



# GRACE NOTES

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, 46 WOODLAND STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06105 860-527-7792

**NOVEMBER 2024**

## **COMING TOGETHER – For Truth, Love and the “American Way”**

Yes, it is the last call for our country, what we believe to be right, and what we know to be wrong... many of us are confused, angered and undecided. Our politics, yes, our politics, our courts, giving ... and more. And in our aging, some of us, well, many of us are just plain tired. Strikingly, it wraps our faith, and our sorrow, the darkness of hatred, with a glimmer of hope.

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We're waiting for an end to the unknowns.

Violence is growing... hate is not far behind.

In the meantime, many are joining the other side. Letting go of fascism, redefining the role of women, people of color, LGBGQT+ people, people from Puerto Rico, Haiti, and countries throughout the world, etc. Paying attention to the treatment all people are given, enabling them to love who they want, when they want, etc. and to become free. This is what all of this is about. There are many articles and reports that speak of all this inside.

We know and realize that part of this battle is about influence of other countries on us, particularly Putin, China, Myanmar, North Korea, places in Africa, Mexico, places where it is no longer safe for people to live. and others. Rather than come together to address these threats, we contribute, we participate, and things get worse. We were a light for the world. The world needs our light, but first we must regain our own. We can agree to disagree, but we must come to the table.

Morning Joe is a morning show on MSNBC with Co-Host Mika Brzezinski on the show with Joe Scarborough. A couple of days ago, Mika had a request from a well-known and world-famous singer Stevie Nicks. She wanted to speak with Mika alone. That would be the only way she would be on the show. She said that she has for years been listening to HER on the show. She had

realized that watching her on the show helped her through her own life, it's challenges and issues. She had a gift for Mika, but she would only give it, if she could have Mika be the one to talk with on the program.

Joe seemed OK with that, but it was quite a bit out of the ordinary. You see, SHE has been a co-host, but it is Joe's show. She is a very strong and capable woman with great knowledge, her father was a very important figure in the government, she graduated from Williams College and is an author and grew up in New York City. Enough with all this.

Stevie, and her “producer” Sheryl Crow, joined Stevie, again, kind of taking over the show, but realized something was going on here and he'd best let it continue.

Stevie continued, I haven't realized just how much help you have given me in my life, and I want you to know about it. And, if we can do this with you now. Before the show is over, I will introduce a new song, that I have written for you, Mika. And, that song will hit the airways before the show is over, and you will be able to hear it, know the words, and everybody in the world will be able to know how important you have been and are in my life.

Here are the words:

The Lighthouse:

Song by: Stevie Nicks

*I have my scars, you have yours  
Don't let them take your power  
Don't leave it alone in the final hours  
They'll take your soul, they'll take your power  
Don't close your eyes and hope for the best  
The dark is out there  
The light is going fast  
Until the final hours  
Your life's forever changed  
And all the rights that you had yesterday  
Are taken away  
And now you're afraid  
You should be afraid  
Should be afraid  
Because everything I fought for  
Long ago in a dream is gone.  
Someone said the dream is not over  
The dream has just begun, or  
Is it a nightmare?*



*Is it a lasting scar?  
It is, unless you save it?  
And that's that-  
Unless you stand up  
And take it back  
And take it back  
I have my scars, you have yours  
Don't let them take your power  
Don't leave it alone in the final hours  
They'll take your soul, they'll take your power  
Unless you stand up  
And take it back  
Try to see the future  
And get mad  
It's slippin' through your fingers  
You don't have what you had  
You don't have much time  
To get it back  
I wanna be the lighthouse  
Bring all of you together  
Bring it out in a song  
Bring it out in stormy weather  
Tell them the story  
I wanna teach 'em to fight  
I wanna tell 'em  
This has happened before  
Don't let it happen again  
I have my scars, you have yours  
Don't let them take your power  
Don't let them take your power  
Don't leave it alone in the final hours  
They'll take your soul, they'll take your power  
Unless you save it  
And that's that  
Unless you stand up  
And take it back*



*Try to see the future  
And get made  
It's slippin' through your fingers  
You don't have what you had  
You don't have much time  
You've gotta get in the game  
You've gotta learn how to play  
You've gotta make some change, you've gotta do it today  
In the midnight hour, they'll slam the door  
Make you forget what you were fighting for  
Put you back in your place, they'll shut ya down  
You better learn how to fight  
You better say it out loud*

Here is the YOUTUBE link to her song.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJDCYh5iWQs>

All that came true, and the 70+ Stevie Nicks added her voice (the song is wonderful) and the message could not be overstated for what it is that very sad and sick people seem to see as the way the world should be. It's NOT!





## WITH GOD'S HELP – PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Our world is at a precipice. We all can feel it, it has little to do with the dangers of a close election, although we know that at least one point of view is that there are already problems with the voting. This side believes that the only thing they can do is win. If they don't win, there is something wrong.

The facts have much to do with those who would expand their power and influence, impacting on the lives of millions, world-wide. Those who would leverage their power and influence band together as extremists and use Christian Nationalism as the means to control women, "whether they like it or not". Led by a failed former president, who depends on relationships with Russia, North Korea, an extremist leader in Israel, and it goes on and on.

Russia helped get him elected the first time. Now, after failing his attempts to be re-elected, he has locked arms with dictators throughout the world. Trump depends on that. He remains a pawn of Russia, and is now joined at the hip of Elon Musk and Benjamin Netanyahu.

Wars are no longer isolated, as these war-mongers are seeing this time of uncertainty as a time to take advantage, to make the fearful get out of the way, and let those who would change our country for good have had it. The risks are large and the time is short.

Women are fed-up, union members are angry, the middle class continues as those who are different, poor, jobless, homeless and frightened by the violence of the insurrection and the prospect of yet another one.

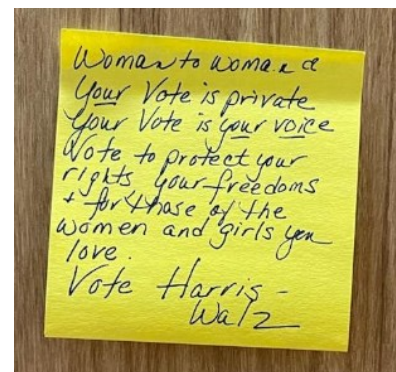
It could be civil war, but with the extremists among us, it would be far from civil. The words being used today are meant to frighten and to scare, not to seek agreements and justice.

Our country has been a beacon of freedom, and now feels more like a roadway for lies, discontent, guns, and violence. This, we pray, will be its last gasp. And it is the women in this country who have taken the lead, who are demanding justice.

Along comes a prosecutor, who is born of an Indian woman and a Jamaican man. While her mother was there for her, and encouraged her pursuits of education, her father was to be a professor at Stanford. Both parents encouraged her to learn; as a child her mother would encourage her to learn, learn, learn. Her father said, no, Kamala, run, run, run. Thank God for her childhood, her tenacity, her fearlessness and her readiness to stop the hemorrhaging and disaffection of so many. From a decidedly middle-class background she has come to restore our democracy, and to show us how.



*This post-it note was found on each stall at the Women's Room at Bradley Airport today.*



## HARTFORD MEN IN HARMONY EVENT - NOVEMBER 23rd



**HARTFORD MEN IN HARMONY**

**SATURDAY 11/23 AT 7:30 P.M.**

**SEDGWICK MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**128 SEDGWICK ROAD, WEST HARTFORD**

**TICKETS – AVAILABLE ONLINE AHEAD OF TIME OR AT THE DOOR - \$15 TO \$30**

***OUR DAVID EBERLY WILL BE PLAYING AT 7 P.M. AND DURING INTERMISSION***

BARBERSHOP'S BEST COMES TO CONNECTICUT



The Hartford Men in Harmony Presents:

The 80th Festival of Harmony  
**FAMILIAR FAVORITES**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2024 - 7:30 PM  
SEDGWICK MIDDLE SCHOOL, W. HARTFORD, CONN.



—Secret Best Friends—  
2024 Barbershop Harmony Society Int'l 8th Place Finalists



—Past Curfew—  
2024 Sweet Adelines Region 1 Silver Medalists



—Greenlight—  
2018 Northeastern District Quartet Champion



—Aberdeen—  
2024 Division Women's Quartet Champion

Scan for Tickets or visit [www.hmih.org](http://www.hmih.org):





**GREATER HARTFORD INTERFAITH ACTION  
ALLIANCE (GHIAA) REMINDER!  
NOVEMBER 21 POWER SUMMIT**



by Darrell Urban

The GHIAA Power Summit is November 21st! It's important that you be there!

If you haven't already registered, please contact Darrell Urban at 860-416-3818 or [darrellburban@gmail.com](mailto:darrellburban@gmail.com)

**GHIAA 2024  
POWER  
SUMMIT**



**THURSDAY NOV 21  
6:30-8:30PM  
DOORS OPEN AT 6PM**

**REGISTER WITH YOUR GHIAA CORE TEAM**

**TOGETHER WE CREATE CHANGE  
WE'LL BE THERE  
WILL YOU?**

**WEAVER HIGH SCHOOL  
415 GRANBY ST, HARTFORD, CT 06112**

**[WWW.CLJCT.ORG/GHIAA](http://WWW.CLJCT.ORG/GHIAA)**

The poster features a background image of a large, diverse crowd of people seated in a gymnasium or large hall, facing towards the front. The text is overlaid on this image in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The GHIAA logo is centered between the title and the date information.

## WHY EQUAL EXCHANGE-FAIR TRADE?

by Nancy Urban

At a recent congregation Council meeting, the Council reconfirmed the commitment to purchase and use Equal Exchange, Fair Trade coffee at congregation events such as the Sunday Hospitality time following worship. Some might ask “why not just go with the cheapest since we run a tight budget?” Here are some considerations that go beyond price.

1. Impacting Climate Change: When we purchase organic Equal Exchange fairly traded food products, we're assisting producers in co-ops who use regenerative, organic agricultural methods. Their crops are free of fossil fuel-based fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides which pollute the environment and expose farmers to toxic chemicals. Rather than clearing the land for one crop, they use shade-grown farming (coffee grown under banana trees is one example) where trees, birds, insects amphibians, fish and clean water along with coffee are all sharing the land together. This, along with natural composting and mulching help the environment rather than harming it. The soil keeps regenerating, retaining moisture and becoming a carbon sponge

2. Cooperatives reflect our values of social justice: Rather than using the traditional chain of marketing that uses large corporations taking much of the profits, local cooperatives work directly with Equal Exchange so that most of the profits go right back to the community, enabling farmers to receive a fair price for their product which allows them to stay on their land, able to provide food for their families and having economic control over their lives. The cooperatives also use some of the profits to build schools, medical clinics and train new farmers.

