Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Living Out God's Grace & Unconditional Love

January 20, 2026

Dear Beloved Members of God's Family in the ELCIC,

I invite you to join me in expressing our solidarity with the people of Minnesota and for all who have been impacted by recent aggressive and violent immigration enforcement by federal agents.

With you, I mourn the shocking death of Renee Nicole Good, who was shot by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent on January 7, 2026. As a church, we join with The Rev. Yehiel Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in calling for a thorough investigation into this case, accountability for the shooting, and a de-escalation of ICE enforcement across the United States.

I have been deeply moved by all who model Christian discipleship by standing up for their neighbours and affirm the message offered by the six ELCA bishops in the state of Minnesota, encouraging their members to, "remain connected to one another and actively support efforts in [their] communities to meet the needs of those directly impacted in this time of fear and intimidation."

This is a week when we remember Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who reminded the church that unity is not passive, and justice is not optional. His vision of a Beloved Community is one that calls us to love our neighbours, resist violence, and work—together—for dignity and equality for all.

This is also the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and we remember that the unity we seek is not sameness, but shared commitment: to truth, nonviolence, the hard, holy work of reconciliation, and of peace with justice.

Dear church, I invite you to reach out to those you know who have family and connections in the United States. Offer your prayers, offer your ears, and offer your hearts. Show that you care.

I invite you to reflect on your call to stand for the rights of refugees and migrant persons in the Canadian context. As Dr. King once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

And, I invite you to join me in prayer:

> *God of justice and peace, strengthen us to build beloved community—across difference, through service, and with love that does not turn away. Amen.*

In Christ Jesus,

+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

The Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

400-185 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, MB R3C 3J1
PHONE: 204-984-9150 / 888-786-6707 WEB: info@elcic.ca

The ELCIC acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast, are on traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples.