



Southeastern Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

March 3, 2020

Dear church,

We are told by the psalmist, *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”* (Psalm 46:1). What more appropriate and needed words for such a time as this. Within the past twenty-four hours within our synod, we have been hit by a devastating tornado within middle Tennessee. Much of which had caused great destruction to the cities of Nashville and Mt. Juliet, as well as Putnam County and other surrounding areas.

We grieve the loss of nineteen people who have died as a result of this, the devastation to homes and businesses, and even the devastation of St. John’s Lutheran Church. We pray for this community of St. John’s, their pastor, and the wider community of Middle Tennessee. We hold fast to God, who is our refuge. We receive our strength in knowing God is present in all our troubles.

Our synod is busily working with Inspiritus (our social service agency), Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), and our own synod disaster team. We are in the process of sending folks in to help with immediate needs and to assess the long-term damage.

Many have already asked, “What can I do to help?” I invite you to keep going to our synod website at www.elca-ses.org for updated information that we will continue to post and your immediate help is needed in financial resources. You can go directly to that site and donate there, by designating your gift to “Southeastern Synod Disaster Response”. We will continue to list ways there that you can help with tangible donations and volunteer opportunities that will be forthcoming in the days, weeks, and months ahead. On our synod website you will also find a link to worship resources to use in the aftermath of a Tornado, information from our partners with LDR and Inspiritus.

Thank you for your prayers, support, and gifts. I give thanks for you and all the ongoing ways you will continue to provide those to the many in need. May God continue to strengthen, support, and provide comfort for all in need through our hands.

+Bishop Kevin L. Strickland

Click here for up-to-date information:

<https://www.elca-ses.org/middle-tennessee-tornado-response>