## IS YOUR CHOCOLATE SUPPORTING CHILD LABOR?

Reports estimate that there are more than 2 million child laborers in the cacao sectors of the Ivory Coast and Ghana alone, countries that produce 70% of the world's cacao. The root cause of this problem is poverty where farm families make roughly \$2/day which is not enough to sustain them. As with coffee, Equal Exchange has worked with cacao farmers assisting in forming cooperatives to set up an alternative supply chain in the Dominican Republic, Peru, Panama and Togo. These cooperatives help to keep families on their land, provide a sustainable wage and also provide funds for community projects.

GOOD NEWS! ORGANIC EQUAL EXCHANGE-FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS COMING TO GRACE ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10th and 24th.

Nancy Urban, who purchases these products wholesale, will have several options available for purchase during the hospitality time following worship. Baking cocoa, dark 70% chocolate chips, mini dark chocolates, assorted teas and coffee will be available. Decorative Holiday jars of coffee beans, trail mix and mini's will also be available. Get them for your personal use, put in Christmas stockings, use as a hostess/thank you gift, or for that person who is hard to gift.

Prices range from \$1-\$10.





J. D. Vance's lies about Haitian immigrants reveal his willingness to trade his dignity for attention.

by Peter W. Marty in the November 2024 issue of Christian Century

Published on October 1, 2024



(Illustration: francescoch / iStock / Getty)

Nothing seems to boil the blood of Jesus quite like the behavior of hypocrites. That's my take from the biblical evidence. Other

sinner—thieves, prostitutes, and murderers, to name a few—receive his reproach in compassionate packaging. Not so with hypocrites. These ones who masquerade as servants of righteousness bear the full brunt of his condemnation.

For most of us, hypocrisy brings to mind inconsistency or duplicity. A person says one thing but does another. But when Jesus describes hypocrisy, it's the trait of those who play to the crowds. The sort of actors who search for human approval, wanting only to be seen. They don any mask that will give an audience what they want. Their self-worth is measured by what others think of them. Their chief goal is to be noticed, recognized, seen. In Matthew's Gospel, hypocrites are those who blow a trumpet when they give alms, pray ostentatiously, and alter their appearance when fasting, all for one single reason: "in order that others will see them" (6:1).

A desire for attention typically tops the list of psychological and social motivations for people who habitually make up stories. Vice presidential candidate J. D. Vance showed off his play-acting credentials in recent weeks by doubling down on his right to make up stories for the sake of garnering attention. "If I have to create stories so that the American media actually pays attention to the suffering of the American people, then that's what I'm going to do," he told a reporter. This stunning admission of a willingness to fabricate stories, with no felt obligation to tell the truth, came on the heels of his cruel rumor about Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, abducting, cooking, and eating the pets of local residents.

The scurrilous nature of Vance's lie achieved what he was after. Not only did he receive the unbroken press coverage he craved, he upped his own sense of self-worth by giving his supporters three things they love to hear: a racialized narrative that Black and Brown immigrants are savages and criminals, the false impression that these Haitian immigrants are "illegal aliens," and the opportunity to have his particular fiction operate as an incendiary device to fuel more conspiracies and hatred.

Accusing immigrants of vulgar eating habits has a long history. When German immigration to the United States increased in the 19th century, many newcomers became the victim of cruel jokes and xenophobia. An ugly rumor surfaced about dogs disappearing when German butchers would arrive in a neighborhood. An American songwriter, Septimus Winner, wrote that rumor into his 1864 song "Der Deitcher's Dog"—Deitscher being a common pronunciation of

Deutscher (German man). We know it today as the nursery rhyme “Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone?” Winner intended the song to mimic a German immigrant with poor English speculating on the fate of his missing dog. The final verse reveals the fate: “Un sasage ist goot, bolonie of course, / Oh where, Oh where can he be. / Dey makes um mit dog und dey makes em mit horse, / I guess dey makes em mit he.” How ironic that Donald Trump would amplify his running mate’s blatant fabulism about Haitian immigrants, a slur that could well have been used against his own grandfather emigrating from Germany.

Springfield, Ohio, never asked for the bomb threats, neo-Nazi marches, and hate filled memes that Vance’s shameless playacting has brought on. But the Haitian owner of a religious supply store in Springfield offered a generous word about those perpetuating Vance’s lie: “I strongly believe that these people, they’re not evil,” Jacob Payen told NPR. “They’re just lost.” That’s a perceptive claim.

According to Jesus, those so desperate to be seen by others and win their acclaim have lost their core identity. They’ve reduced their dignity to the applause of others and relegated God to the periphery of their lives.



**Peter W. Marty**

*Peter W. Marty is editor/publisher of the Century (since 2016), and recently retired from 28 years as senior pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Davenport, Iowa.*

**PRESIDENT BIDEN HAS 100 DAYS LEFT IN OFFICE. HE HAS NEWLY GRANTED SUPREME POWERS WITH IMMUNITY AND NO POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. WHAT IF HE WERE TO USE THEM?**



Dear President Biden:

I have found myself thinking of you often over these past few days. About how we will remember your time in the White House, about what your legacy will be. Certainly, you will be remembered for your brave and selfless act of stepping aside, of elevating the person who could be and, if I have any say in this, *will be* our first woman President in this country’s nearly 250-year history.

Beyond that, what will the history books say about your time — about your journey from Scranton to the Senate, your tireless defense of the working class, your eight years as Vice President to our nation’s first Black president, the personal tragedies that you have selflessly channeled into compassion for others, or your record as the most progressive president we have had since FDR?

Some people are now calling you a “lame duck” president — but then it occurred to me today: **You’re not done.** You’ve still got 100 days left in office! And the Supreme Court has just granted you super powers — AND immunity! You don’t answer to anyone. For the first time in over 50 years, you don’t have to campaign for anything. You are the *opposite* of lame, Joe. And you are

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not a duck. You, sir, are the **President of the United States of America**, and for the next 100 days, you have tremendous power. The only people you have to answer to is **us**. The people who put you there. You have an extraordinary opportunity to make a whole bunch of things happen. Great things. Important things. With a simple stroke or two of your presidential pen, you can make life better for millions of people in ways you never would've dreamed possible. You will leave the White House a hero.

So I've put together a list — a Bucket List for Scranton Joe — of executive actions that you can legally take today or any day until January 20, 2025.

There is still so much left for you to do, so much left that you *can* do, and so much left that I know, deep down in your heart, *you* know that you *must* do, no matter how difficult it may be.

And the best part is, the items on this list already have the **support of the majority** of the American people. You'll be doing the things they elected you to do. And what better note to leave on than that?

You want to help people, Joe. That's your legacy. That's the *real* Joe Biden.

And, did I mention — **You have full immunity!** No kidding! No joke! That's not hyperbole! You can get away with *anything!* And what if *anything* means **everything** to the people? Joe, this is it:

## President Biden's Bucket List for The Final 100 Days

### 1. Officially Declare the Equal Rights Amendment for Women (E.R.A.) as the 28th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

On January 27, 2020, the state of Virginia became the 38th state (of the required 38 states needed) to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. Two hundred and forty four years after the Declaration of Independence declared that all men were created equal (but only if they were, in fact, *men* who were *white* and *owned land*), **women's** Constitutional equality was finally recognized! Except it wasn't.

The Trump administration's Department of Justice refused to publish the fully ratified 28th Amendment to the Constitution, saying it "took too long" and now a few red states wanted to "de-ratify" it. But the Constitution grants no power to rescind a ratification (that's why there's a 21st Amendment ["Drink Up — It's On The House!"] that repealed the 18th Amendment ["Alcohol is the Devil's Demon Seed!"]). And the Constitution grants no power to set time limits on how long it takes to ratify an Amendment. It took 202 years to ratify the 27th Amendment. President Biden, for almost four years, you have had the power to order the United States Archivist to publish the now-ratified Equal Rights Amendment as the law of the land. Will women-haters try to sue to stop it? Well, of course they will! So what! Let 'em. When does our side stop being so cowardly? 93% of the country believes women should have the same rights as men. You have the legal and Constitutional authority to permanently enshrine this Amendment where the American people overwhelmingly want it: **IN OUR UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION!**

**DO IT TODAY!** It will take less than two minutes! About the same time it took Lincoln to give the Gettysburg Address.

Be the hero to all women you say you are. I think even Anita Hill will light a candle in your honor. In fact, call her now and invite her over to the posting ceremony this afternoon.

# **PRESIDENT BIDEN HAS 100 DAYS LEFT IN OFFICE. HE HAS NEWLY GRANTED SUPREME POWERS WITH IMMUNITY AND NO POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. WHAT IF HE WERE TO USE THEM?**

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## **2. Cancel All Student Debt Now.**

You ran on the promise to cancel all student loan debts. Now is the time to do it! Break the law if you have to (remember — *you have immunity!*). You have made admirable efforts so far, but the Republican Supreme Court of Right Wing Catholics, along with the Republican Congress of Election Denying **Traitors**, keep trying to stop you. Now's the time to go whole hog and just wipe away ALL student debt. And while you're at it, take the advice of the American Federation of Teachers and fire MOHELA, the company currently under contract with the Department of Education that is one of the largest holders of student debt in the country. Better yet, don't fire them, nationalize 'em, and cancel all the debt they hold. *You have immunity!*

Everyone under the age of 40 who is saddled with this insane debt — debt that is unheard of and even outlawed in most other Democracies — these younger Americans will not only be sure to set new record numbers for Harris at the polls, they will fire up millions of bongs in your honor.

## **3. Cancel Medical Debt, too!**

While you are at it, cancel medical debt, too! Americans owe \$220 BILLION in medical debt to our corrupt, bloated, broken and exploitative health care system. Like student loan debt, these undue burdens that *no other civilized country suffers from* cripple our households and keep people living paycheck to paycheck, unable to afford rent, car payments and even groceries. You have some of the smartest minds in the legal world at your fingertips. What's the wildest, most aggressive plan they've presented to you to cancel medical debt? Now's your chance. Shortly before you ended your campaign, you pledged that ending medical debt would be a primary goal for your second term. Well, you have three months to go. Treat this time as your second term. You've got nothing to lose. And everything to gain from a grateful nation that will finally be able to realize that part of the American Dream called "the pursuit of happiness" because they will finally be out from under this crushing debt.

## **4. Close Guantanamo Bay.**

Close the United States Military's Guantanamo Bay Torture Base *now*. It represents a dark stain on America's standing in the world. It is long, long past time for GITMO to go. Shut it down.

## **5. Free Cuba, Free Our Souls.**

Last November, an overwhelming 187 countries in the UN General Assembly came together — *for the 31st time!* — to demand the United States end our six decade-long trade embargo against Cuba. The only country that voted with us was... *wait for it...* Israel! Oh, and one nation abstained — Ukraine. No decent person can look at this and truly believe America is on the right side of this issue. It is time to normalize all relations with Cuba, end all sanctions against Cuba, end the embargo and fully recognize the Cuban people's right to self-determination. And while you're in Havana at the signing ceremony, announce that you're also giving Guantanamo Bay back to the Cuban people since we don't need it anymore (see above) because it's quite obviously *their* land. The devout Catholic in you knows that what we're doing to Cuba is wrong. Joe, free our souls of this sinful burden, do what is right.

## **6. Be Israel's Best Friend, Stop the Slaughter.**

How many violations of red lines will it take until you've had enough? How many times can Netanyahu flaunt your rules, ignore your advice, and spit in your face? He came to Our House, the People's House, and spewed hate and violence from the spot where *you* normally stand. Mass



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carnage, mass murder, mass destruction all being committed in America's name — with America's bombs and America's weapons and America's money — all of which **you** sent him. Stop the slaughter now. Halt all weapons shipments. Halt all military aid. Demand the ceasefire. Put Bibi in the corner or in the timeout room and tell Israel to get its shit together, get to the negotiating table, and make a deal to end this madness, free the hostages in Gaza, free the political prisoners in Israel and stop this slaughter.

In May, your own State Department issued a report admitting that it was “reasonable to assess” that Israel has violated international humanitarian law — by using American weapons! In 1997, Senator Patrick Leahy conceived and introduced a law — now known as “the Leahy Law” — which prohibits the United States from funding and arming foreign military forces if the Secretary of State has “credible information” that this military unit is violating human rights. By continuing to arm the Israeli military after that report, the U.S. government is in violation of the Leahy Law. And do you know who is saying that we're in violation of the Leahy Law? The guy who wrote the law! This past May, Patrick Leahy explained how our arming of Israel violates the very law he authored. We are funding a genocide, we are funding human rights abuses and war crimes, we are funding the breaking of International laws. And in the process, we are breaking *our own laws*! It is time for this to stop, and **you** have the power to **stop it**. It's not anti-semitic. It's not anti-Israel. It's the opposite! It's doing what any true best friend does: Tell you when you are messing up! And set you straight! Oh — *and it's the law*!

### **7. Back in the U.S.S.R., Keep Your Comrades Warm.**

Similarly, the senseless destruction in Ukraine must end. Putin does not want to be Trump's friend. In fact, Putin threw Trump under the bus yesterday by admitting that he did, in fact, secretly receive free COVID tests from Trump when they were most needed by the American people. Putin wants to be *your* friend, Joe. Cause who better to pull him out of this mess that he started with his illegal invasion of Ukraine than another president who finds himself in a mess involving the illegal bombing of a civilian population that the entire world is against?

President Biden, you pride yourself on your foreign policy knowledge and prowess. *Use it*. Get Putin to the negotiating table. You cannot end your presidency with America still funding these two bloody wars, one against the people of Gaza, the other with Ukraine trying to defend itself from Russian aggression. What greater way to close out your administration than to bring an end to these two wars! You're the expert here, so do whatever it is you have to do because back here at home we have an education system we need to fund, teachers we need to pay, students who need a warm meal, a health care system that needs to be made universal — you get the idea. For my money, I think enough people have died. Let's cut our losses and invest in the future. Russia, go home. Ukraine, you lost Crimea a decade ago. Mexico lost Texas in 1848. I wish they hadn't. We've been stuck with it now, like, forever. They're not getting it back. Bad things happen. Let's pick up the pieces and move on. No more killing. Thanks to you, Joe, Putin has lost many lives and much prestige. He won't try this again anytime soon.

### **8. Empty Federal Death Row.**

As a candidate, Mr. President, you campaigned on the promise to “pass legislation to eliminate the death penalty at the federal level, and incentivize states to follow the federal government's example.” You said that even the worst criminals on Death Row “should instead serve life sentences without probation or parole.” This was your stance. Now... it is your time. That law never passed, but you still have the power to do something else. There are currently 40 people on the Federal Death Row. They have committed heinous awful crimes. But still, Joe... *who are we*? The only other countries on Earth that routinely execute their own citizens are China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq,

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Egypt, and North Korea. Is that who we are? Really? Since the federal death penalty was reinstated in 1988, just 16 men have been executed. Three of them in George W. Bush's first term and 13 of them during the Trump administration, all of them in the final 7 months of his disgraceful presidency. It was your campaign promise to end this barbarism. Commute their sentences to life without parole and let them live with what they've done. (Note: May I remind you that four out of the last five Popes opposed the death penalty. The second to last one called for its abolition, and the current one called it a Mortal Sin. That's not a venial sin, Joe, it's a MORTAL one. That's bad!)

### **9. Free Leonard Peltier.**

Mr. President, Leonard Peltier is two years younger than you. Mr. Peltier has now been in prison for over 46 years. To put that another way, three years after you entered the United States Senate, Mr. Peltier was locked up. I don't think I need to tell you that this is a very long time. Think of all you have experienced in these past 46 years, Joe. What if instead of all that, you had just sat in prison the entire time? May I please refresh your memory on the facts of Mr. Peltier's case?

Leonard Peltier, a Native American civil rights activist was pursued and surveilled by the FBI because of his political engagement. The evidence at his trial included conveniently altered details and a key witness who was coerced into testifying. Now, one of the lead prosecutors in Mr. Peltier's case, United States Attorney James Reynolds, has written to you, asking for Mr. Peltier's release.

"With time, and the benefit of hindsight," Mr. Reynolds wrote in 2021, "I have realized that the prosecution of and continued incarceration of Mr. Peltier was and is unjust." Among those who have called for Mr. Peltier's clemency include: Jesse Jackson, Bernie Sanders, Robert Redford, Elizabeth Warren, Tom Morello and Rage Against the Machine, the Dali Lama, the late Kris Kristofferson and Harry Belafonte. And Nelson Mandela. Joe, c'mon man — even Mother Teresa wanted him freed! President Biden, you know what you have to do. Now... you just have to do it. It will take less than a minute. Pick up the phone and buzz your indigenous cabinet member, Secretary of the Interior, Rep. Deb Haaland — who urged Biden to release Peltier in a tweet writing, "At 75 with chronic health issues, it is urgent that we #FreeLeonardPeltier."

### **10. Pardon Edward Snowden.**

Hey, Joe, do you remember back in the spring of 2014, you were Vice President and President of the Senate, and the late Dianne Feinstein, who had spent the previous nine months defending the NSA's mass surveillance of American citizens, went public with claims that the CIA was spying on her committee, the Senate Intelligence Committee, and that it violated her 4th Amendment right to privacy? What did you think of that? Did you think that U.S. Senators should get different rights than the rest of the American public? That *they* should be safe from the government's prying eyes — but that *we*, the people, should have no such rights?

Edward Snowden, as you very well know, exposed a *massive* scandal involving the highest levels of the United States government and its intelligence community. Hired as a contractor for the NSA, he saw what the vast majority of Americans never see — and when he learned that the government was spying on its own people, he did exactly the right thing. He told us. After Snowden's whistleblowing, the NSA's mass surveillance program was found to be ILLEGAL in court. Edward Snowden did this country a service. And for that — for embarrassing the United States Government, for exposing the illegal actions of the intelligence community — he's a criminal? Let's be real, Joe. Edward Snowden deserves a pardon. Like Chelsea Manning (whose sentence was commuted), Eugene Debs (whose sentence was commuted) and Daniel Ellsberg (whose case was dismissed), Edward Snowden made this country a safer, smarter and stronger place. He exposed corruption. He defended American freedom. *That's* what America is all about. What would you have done, in his shoes? What would Beau have done? Just let the government

## CHURCH NEWS

### FRIDAY GATHERING

**Entertainment** - if you would be interested in/willing to entertain at a Friday Gathering Dinner, please let Judy Butterworth-Kremer know at judyvbk@aol.com.

### JANET'S CLOSET -

Volunteers (escorts) are still needed for Wednesdays and Saturdays. We need gently used seasonal clothing, blankets and shoes. Clothing racks are needed, too.



### Special Dates of Note

**11/22 - Friday Dinner - David Eberly will be playing.**

**11/28 - Thanksgiving Day - there will be no service on this day.**

**First Calvary will be offering a breakfast for the community in the morning.**



### Prayer for Those Being Held in Captivity

May the Holy One who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah; bless, protect and guard our missing brothers and sisters who are in distress and captivity. May the Holy Compassionate One, bring them out of darkness and the shadow of death; may God break their bonds, deliver them from their distress, and bring them swiftly back to their families' embrace. May there be fulfilled in them the verse: "Those redeemed by God will return; they will enter Zion with singing, and everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

And let us say: Amen.

מִי שְׁבֵרָה אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבֹרָהִם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ וְיִשְׁמֵר וְיִנְצֵר אֶת כָּל אֲחֵינוּ וְאֲחֻיּוֹתֵינוּ הַנֶּעְדָּרִים הַנִּתְּנוּיִם בְּצָרָה וּבְשִׁבְיָה. הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵיהֶם, וְיִצְיָאֵם מִחֶשֶׁךְ וְצִלְמוֹת, וּמוֹסְרוֹתֵיהֶם יִנְתֵּן, וּמִמְצוּקוֹתֵיהֶם יוֹשִׁיעֵם, וְיִשִּׁיבֵם מִהֲרָה לַחִיק מִשְׁפְּחוֹתֵיהֶם. וְיִקְרָא

בָּהֶם מִקְרָא שְׂכֵתוֹב: וּפְדוּתָא ה' יִשְׁבּוּן, וּבֵאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה, וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל-רֵאשֵׁם, שְׁשׁוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה יִשְׁגּוּ ,

וְנִסּוּ יִגּוֹן וְאֲנָחָה: וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן



## **PRESIDENT BIDEN HAS 100 DAYS LEFT IN OFFICE. HE HAS NEWLY GRANTED SUPREME POWERS WITH IMMUNITY AND NO POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. WHAT IF HE WERE TO USE THEM?**

(continued from page 14)

keep on spying on Americans? No! Joe, you would've done the same thing because you love America. He doesn't deserve prison, he deserves a medal. And you know it. Pardon Edward Snowden. Give him the medal.

