

Wednesday, September 22nd



**ELCA World Hunger**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

**A People of Hope:  
Until All Are Fed**  
**An online benefit for  
ELCA World Hunger**

When: Thursday, Oct. 14, 7:30 p.m. Central

Where: Zoom webinar

Dear friend in Christ,

You're invited to join me and [Rick Steves](#),  
guidebook author and travel TV host, as we  
celebrate World Food Day!

This online benefit for [ELCA World Hun-  
ger](#) will feature interviews hosted by my friend,  
Rick, with people on the ground who are doing  
the dynamic work of fighting hunger around  
the world. Special guests include the Rev.  
David Beckmann, who is being honored for his  
lifelong service to end hunger; the Rev. Rebel Hurd; Willie and Anne Langdji; and the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla. There  
will also be special performances by Rachel Kurtz, Peter Mayer and the St. Olaf Choir. As a vital supporter of the church,  
we would love for you to join us as we hear compelling stories, listen to wonderful music and gather in fellowship to in-  
vest in this life-giving work.

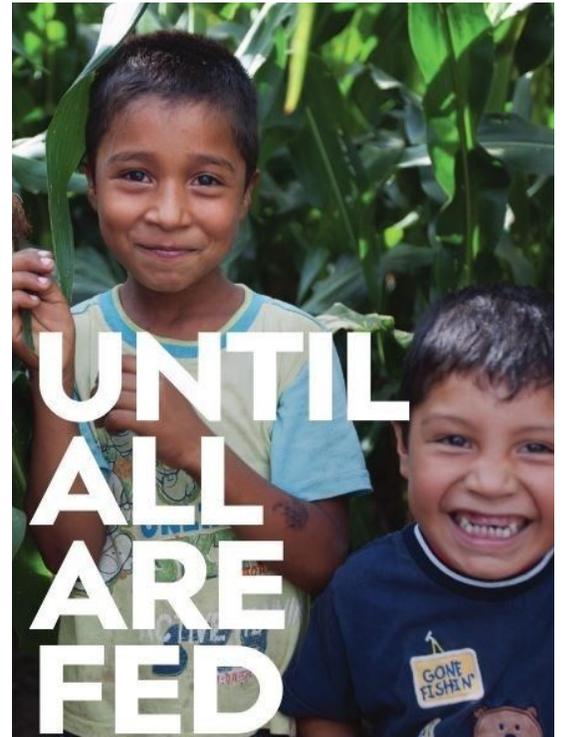
As a church, we remain focused on supporting our neighbors near and far as  
the pandemic continues disrupting and impacting lives. At this event, you will  
learn about the ways ELCA World Hunger is responding. No one is better  
positioned and more experienced than the church in addressing hunger —  
both immediate needs and root solutions. We are ready, able, effective and  
efficient.

Together, we are a people of hope.

I look forward to seeing you there!

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop



[REGISTER HERE](#)

**Matthew: The taxman**  
**(September 21st)**  
**by Pr. Tim for St. Laika's**

*"Should five per cent appear too small  
be thankful I don't take it all,  
'cause I'm the taxman;  
yeah, I'm the taxman."*

(George Harrison)

If the Beatles could ride this to number one in 1966, you've got to know that people are ambivalent about the men and women who collect our taxes. In the case of Saint Matthew, there is no ambivalence at all. He was hated by people, despised for collaborating with the Roman army occupation force which had conquered and subdued Israel beginning around 63BC.



Tax collectors were required to collect whatever taxes the Romans wanted to be levied but, in addition, they were free to enrich themselves by requiring more. They were corrupt, made their wealth on their own people's pain and of no use to any Jew who was hoping for an independent Jewish nation.

What are the spiritual inclinations of such a person? How many people would be pariahs in our congregations today just because of what they do? Jesus invites this excluded soul to become a follower. Not only a follower but a teller of tales, a writer of good news, a holy apostle.

What is mind-boggling about the story of Matthew's calling, is less for me the call itself and more the dinner in Matthew's house that Jesus attends. It leaves me breathless. A gathering of "many tax collectors and sinners" to quote Matthew himself (9:10).

In Franco Zeffirelli's movie adaptation of the life of Jesus, he focuses on Peter. Jesus has already crossed the threshold of the door and is sitting with Matthew's friends. Peter, however, is standing just outside the threshold, waging an interior battle. Will he enter or retreat? What an image of the church of Jesus. The outcasts and sinners are at the table, feasting. The pious, and prudish missing the feast because they cannot stand the company!

"Why does your teacher eat with these people?" they ask. Why indeed!

What makes Saint Laika's holy for me is that no one is ever turned away. Whatever the condition of your soul, whatever doubts assail you, whatever theology you choose to practice, you are welcome here. And Jesus, Lord of Virtual Reality, is here, too. Let Matthew lead you into this place.

**Scripture.** In the ninth chapter of "Matthew," verses nine and ten, we read:

"As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, 'Follow me.'

"And he got up and followed him.

"And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples."

**Prayer.** Almighty God, your son, our saviour, called a despised tax collector to become one of his apostles. Help us, like Matthew, to respond to the transforming call of Jesus Christ, who lives and rules with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*"How many people would be pariahs in our congregations today just because of what they do? Jesus invites this excluded soul to become a follower. Not only a follower but a teller of tales, a writer of good news, a holy apostle." Thank you for this surgically incisive question and response, Pr. Tim. In the divisive time we live in, we are called to let Love overcome every difference and division. We refuse to look through any lens that separates "us" from "them". We are brothers and sisters and the more we allow that to be the truth in our hearts, in our giving to the hungry, in all of our daily interactions, the more we will be able to spread Jesus' love and light. Matthew is such an inspiration! He dove into God's mercy and left everything behind, even to the point of giving his life for love of Jesus. May we give of our own lives in the small and large ways God asks us, and so allow His light to shine like Matthew did.*