

Asian and Pacific Islander Ministries  
May – July 2026

Dear friends in Christ,

May 2026 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first large arrivals of Hmong in the United States. This reminded me of one of my visits to our Hmong communities in Minnesota where I was introduced to a Minnesotan, a known and respected Hmong writer, Kao Kalia yang, who wrote in one of her [essays](#), “Each story that I share opens me up to and for the world in ways that I never knew were possible.” Yang added that we are the “inheritors” of our parents and ancestors’ “stories and sorrow,” joy and perseverance.

This month of May, as we observe Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, I invite you to learn, listen and read stories of your parents and ancestors and other AANHPI communities you have not yet explored. What is your story to tell? How is God present in our stories? Let us center our hearts and reflections around “Inheritors and Witnesses.” This is inspired both by the title of Yang’s essay, and the apostles Peter and John in Acts 4:29, “*Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.*”

Here are more resources for the AANHPI Heritage month for use in your ministry and Sunday worship:

### **Asian American Native American Heritage Month**

1. “*Bold Witness of API Young Adults,*”

May 23, 2026 4:30 pm PST, 6:30 pm CST, 7:30 pm EST

API Young Adults will share their experiences on advocacy as part of their faith expressions, their hopes and visions for our church, and the challenges they face.

We will also have a prayer, led by API leaders, to give thanks for the gifts of API community and for God’s gifts of resilience and grace to guide us on our ministry of hope and justice.

[Here is zoom link](#) or

Meeting ID: 917 2891 7662

Passcode: 853513

## 2. [Living Lutheran](#) Stories

These stories could be used for personal and community (Adult Forum) reflections:

- a. *Japanese American Lutherans*, Gail Kiyomura, Stacy Kitahata and Pr. Deanna Kim Bassett, reflect on their life and faith as it relates to the stories of their families at the concentration camp.

Online release of these stories will be May 5, 13, and 29, 2026.

- b. *API Stories and the Bible*. Two of our rostered leaders reflect on a biblical story in the light of their respective vocation stories. Specific dates of release are still to be determined.

Online: [Home | Living Lutheran](#)

Printed: Order your copy of May release: [Subscribe to Living Lutheran Magazine | Living Lutheran](#)

Some questions to ponder as you read them individually or collectively:

1. What part of the Japanese American siblings' stories resonates with your family's stories?
2. How do you find God and God's message in their stories? What is God calling you to as you learn from them?
3. How do these stories invite you to search and live out justice through your story as bold witness?
4. Are there any bible stories that comes to your mind in these stories? Why?

## 3. To remember the [50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first largest arrivals of the Hmong refugees](#) in this country on May 1976, I invite you to

- a. Include Sunday intercessory prayers. You may use some of the following themes as you write prayers for the Sundays in May:
  - i. The gifts and valuable contribution of the Hmong community in church and society
  - ii. Refugees' safe journeys, and for the provisions they need along the way
  - iii. For refugees to find warm welcome, hospitality, belonging and just immigration policies, especially for those seeking asylum and protection from violence and war

- iv. For refugees' family reunions
- v. For strong faith, that they may be able to worship with freedom and strengthen their faith communities

*b. And prayers for ELCA Hmong communities, congregations, and leaders:*

1. Grace (Fresno, CA) Pr. Lu Vang
2. Central (St. Paul, MN) Pr. Nouk Vagh
3. Eternal Flame (Vadnais Heights, MN) Pr. Jua Jay
4. Amazing Grace (Fridley, MN) Pr. Nhiabee Vang
5. Hmong Community (Philadelphia, PA) Pr. Songchai Hang
6. Ascension (three expressions, one Congregation), Ms. Ar Lee (Lay Leader)
7. More leaders:
  - Pr. Lue Moan (St. Mark's, MN)
  - Pr. Bea Vue-Venson (MFT MN)
  - Dr. Kao Nou Moua, Faculty at Augsburg University and currently serving on the ELCA Committee on Sexuality
  - Luther Siong, ELCA Advocacy Immersion fellow (2025)

And many more Hmong Lutherans who are members of predominantly white or multicultural congregations, and serving in various capacities in congregations, synods and churchwide

**Recent events and information:**

**1. *ELCA Church Council Affirmation of the Asian and Pacific Islander Ministry Strategy (2026-2030):***

Church Council action:

To affirm the new Asian and Pacific Islander Ministry Strategy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

To express solidarity and deep gratitude for the ministries of the ELCA with the Asian and Pacific Islander community and for the Asians and Pacific Islanders of the ELCA who have enriched and blessed this church with all they generously have given, shared, and cultivated for mission and ministry; and

To commend the ELCA to accompany the Asian and Pacific Islander congregations and to utilize this new strategic plan in responding to a changing world and embodying this church's faithful discipleship.

The final document is currently being formatted by the ELCA Communication for distribution via online and in print, which will be available before the end of May.

Translation to various Asian and Pacific Islander languages will follow.

2. *Hunger Grant Workshop*. There were 19 participants at the Hunger Grant Workshop on March 17. One of them, Faith Trinity (Monterey Park) is a recipient of 2025 Hunger grant. Please check out the ELCA hunger grant webpage. *The [Letter of Intent](#) is now open for submission until July 2026.*

### **Celebrations and for prayers:**

#### Installation

- Pr. Tim Marquez, St. Martin's Lutheran Church (Texas)
- Pr. Samuel Rajkumar, St. Paul's (Indiana)

#### Ordination

- Pr. Grace Lee, Calvary by the Sea (Hawaii)

#### Graduation from Theological Education from Emerging Ministries

- Pr. Feronika Raming (CLU-PLTS)
- Pr. Wen Yang (CLU-PLTS)

### **Upcoming:**

- API Ministries' *Let Your Kingdom Come! A Bible Study Series from An Asian Perspective* by Rev. Dr. Surekha Nelavala. Through our partnership with the ELCA Building Resilient Communities and Hunger Office, we are offering this engaging invitation to turn our gaze to study parables on economic justice from an Asian perspective.