### **11. Pardon Sister Carol Gilbert. And posthumously, Sister Jackie Hudson and Sister Ardeth Platte.**

In October 2002, these three Dominican nuns dressed in white hazmat suits and broke into a nuclear missile site in Colorado. They used a hammer to bang on a nuclear missile silo loaded with a Minuteman III missile that was armed with a 20 kiloton nuclear bomb. They made the sign of the cross on the silo's lid in their own blood and said a prayer: "Oh God, help us to be peacemakers in a hostile world." Later, Sister Ardeth would recount, "Every movement of our body was a liturgy."

The three nuns were arrested. This was not their first run-in with the law. As members of the peaceful and anti-nuclear Plowshares movement, Sister Carol had previously been arrested at the Pentagon in the mid-1990s, and in 1998, they were arrested after attending an air show at Andrews Air Force Base and banging on a B-52 bomber with a hammer and pouring their blood on it.

Two years later, they entered another Air Force base and put their blood on a fighter jet. I dedicated my 2001 book, *Stupid White Men*, to them, and Sister Ardeth would later become the inspiration for a character on Netflix's *Orange is the New Black*. You see, the Sisters had spent so much time in prisons, that they took that as part of their calling, too. Sister Ardeth became a chaplain for all faiths behind bars, fighting the unfair sentencing of the mostly poor women of color alongside whom she served her time. Sister Jackie passed away from cancer after one of their early stints in jail, but Sister Carol and Sister Ardeth continued on. By 2017, they estimated that they had spent more than 15 years in total behind bars, and had been arrested around 40 times. Sister Ardeth died in 2020, with Sister Carol by her side. Sister Carol has continued their cause to this day. I don't even know that she — or they — would *want* a Pardon. But you should give it to them anyway. And then, when Sister Carol immediately goes out with pardon in hand to continue her righteous lifelong protest against the bloodthirsty violence of our murderous and militarized government, you or



President Harris can pardon her again.

(Note: In the full interest of transparency, Sister Ardeth and Sister Carol were "my nuns" back in the 1970s and later worked on my paper *The Flint Voice* —when they weren't being pursued by law enforcement.)

### **12. Ban All Spam Text Messaging (Including Political Fundraising Text Messages!).**

Everyone hates these. The only people who like them are scammers and politicians. Weird combo,



## **PRESIDENT BIDEN HAS 100 DAYS LEFT IN OFFICE. HE HAS NEWLY GRANTED SUPREME POWERS WITH IMMUNITY AND NO POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. WHAT IF HE WERE TO USE THEM?**

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huh? Anyway, these messages are annoying, unhelpful and often harmful. These unregulated texts are used to scam our most vulnerable people out of their hard-earned money. They serve no good purpose. More importantly, if you were the President who successfully saved every American from being bombarded by this daily barrage of messages, we'd add your head to Mount Rushmore tomorrow (as long as you do 60% of the other things on this list as well.)

Finally:

### **13. Grant Clemency to Non-Violent Drug Offenders, Many of Whom Need Help and Recovery, Not Prison Time (People Just Like Your Son, Hunter).**

Do I really need to say more, Joe? For the last 30 years, our nation has practiced a campaign of mass incarceration. You're responsible for some of that, and I think it weighs on your conscience. Now, you're seeing just a small glimpse of this up close and in your own house. What they did to your son is evil, Joe. It's evil. And it's no different than what's happened to millions of sons and daughters all across this country. Those parents feel just like you, Joe. And you can help them.

The ACLU runs an ongoing nationwide effort — The Redemption Campaign — to free 50,000 people from federal and state prisons by pushing elected officials to use clemency powers in transformational new ways. You've granted many clemencies like this, Mr. President, but I'd like to challenge you to go further. Grant them all. Grant as many clemencies as you can. Order your team to work directly with the ACLU and then challenge every single governor in the U.S. to join you in this cause.

The ACLU's network of lawyers have focused on these 50,000 people in four large groups of unjustifiably imprisoned people:

- People who, if they were convicted under current laws, would serve a lesser sentence than what they are now serving;
- People convicted of possession offenses, regardless of underlying substance;
- People incarcerated for technical probation or parole violations; and
- Older incarcerated people.

Imagine how you would feel, Joe, if someone granted your kid clemency. Your good kid. Maybe he messed up. But he needs help, not prison. Imagine all of a sudden, someone told you that the President of the United States had reached out, and that your kid was free, free to get help, to get a fresh start, to be a good kid again. Imagine that.

C'mon Joe. I know it doesn't look like it, but you've been around a while. You know what to do. We're Americans. This is what we are built for.

You've got, starting today, 100 days left in the White House.

Make 'em count. And for God's sake, let me say it again: Don't let the violence that you are funding and allowing against the people of Palestine become what your presidency will be remembered for. I know that is not the legacy you want.

So rewrite it. Today. It's as easy as taking the cap off a pen.

Enjoy these 100 days! Rehoboth Beach awaits you!

**YOU HAVE IMMUNITY!**

## AN IMMIGRANT WHO DIVORCED HERSELF FROM THE AMERICAN DREAM

An interview with social activist Rahiel Tesfamariam on identity, spiritual power, and what it takes to imagine freedom.  
by Darren Saint-Ulysse

NOVEMBER 2024

WHEN RAHIEL TESFAMARIAM was 5 years old, she and her mother flew from Eritrea to New York City, arriving in the United States with six-month tourist visas to help prepare for Tesfamariam's eldest sister's wedding. After the six months had passed, Tesfamariam's mother began packing clothes for a return trip to Eritrea, but Tesfamariam adamantly refused to leave. Tesfamariam's brother recalls being at the airport and watching their mother step to the gate; Rahiel stepped back and said, "Bye, Mommy." And so it was: Rahiel Tesfamariam remained in the United States in the care of her siblings, out of the shadow of the Eritrean War of Independence, with an expired travel visa.



