



# The Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



# The Southwestern Texas Synod

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



# The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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April 22, 2020

Dear Texas-Louisiana Synod Leaders:

The document “[Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#)” was released on April 16<sup>th</sup>. It outlines three phases, based on the trajectory of identified COVID-19 cases, for communities as they consider how to engage in communal activity and open currently-closed operations. The document states clearly that this process will be contextual to each state, county, and municipality.

Gathering as an assembly is a fundamental part of Christian community. It is understandable that communities want to be able to gather together, but care must be taken. Our congregations have responded faithfully and adaptively in this time. The church has never been closed but adapted its life to continue to proclaim the gospel and care for our neighbors. This need for flexibility and adaptation will continue.

The measures taken to reduce the spread of the virus have been challenging and caused significant loss and grief; however, they have been effective in preventing our medical systems from being overwhelmed. As we begin to plan for the upcoming months, we encourage communities to be wise and flexible, putting first the needs of the most vulnerable.

Please take time to review the *Coming Back Together as a Congregation Guidelines* ([www.ntnl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-04-22-coming-back-guidelines.pdf](http://www.ntnl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-04-22-coming-back-guidelines.pdf)). As we come together, it will be important to celebrate but also recognize the losses and griefs experienced in this time. *Coming Back Together for Worship Resources* ([www.ntnl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-04-22-coming-back-worship-resources.pdf](http://www.ntnl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-04-22-coming-back-worship-resources.pdf)) offers ideas for grief work and supporting our neighbors, as well as worship resources to aid our communities in centering this experience in service, worship, and prayer.

God bless you in your work. We are grateful for your faithful leadership and service to our communities and to the gospel we proclaim.

In Easter Hope,

Bishop Sue Briner  
Southwestern Texas Synod

Bishop Michael Rinehart  
Gulf Coast Synod

Bishop Erik K.J. Gronberg, PhD  
Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod