



**NOVEMBER 2021**

## **CRYING OUT, WHILE REMEMBERING WHO WE ARE**

We Lutherans come from fearless roots. Who here does not carry in their heart the words, "Here I Stand!"? Our scripture readings on Sundays in October have reminded us that Jesus can be tough, too. Or, at least, very direct. The Biblical history that we have absorbed of late, does offer signs for us of what to do and how to do it in our world today.

Joshua was Moses' assistant and successor.

He was to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. He led the people of Israel to cross the Jordan near the City of Jericho. God told Joshua that Jericho was already delivered into his hands. What confidence he must have had as he went into battle! "On the seventh day you are to march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the horns. When you hear the priests give one long blast on the horns, have all the people give a mighty shout. Then the walls of the city will collapse and the people can charge straight into the city." Joshua was a person committed to God. He was faithful to God's direction in the challenges that he faced.

There was the tax collector, Zachheus, who climbed up a Sycamore tree in the center of Jericho during an early visit Jesus made to the city. He was too short but climbed the tree so he could give witness to this prophet and man of God. He had been attracted to Jesus, and perhaps not very comfortable in his own skin. After all, he was one of those hated tax collectors. What we might assume is that in his climb up the tree he might not be noticed, and yet, he, too, might find newness in life in this encounter with God's only Son.

From scripture the voice that cried out, and cried out loudest to us, might have been the blind beggar sitting on the road in Jericho, trying to get the attention of our Lord who is swamped with those looking to Him for help and assistance. Now this man gets no attention in this bustling city. He appears to be helpless and worthless. Jericho was on the path that Jesus chose to make his way to Jerusalem and the cross. And Jericho is a storied city having been visited by Jesus several times and having been the locus of major events in the history of the Israelites.

What is interesting about these three stories, and the mention of Luther, is that each calls us to God, a relationship with God, and each involves action on the part of the characters involved. Luther nailed the 95 Thesis on the church door, he then would repeatedly refuse to budge from his understanding of the meaning of the Word and its direction in our lives.

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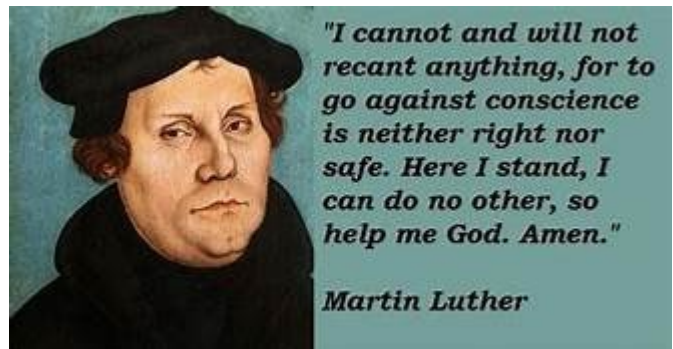
## CRYING OUT, WHILE REMEMBERING WHO WE ARE

(continued from page 1)

Zaccheus likely knew of his sins, and risked being seen by others who hated him and his kind, but desperately wanted to be close to and hear Jesus. The blind man, too, was unable to easily participate in what was going on. Bartimaeus was more than attracted to Jesus. He wanted to regain his sight, but he also knew, better than anyone, just who Jesus was. He wanted his sight so that he might pick up his cross and follow Him.

As we look at the landscape for our country in November, it would appear that little to nothing may come of the Administration's program to "Build Back Better." Republicans simply obstruct. And two democrats have surfaced who are even worse. There has been true and meaningful progress on the January 6<sup>th</sup> Committee's investigation into the cause of the insurrection. Those who planned it, led it and those accountable for the results continue to simply ignore it. Lie-telling is in full-bloom, the prior president is ostensibly running for office once again and doing all he can to spread the "Big Lie" throughout the country, particularly in places that the crowds came from on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The wildfires continue, a massive oil spill has soiled the coast-line of California and voter suppression is spreading throughout the country as the word is that there was major voter fraud in 2020, although no one seems to be able to find it. But that isn't important anyway. The goal is simply to have people no longer believe in the integrity of our elections. And it's working.

Remarkably, after a fully corrupted Justice Department under the prior president, the existing one seems timid in taking the big steps that are called for to address the worst division in our country since the Jim Crow era after the Civil War. What is staggering to most of us is that the more they discover, the more roadblocks are placed in the road. And, our President, with a desire to do what is right and needed seems to be fumbling the ball with his democratic majority, never mind the growing number of independents and those astounded by how little has been done to address the action to take over our government that occurred more than nine months ago.



History is a moving target, with extraordinary complexity and moving parts everywhere. We advise you to watch the "Civil War" a new documentary, that had too many ads, but addressed issues of slavery, racism, white supremacy and the feelings of those in the South and North. What was particularly striking was the reactions of young people to these now very current issues. They are strikingly similar and robustly different, even today. We are living history. The darkest history for many of us in our lives.

Back to crying out! Luther took a stand; Joshua had the people shout which resulted in the collapse of the walls of Jericho. Zaccheus was quiet, but intentionally so. He didn't want to be noticed. Yet, Bartimaeus cries out for help to Jesus in the crowd in Jericho. Those who heard him told him to be quiet, which simply led to him to shout louder. He wanted Jesus' attention to

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## CRYING OUT, WHILE REMEMBERING WHO WE ARE

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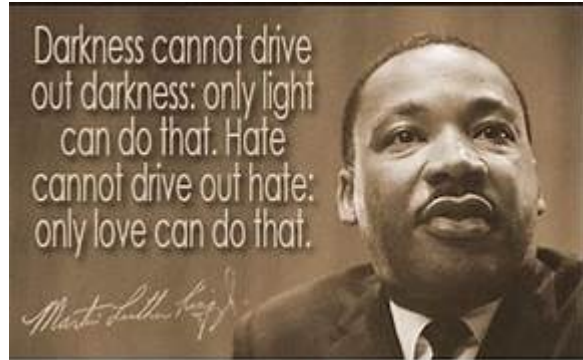
his plight, and he got it. He called out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" No one in the book of Mark ever calls him by his name of proper lineage. He is more often referred to as Jesus of Bethlehem... or Jesus of Nazareth. Neither of these locations, conjure up the messianic lineage that the House of David does!

So, what do we learn from these stories of Biblical history? We are to take initiative, get involved, and make sure that we are heard. Shout, scream, yell, or whatever! Be tough. Listen to God; do as we are told. And, by faith live our lives with freedom and courage.

There's just one problem. What is happening in our world today has evolved into a war of hate. Never have we seen this kind of violence, filthy language, attempts at extortion, spreading fear, threats to the lives of civil servants, and even so-called "leaders" in Congress. Treating each other like the lowest of the low. With increasing stridency, and deliberate threats. Never have we seen this degree of hatefulness, sometimes voiced in the context of faith and religion, or no-faith at all. How do we find our ways out of this or are we seeing the beginning of the end of our species and our planet?

On Reformation Sunday we heard our Lord's words from the Gospel of St. John: ***If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Jesus THEN says: Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. . . If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.***

It is here that we must find our response, our trust, and our confidence. This is who we are, and may we remember this and embrace it with our whole hearts.





## Pastor's Message: MANDATES AND CHILDREN – THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING!

Progress continues to be made in the fight against COVID and its variants. Recently both Moderna and Johnson & Johnson have been approved as boosters, including the possibility of mixing the brands without fear. Here is more good news on the pandemic front: approvals have been received to vaccinate children age 5+ in the state of Connecticut. Our granddaughter will be soon vaccinated. Both of our grandkids are in the classroom, wearing masks and doing just fine. We pray that we can focus now on the younger ones to make sure that they are fully protected.

The Worship Committee has cooked up some special services during the holidays, that have not been on any calendars as yet. The night before Thanksgiving we will have a musical service by Zoom-only that will remind us of our gratitude for all that has been given to us. It will begin @ 7pm and be over by 8 pm. Look forward to all your favorite music for the season and a chance to just give thanks for all the blessings we have.

On Christmas Eve, we will have our usual service at 7 pm both in-person and on Zoom. Again, there will be an abundance of beautiful music of the season and a chance for our families to gather together on this precious night of our Savior's birth. On Christmas Day, we will offer a Zoom-Service of music and joy at 10:00 am that will be over by 11 am. We just feel that in these stressful times, it will be wonderful to gather and hear the music that calls us to Bethlehem at this time once again.

There are other monumental things coming in our church lives, particularly on our property both front and back. Before the end of the year, we will have all new furniture from Fresh Start both in the front of the church and the back. Some forty pieces have been ordered and many have been built. Louisa has already painted two new expanded benches to be placed by the cherry trees, with two chairs next to them painted in complimentary colors.



The back yard will be especially impacted as we have ordered raised flower beds for the very back, an over-sized arbor with doors, a single arbor to be placed where the old one was, also in wood with a wooden door. There will be a new fence built by Fresh Start that will prevent children from running into the parking lot, which will also be protected by the raised beds and the Arbors. The biggest surprise of all will be a 16' Gazebo installed and built by Kloter Farms made of pressure-treated lumber and coated with vinyl making it easy to maintain. In the Gazebo will be benches, chairs, and tables from Fresh Start. We may be using this structure

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## Pastor's Message: MANDATES AND CHILDREN – THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING!

for Bible Study, private meetings or even meals for small groups.

Yes, lots of change, including the resolution of the drainage problem in the backyard and the placement of a small shed in the yard to house our lawn mower, rakes, wheelbarrow, and countless other tools that are for outdoor use.

The canopy for the 46 door is awaiting material, and a new sign will be going up is up, providing information about what our church does, when. You can see it below.

Hope you all like everything....



45.00 in

34.25 in

***GOD'S GRACE IS THE HEART OF GRACE***  
*Community, Compassion and Love*  
**SUNDAY WORSHIP**  
*WITH HOLY COMMUNION - 10:00 AM*

ALL ARE INVITED  ALL ARE WELCOME

**Prayer Circle - Friday 3:30 pm**  
**Free Community Meal - Friday 4:15 pm - 5:30 pm**  
**Free Clothing - Wednesday, Saturday 11:00 am - 1:00 pm**  
**Open AA Meetings - Tuesday 10:00 am; Thursday 12:00 pm**

Church Office Hours - Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 10:00 am - 3:00 pm  
Church Office Phone (860) 527-7792

## DESTROYED FOR OUR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

**SOJOURNERS** by ADAM RUSSELL TAYLOR

OCT 14, 2021

Most of the U.S. public doesn't "know anything at all" about congressional Democrats' Build Back Better infrastructure plan, according to a **CBS poll** released this week. Even though the provisions the plan contains could help countless families, the language of "infrastructure" is both distant from our daily lives and too obscure to generate a sense of urgency. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," the prophet Hosea warns (Hosea 4:6). How true that rings now.



In Hosea's case, Israel's lack of knowledge was tied to their unfaithfulness, which precipitated the Northern Kingdom's fall to the Assyrians. Today, the public's lack of knowledge around the infrastructure bills that target both traditional physical infrastructure, like roads and bridges, and human infrastructure, like child care and health care, has resulted from a combination of disinformation and weak messaging that is failing to break through. The truth is, these bills are about ensuring that families and communities of all kinds across the United States can make a sustainable living, provide quality education for children, afford medications when they get sick, have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink, equip the next generation with a livable planet, and so much more. Together the bipartisan infrastructure bill and budget reconciliation package represent the most pro-family and pro-common good agenda we have seen in over a generation. When so much is at stake, leaders must better communicate what's in these bills — and make the case for why they will significantly improve our quality of life as a society.

One cause of confusion is the money: What is the price tag and who will pay for it? While we must consider the cost, it's important to note that this new spending is over a 10-year period. Even if the budget reconciliation bill — the bill that targets crucial human needs like child care, paid family leave, and health care — were passed at its initially proposed price tag of \$3.5 trillion, that comes out to \$350 billion per year. That's less than half of the military budget, which totaled **more than \$770 billion** last year. It's worth asking why the military budget is universally discussed in annual terms but programs that would fight the climate crisis and provide vital support to families are discussed in terms of their total cost over the course of a decade. As for how to fund the programs, the **bill proposes** a more equitable tax system in which the uber-wealthy and major corporations pay their fair share.

### **READ: The Parable of the Federal Budget**

So what's in the budget reconciliation bill? As Sojourners political director Lauren W. Reliford laid out a few weeks ago, the bill would dramatically **cut child poverty**, which today affects nearly one in five children in the United States. And while the bill's final details are being negotiated as we speak, the **House version** includes 12 weeks of universal paid family and medical leave. It would also **make child care more affordable** by capping the amount of income parents spend on it and provide **funding** to states that implement universal pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds, with the goal of making pre-K available nationwide.

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## DESTROYED FOR OUR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

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The reconciliation bill's climate provisions reward electric companies that use more clean, renewable energy and fine those that don't and provide tax breaks to renewable energy industries like wind and solar. These provisions would help transition our economy off of fossil fuels, enabling us to cut greenhouse gas emissions by as much as **50 percent** by the end of the decade, while creating clean energy jobs in the process.

Between this bill's family-focused programs and climate-focused provisions, it's not a stretch to say that this legislation could save countless lives both now and long term.

And what about the bipartisan infrastructure bill — the one that targets traditional infrastructure like roads and bridges? It would spend over \$100 billion to fix crumbling roads and bridges across the country. It would invest an additional \$100 billion in public transit and rail, which will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A billion dollars would go toward reconnecting communities that have been divided by large highways, which are overwhelmingly communities of color. It would also invest \$65 billion to finally deliver high-speed internet to every



community in the United States. It would make electric vehicles more practical and widespread, modernize the national power grid, fund damage mitigation from extreme weather, and invest in clean water and soil. It's an important bill for environmental justice and the climate crisis, and it complements the transformational nature of the budget reconciliation bill.

Far too often the political Right narrowly defines a pro-family agenda as restricting abortion and standing in the way of LGBTQ rights and is then largely silent on policies that would clearly benefit families. In the debate over these bills, many Republican politicians have used scare tactics, mischaracterizing the bills as socialism or arguing that they will destroy the economy. Just as Jesus expressed his moral indignation against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, we too should call out this hypocrisy. Saying “free market” doesn't make child care more affordable or offer those providing it a living wage. These bills would provide lifelines of support where market forces have clearly failed.

Rather than talking and thinking about these bills through the lens of infrastructure, we must reframe them through the lens of our faith, particularly the biblical call to advance the common good and serve as “repairers of the breach” (Isaiah 58:12). In one of my favorite passages from the Hebrew Bible, the prophet Isaiah speaks directly about the dual call to renew and build a society rooted in a commitment to compassion and justice. Isaiah speaks to a broken and demoralized people in roughly 540 B.C., 45 years after the Babylonian Empire had destroyed Jerusalem, Judah's capital city, and deported many Jews to Babylon. Isaiah denounces their empty worship, which is superficial as long as it is disconnected from a commitment to maintain justice and provide for the common good. Isaiah makes it plain:

*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? (Isaiah 58:6-7)*

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## DESTROYED FOR OUR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

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These verses make it crystal clear that what pleases the Lord is when we engage in acts of compassion and justice, which in turn advance the common good. And these requirements are not confined to individual acts but also apply to our communal acts — in other words who and what we prioritize in our politics and budgetary priorities. As the Second Vatican Council **put it**, the common good is “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.”

Pope Francis, in the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* also emphasizes that we must recognize the equal dignity of all people and to work together to build a world where people love and care for one another as brothers and sisters. Isaiah forewarns us not to let our worship devolve into a purely private or personal enterprise and makes it clear that our spiritual and material prosperity is tied to the liberation and welfare of the people who are most downtrodden and shut out in our communities.

Isaiah goes on to say that after we prioritize compassion and justice, “Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly ... then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday ... Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in” (Isaiah 58:8, 10, 12). Not only will a commitment to prioritize compassion and justice bless others, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized, it will ultimately bless and uplift all of us. In other words, a politics and economy that prioritize the common good will produce more abundant life and wholeness for all.

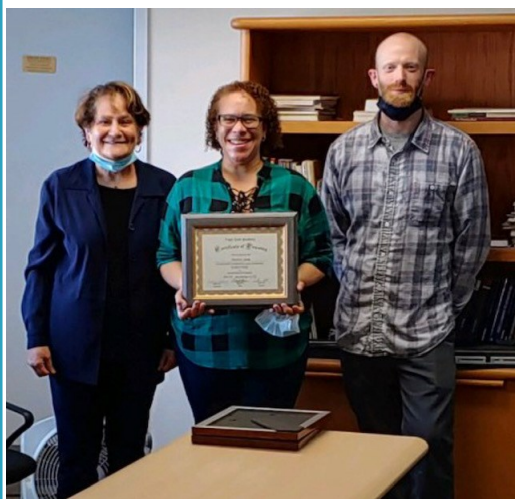
The debate over these bills presents a historic moment and an opportunity in which we must respond to the continual call to be repairers of the breach. Through the Circle of Protection, Christian leaders representing a broad cross-section of denominations and faith-based organizations have created and promoted **videos** that speak to this moral imperative. We must all raise our voices to demand that our elected representatives pass the infrastructure plan and a budget bill that fundamentally transforms our economy in ways that allow families to thrive and the planet to heal. A more compassionate and just economy and nation are both possible and necessary, and it’s up to us to convince our legislators of the importance of these bills in getting us there.



**Adam Russell Taylor**

Adam Russell Taylor is president of Sojourners and author of [\*A More Perfect Union: A New Vision for Building the Beloved Community\*](#). Follow him on Twitter [@revadamtaylor](#).





## Fresh Start Academy — First Graduation

**Hooray!!** Congratulations to the 3 men and 1 woman who have graduated from the first Fresh Start Academy.



## THE STATES WHERE THE MOST PEOPLE ARE QUITTING THEIR JOBS SEEM TO HAVE 2 THINGS IN COMMON (<https://www.dailykos.com>)

The business owners whose blood, sweat, and tears—or at least their fancy, high-priced educations, family connections and access to venture capital—*built this country, dammit* were hellbent and determined to show American workers who was boss. This COVID-19 nonsense was not going to interfere with their profits any longer. It was time to *take a stand*.

So they all had their administrative assistants conference in their favorite state legislators, the same ones who helpfully passed legislation a few years back, keeping pesky unions out of their states. They called in their chits for all those campaign contributions to the governor. They called their Republican House reps and senators. *Damn that Fauci*, they complained. *My business is hurting. No more lockdowns, no more of this “social distancing” crap. This state is going to open for business and I don’t want to hear another word about body counts or stressed hospitals. I need workers and I need them now. I paid for your damn campaigns, so do something!*

And those state representatives and senators leapt into action. In a matter of a few weeks we saw state after state brimming with self-appointed medical experts in their legislatures, railing about the tyrannical mask mandates and business lockdowns. CEOs and white-collar professionals cracked their whips—many still from the comfort of their fine second homes and pools. And thus the support staff, the retail clerks and the service workers, many of whom who had once been adoringly lionized as “essential” at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, were told it was time to return to work. And for added good measure, Republican governors in those states cut off their unemployment aid. *That’ll show them*, they thought ...

But strangely enough, not all of those workers heeded the call. In fact, a good many of them quit.

As reported by Alyssa Fowers and Eli Rosenberg, writing for *The Washington Post*: Kentucky, Idaho, South Dakota and Iowa reported the highest increases in the rates of workers who quit their jobs in August, according to a new glimpse of quit rates in the labor market released Friday.

The largest increase in the number of quitters happened in Georgia, with 35,000 more people leaving their jobs. Overall, the states with the highest rates of workers quitting their jobs were Georgia, Kentucky and Idaho.

As *The Post* points out, the interesting thing about this data is that service-sector jobs are most highly concentrated in urban areas. So why would people be quitting their jobs at such astronomical rates in such relatively rural states as Kentucky, South Dakota, Iowa and Idaho?

Fowers and Rosenberg offer a clue:

Employees quit or were hired at rates matching or exceeding the national average in the ten states with the highest rates of new infections that month: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Tennessee.

So the highest rate of turnover in August—employees quitting or getting hired—was found in the states which had the highest rate of COVID-19 infection for that month. Logically, that seems to make sense. Workers who live in one of those states were also likely to have a governor or, in the case of Kentucky, a Republican-dominated legislature who opposed business closures, even while the delta variant ravaged the state’s population. Such workers were essentially forced by these states policies to return to work if they could not work from home.

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## THE STATES WHERE THE MOST PEOPLE ARE QUITTING THEIR JOBS SEEM TO HAVE 2 THINGS IN COMMON

Those people forced back to work in an unsafe environment simply decided to quit—many of them likely before ever venturing back into their workspace. After all, they saw a job the other day that was offering more money. Or their next-door neighbor's cousin got a job that pays more and allows them to work from home. *The Post* article quotes Nick Bunker, an economist for the job search portal Indeed, who notes that the high quit rate in these red and rural states “may be a sign there's more competition in those parts of the country than other parts.”

The other interesting point about *all* of the states having both the highest level of turnover and the highest infection rates? They are all so-called “right to work” states, where legislatures passed legislation to disincentivize and discourage unions. So these workers have essentially no protection, no one to turn to for help remedying unsafe conditions, and no collective bargaining power; they can, for the most part, be terminated at will. That's what “right-to work” has always been about.

As one commenter to *The Post* story points out:

So, when you have a crappy job, for crappy wages, and a crappy employer who doesn't value you at all, and all of a sudden you find yourself in a labor market situation that actually encourages you to look for work elsewhere--what do you think is going to happen?

The 'Great Resignation' is largely about working class people attempting to use what little leverage they have in order to make a moderately better wage for themselves in a mostly hostile, oppressive national work environment.

For employers, the downside of “right to work”—one they never saw coming—was the fact that workers in those states had little, if any, incentive to stay, especially when once-in-a-lifetime opportunities arose for them to leave, while competition for higher wages and better working conditions further drove that exodus.

Some employers are responding by antagonizing would-be applicants.



In Missouri, a group of businesses, still frustrated by labor shortages more than three months after the state cut off the \$300-a-week federal jobless checks, paid for billboards in Springfield that said: “Get Off Your Butt!” and “Get. To. Work.”

The state has seen no growth in its workforce since ending emergency benefits.

“We don't know where people are,” said Brad Parke, general manager of Greek Corner Screen Printing and Embroidery, who helped pay for the billboards. “Obviously, they're not at work. Apparently, they're at home.”

The attempt to force workers back to dangerous, unsafe pandemic working conditions—brought on by short-sighted Republican policymakers for political ends—has collided with a culture where workplace protections and the ability to bargain have been completely devalued (also by Republican politicians), leaving workers as essentially dispensable commodities.

No wonder they're quitting for greener pastures in those states. Republican elected officials and their business donors in those same states have no one to blame but themselves. They created this environment, and now they're going to have to cope and adjust with workers who want more out of their jobs ... and know they can get it. They have to keep up and do better, or see their businesses go under. Funny how that worked out.



It's great to communicate with people who agree with us. It's even more important to make the case to people who don't agree with us. Enclosed is an op-ed I just wrote for Fox News discussing the big-money interests that want to defeat the Reconciliation Bill which, in my view, has the chance to be the most consequential piece of legislation for working families in the modern history of our country.

The two great questions that we face right now are whether all Democrats will stand together to protect the interests of the elderly, the children, the sick and the poor, and whether all Democrats will stand together to take on the greed of a handful of special interest groups and wealthy campaign contributors that dominate our political system. This is a fight we cannot lose.

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### **Biden's \$3.5T plan to help working families depends on Democratic unity**

*It is no great surprise that not a single Republican in Congress supports this bill*

By Sen. Bernie Sanders

Wed, Oct 13, 2021

At a time when working families continue to struggle, poll after poll shows that the vast majority of the American people support the provisions in President Joe Biden's \$3.5 trillion Build Back Better Act.

Some 88 percent believe we should lower the cost of prescription drugs, 84 percent believe we should expand Medicare to include dental care, hearing aids and eyeglasses, 73 percent support establishing Paid Family and Medical Leave, and 67 percent want universal Pre-K. Further, 67 percent believe the federal government should raise taxes on high-income people and corporations to help pay for these desperately needed programs — which is what this legislation does.



So, given this overwhelming support, why is it taking so long for Congress to pass this bill? The answer is simple. Follow the money.

As part of our corrupt, big-money dominated political system, the pharmaceutical industry is now spending hundreds of millions of dollars on lobbying, campaign contributions and television ads to defeat this legislation because it does not want Medicare to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices. In order to increase their profits they want American taxpayers to continue paying, by far, the highest prices in the world for our medicine — sometimes ten times more than the people in other countries.

Last year alone, while nearly one out of four Americans could not afford to fill the prescriptions their doctors wrote, six of the largest pharmaceutical companies made nearly \$50 billion in profits and the ten highest paid executives in the industry made more than \$500 million in compensation. In order to preserve their corrupt and greedy pricing system, the drug companies hired nearly 1,500 lobbyists, including former leaders of the Republican and Democratic parties, to protect their interests. That is 3 lobbyists for every member of Congress.

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## OP-ED FROM BERNIE TO FOX NEWS

(continued from page 12)

Unbelievable!

But let's be clear. Opposition to this bill is not just limited to the pharmaceutical industry.

At a time when millions of senior citizens and people with disabilities cannot afford the home health care, dental care, hearing aids, and eyeglasses they desperately need, private health insurance companies are strongly opposed to this legislation. They are spending tens of millions of dollars to defeat this bill because they do not want Congress to expand Medicare to provide dental, hearing, and vision benefits and they apparently do not want seniors to receive the quality care they need in their own homes.



And it's not just the health care industry and big drug companies. The fossil fuel industry is launching a major advertising campaign to defeat this legislation because it seems to be more concerned about protecting their short-term profits than addressing the existential threat of climate change.

At a time of record-breaking forest fires, drought, rising sea levels and extreme weather disturbances the fossil fuel industry has, since 2000, spent more than \$2 billion on lobbying to protect its special interests and prevent the federal government from making cuts in carbon emissions to protect our planet.

Further, at a time of massive wealth and income inequality — when the two richest people in this country own more wealth than the bottom 40 percent — the billionaire class is vigorously opposing this legislation because it wants to prevent Congress from making the wealthiest people and most profitable corporations finally start paying their fair share of taxes. The corporate elite seem to love the idea that billionaires have a lower effective tax rate than nurses or teachers and that, in a given year, there are dozens of profitable corporations that don't pay a nickel in federal income tax.

Let's be clear. The \$3.5 trillion Build Back Better Act will not only expand Medicare, improve home health care for the elderly and disabled, lower prescription drug prices, combat climate change, and demand that the wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share of taxes. It will cut child poverty in half by extending the \$300 a month direct payments for working class parents that expire in December.



It will allow more than a million women to get back into the workforce by making sure that working families pay no more than 7 percent of their incomes on child care and make pre-school free for every 3 and 4 year old in America.

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## OP-ED FROM BERNIE TO FOX NEWS

(continued from page 13)

It will end the international embarrassment of the United States of America being the only major country on earth not to guarantee paid family and medical leave as a human right. Under this legislation, we will no longer tell working moms that they must go back to work a week or two after giving birth in order to put food on the table and pay the rent.

It will address the labor shortage in America by making community colleges tuition free so that young people have the opportunity to acquire the skills they need for the good-paying jobs that are going unfilled today.

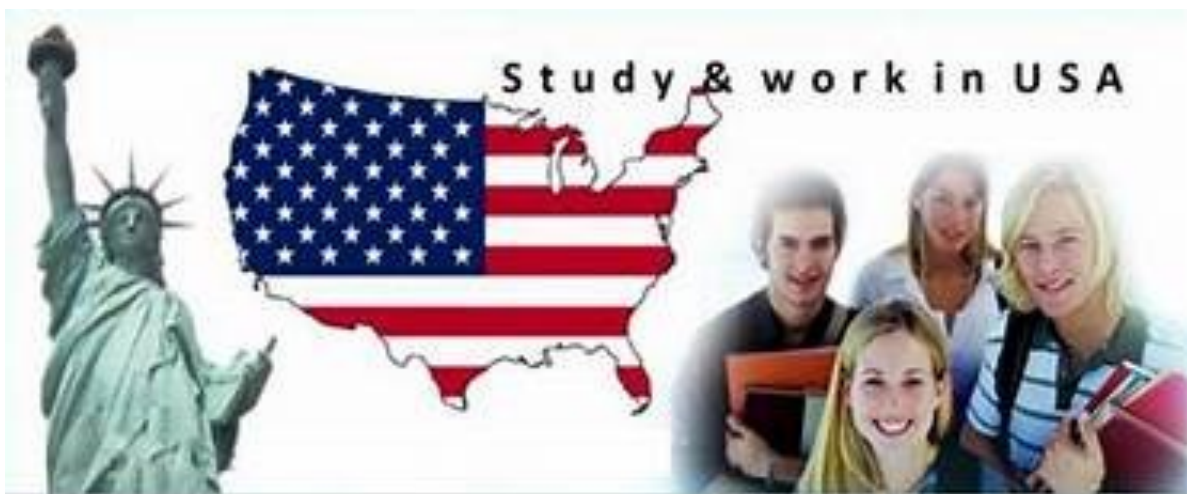
It will create hundreds of thousands of jobs by building the affordable housing we need so that millions of Americans are no longer paying over 50 percent of their limited incomes on housing and so 600,000 Americans are no longer sleeping out on the street or in homeless shelters.

It is no great surprise that not a single Republican in Congress supports this bill. After all, this is the party that four years ago provided \$2 trillion in tax breaks to primarily benefit the wealthy and large corporations, and came within one vote of throwing up to 32 million Americans off their health care.

So, in a tied Senate which has 50 members each of the Democratic and Republican caucuses and a House of Representatives which has a mere three-vote-majority for Democrats, the question of whether we finally deliver consequential legislation to improve the lives of working class families comes down to Democratic unity.

Will *all* Democrats stand together to protect the interests of the elderly, the children, the sick and the poor? Will *all* Democrats stand together to take on the greed of the pharmaceutical industry, the health insurance companies, the fossil fuel industry, and wealthy campaign contributors?

I certainly hope so.





## CREATION CARE CORNER: HOLIDAY GIVING??? — by NANCY URBAN

Way back in the late 60's, when I was teaching first grade in a public school, one of my students was from a family of Jehovah Witnesses. I was concerned about celebrating the Christmas holidays in a way that would be fair to all. In conversation with the family one thing that stood out for me was “we don't celebrate birthdays and gifts on holidays as we believe that a gift should be from the heart, given at any time and not an obligation on certain days”.

For most of us giving and receiving gifts is a long-held joyful holiday tradition, but as we look at this tradition from the view of “Caring for Creation” it can get complicated. Questions to be asked might be—Where did this item come from? How much damage to the earth through shipping and production? How much plastic, oil, toxic paints were used in the item? Does anyone really need this product? Are the workers who made this being treated fairly? How much am I buying into consumeristic and materialistic culture? What happens to the boxes, wrapping paper, ribbons? What messages am I sharing with my grandkids, friends, family?

Many folks that I talk with have taken the route of not exchanging gifts during this time. They say “we don't need anything more”; “we want to keep the holidays simple and just enjoy family and friends without all the hassle”. But if you really do enjoy gifting and find pleasure in this tradition, you do not have to be bound by the consumeristic/earth destroying advertisements.

There are alternatives and many people have found ways of giving that are more in line with our Christian values and our concern for Creation Care. Here are a few suggestions:

Give experiences, time together: trip to a museum, walk in the park with lunch, sharing a skill that you have such as knitting or cooking, membership in something you know the person would enjoy—Mystic Seaport, Science museum, workout at gym, yoga classes, cooking classes, etc.

Donations: to a charity, for a chicken, pig, water filter system, tracking a dolphin, replanting a forest, there are many sources for this kind of giving.

Regifting: Do you have something you are not really using, but someone might like? Pass it on—regift it.



Homemade items: A set of note cards, special jams, salsas, breads, cloth napkins—you get the idea.

Basket of locally made or earth sustainable products. (a friend of mine has tried shampoo that comes in a bar as opposed to a plastic bottle and is giving those this Christmas)

This list could go on; the only limit being one's creativity. However you choose to celebrate, enjoy the wonderful gifts of God's Creation.



Holiday Blessings,

Nancy Urban



### **Christmas Poinsettia Order Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number of plants:

\_\_\_\_\_

All plants are \$19.00 each.

Deadline for ordering poinsettias is December 12, 2021.

Orders can also be mailed to the church office, dropped into the offering plate or emailed to [office.gracelutheranhartford@gmail.com](mailto:office.gracelutheranhartford@gmail.com).

Let's make our church beautiful this Christmas!

## GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE

Wednesday, November 24th at 7:00 pm.

Come and join us with your family for music and lots of gratitude.



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### FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS: HELPING FARM COOPERATIVES AND LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Once again Nancy Urban is offering Organic Fair Trade products from Equal Exchange. Equal Exchange is celebrating 25 years of interfaith partnership helping to build alternative trade networks with small farming communities around the world. With your support farmers have gained greater economic stability allowing them to stay on the land, farm sustainably, and invest in their communities.



Nancy orders in bulk getting wholesale prices and free shipping. All items are organic.

Items available this year are:

Baking cocoa-\$5-8oz can

Mini dark chocolate bars-\$1-5 bars

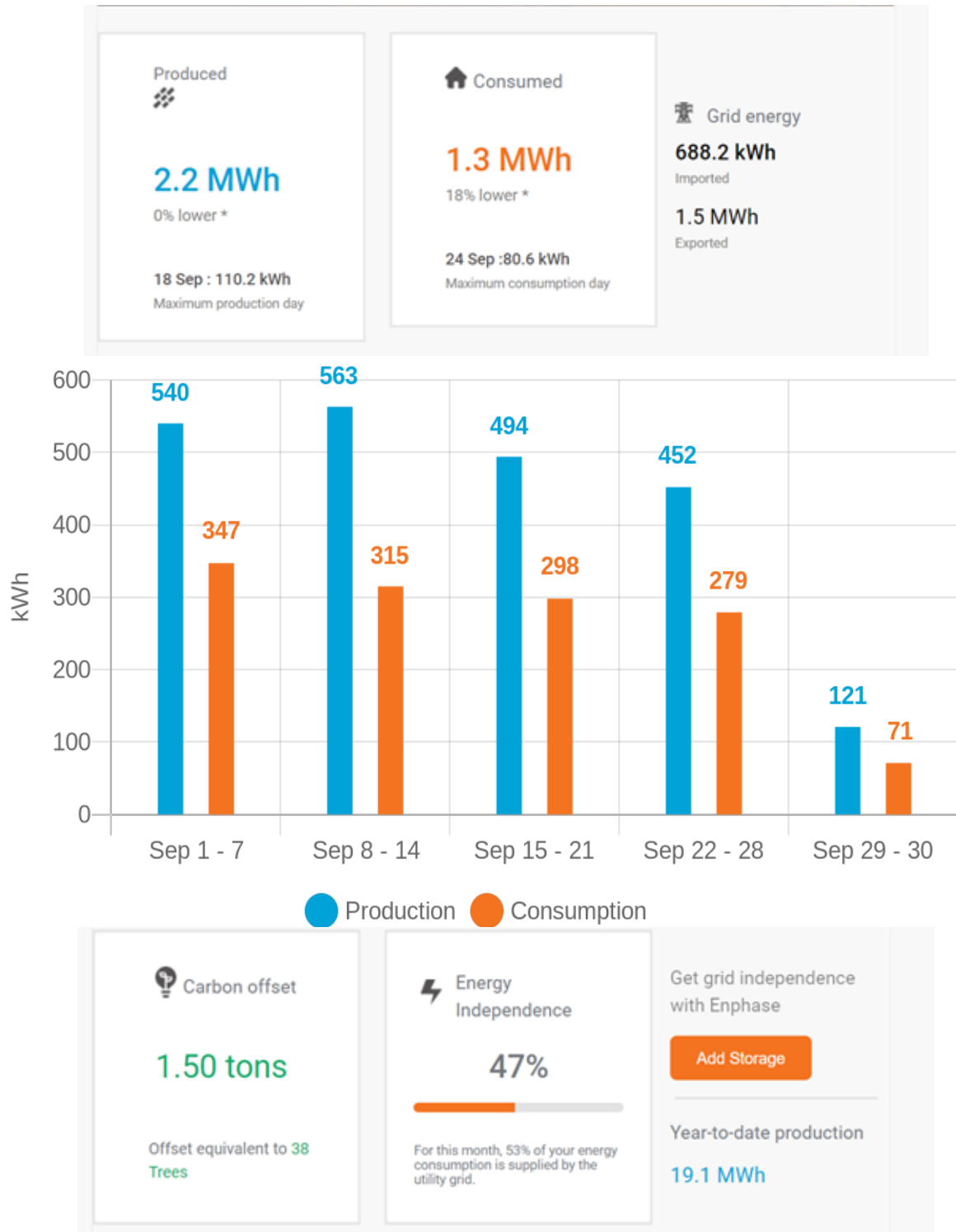
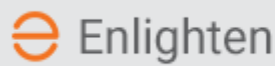
55% cocoa semi-sweet chocolate chips-\$3-10 oz bag

Tea -\$3-20 bags per box. Earl Grey—Decaf English Breakfast—Herbal Tumeric  
Ginger—Green Tea with Ginger—Herbal Peppermint—Herbal Chamomile

If you wish to order any of these items or special coffee, talk with Nancy at 860-416-3336 before November 22 to discuss options.



SOLAR PANEL REPORT



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Save the Date

Grace's own David Eberly is a member of Hartford Men in Harmony Barbershop Quartet, he will be singing in the choir at a concert on Saturday, November 27, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. at Trinity-on-Main, 69 Main Street, New Britain, CT 06051.

He will also be playing the piano prior to the concert and during the intermission.



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### November 2021 Birthdays!

**Birthday Blessings to all  
those who birthday is  
this month.**



*May you all be  
blessed as you  
celebrate your  
special days!*

Did we miss your  
birthday or anniversary?  
Contact the office,  
860-527-7792 or email  
[office.gracelutheranhartford@  
gmail.com](mailto:office.gracelutheranhartford@gmail.com)  
to update our records.



Grace Lutheran Church  
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### **Our Staff and Council Leadership**

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Dorothea Glatte, Lay Minister

Lloyd Smith, Lay Minister

Louisa Barton-Duguay, Religious Worker

Artist in Residence for Outreach

Barbara Ruhe, President

Lou Oliver, Vice President

Mildred Unfried, Assistant Vice President

Barbara Calogero, Secretary

Dale Eberhardt, Treasurer

Janice Potter, Financial Assistant

Dale Eberhardt, Organist

Walter Scott, Sexton

[www.graceistheplace.org](http://www.graceistheplace.org)

