



Northern Texas - Northern Louisiana Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

From the desk of Bp. Erik Gronberg

BpGronberg@ntnl.org

May 4, 2020

Dear Partners in Mission:

The COVID-19 crisis continues to challenge and change our lives together. Many congregations have suspended in-person worship for over a month. In addition, daycares and other church ministries have been deeply impacted. Our leaders have proven themselves resilient, adaptable, and faithful to the work that we do together. While this crisis has brought challenge, it has also brought innovation and opportunity for our communities.

We are, however, only now beginning to get a fuller picture of the impact these changes are having on our congregations and their financial sustainability. Each congregation and ministry is, just like the people who make up the church, experiencing this differently. For some of our communities, the move to online worship and giving has been fairly seamless. Others are more dependent on weekly offerings from in-person worship. And within the communities, there are uneven experiences of job and income loss and stability.

Throughout this process, we have shared resources with you about how you might take advantage of governmental programs, as well as work with creditors to change loans or other obligations. Again, the experience across the synod has been uneven as each community and ministry works with their various financial institutions.

Recognizing that emergency cash flow problems might threaten benefits for employees or other vital bills, the board of the Mission Endowment Fund (MEF) of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod has responded with an emergency loan program. Utilizing unrestricted funds and in concert with their financial advisors, they have available some funds to help communities in an emergency situation. I am grateful for their clarity of mission in that these funds are a gift for us to steward for mission and that carrying out mission and Word and Sacrament ministry in this time is critical. Information about applying for these funds are available on our website: <https://www.ntnl.org/ministries/mef/>.

A host of resources, including some guidelines on how communities might make decisions about coming back together, are available at <https://www.ntnl.org/resources/covid-19/>. I encourage you to make use of those.

In Mission Together,

Bishop Erik K.J. Gronberg