletter about all the initiatives mentioned above?*
- *Can I lead a study session on Zoom, conference call, or some other strategy?*
- *How can we pray together for each other?*
- *Consider a recorded message that could be incorporated into a congregation’s virtual worship.*
- *Post a virtual newsletter in addition to your written words that can be linked on social media or in congregational e-mail updates. BTW, I have already written a blog on the new norm of “Social Distancing”!!*

## **Intercessions**

***We pause and find a moment of peace, as we lift up our hearts together in prayer to remember out Companions, congregations, partners and communities who are infected and affected by COVID-19, as they discern new directions, and praying for hope.***

***We pray for many frontline-diaconal and health workers in our hospitals and other projects who risk their lives to provide care, treatment and rehabilitation.***

***We pray for the new leadership in our companion churches in the ELCA and in South Asia for God’s grace, strength and guidance.***

***We pray for our pastors and the families as they provide services including worship, diakonia and counseling through available sources.***

***We pray for the Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, all colleagues at the Church Wide Office, including Global Mission Staff as we provide leadership with vision and purpose to continue serving the neighbour.***

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