The rest of her story could be told this way: She became a legal permanent resident of the United States, graduated from Stanford University, became the youngest-ever editor in chief of *The Washington Informer*, received her Master of Divinity degree from Yale University, and launched Urban Cusp, an online community for Black millennials interested in the intersection between faith, culture, and justice. Tesfamariam worked as a columnist for *The Washington Post*; led #NotOneDime, a national Black Friday economic boycott during the 2014 Ferguson protests; and was named by *Essence* magazine as one of its "New Civil Rights Leaders." She got married. She became a mother. It could be said that Tesfamariam pulled herself up into the American dream.

Tesfamariam's book ***Imagine Freedom: Transforming Pain into Political and Spiritual Power*** (Amistad), released earlier this year, tells that story, but with a difference. Telling only that version, like the American dream itself, would be insufficient. Tesfamariam spoke with Sojourners associate editor Darren Saint-Ulysse in April about how she carries Africa within, political power's ephemeral nature, and God's command to free the captives. — *The Editors*

**Darren Saint-Ulysse:** You have a long history of social activism. What made you want to write *Imagine Freedom* now? How did you decide what to include?

**Rahiel Tesfamariam:** I was not necessarily trying to convince myself I have a story worthy of telling — but what part of the story needs to be told? What takeaway from the story is so important that the world needs to know? The takeaway was initially rooted in capitalism, careerism, and the American dream. But later it evolved into how I *divorced* the American dream.

*Imagine Freedom* comes out of a clear understanding that healing was the most important story I could ever tell. When you think about Black resilience, the story is often threaded with trauma and suffering. So I asked: What have we done to survive this long? What kept us? We call ourselves resilient people, but what has made us resilient? How did we survive? What happened to us for 400 or 500 years? We've unpacked the trauma, but we didn't unpack the survival strategies and the emotional, spiritual, and psychological stories.

*Imagine Freedom* is a compact, condensed version of how I unpacked diasporic healing

## AN IMMIGRANT WHO DIVORCED HERSELF FROM THE AMERICAN DREAM

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rituals. How did Africa survive despite colonization? How did Black Americans survive despite enslavement? Why were the forces so strong, persistent, adamant, and determined to destroy us? We don't often look at white supremacy as a form of spiritual warfare against us, one that we must arm ourselves against and resist. It's not just a system; it's also a spiritual war.

Then there's also my "beautiful story": Coming to this country from the slums of Africa, undocumented, not speaking a word of English, having nothing, and then going to Stanford, Oxford, and Yale; traveling the world; writing for *The Washington Post*. I fell in love with *that* story. I was like, "Hey, anybody who wants to, listen to this great story I got to tell you."

Eventually, I had to learn that my résumé doesn't tell the most important parts of my story. The most important parts of my story are the things to this day that I won't talk about. It's the stuff that I wasn't saying. Not my victories, but my trauma. Now I understand that what makes me so great *isn't* what I accomplished. It was never Stanford or Yale. It was a little girl refusing to die, refusing to have her spirit broken. This little girl refusing to let a war define her destiny, but to say instead, "I belong on this land. I got purpose on this land." And being able to say that at age 5.



In my 30s, I began to ask: What is it that this little girl knew that I don't know? What clarity did that 5-year-old girl have about herself that this 30- and 40-year-old woman doesn't have? How do I trace back to her? We always think liberation is a forward journey toward freedom. Sometimes, it is retrieving what they took from us. I had to go back and fetch that 5-year-old girl.

*Photograph by Kirth Bobb*

**From 2016 to 2019, you spent three years on sabbatical in southern Africa. "I knew Africa had changed me," you wrote, "and I was terrified that I would quickly slip back into old ways of being." How do you carry southern Africa within you?**

To paraphrase Kwame Nkrumah, What does it mean for Africa to be born *within* us? I had to figure out what it means for Africa to be not a chain, medallion, or ring I wear.

I had a powerful conversation with a friend who talked about Malcolm X's hajj to Mecca. He said that Malcolm returned renamed. He was given *more* than one name. We know El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, but he was also given a Nigerian name. As he traveled to these countries, they would give him a name in the local tradition. It was how he adopted pieces of all these places. That renaming practice is very important because it signifies a new identity.

But I already had an African name, right? I went over there as *Rahiel Tesfamariam*. So, what was my renaming going to be? It can't be the jewelry or the African print. It's got to be the *personhood*. How I was going to look, sound, move, pray, dance, breathe differently because Africa had become so embedded in me that they'd look at me and say: "She don't sound the same."

I believe, in my core, that is what happened. For three years, I lived and studied with South Africans — not just politically, but culturally. The way they danced. Their music. I became obsessed with their culture. What's so powerful about culture is that culture is liberating.

## **AN IMMIGRANT WHO DIVORCED HERSELF FROM THE AMERICAN DREAM**

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Culture has always been how we have found relief from the oppressor. When I got to Africa, I gave my body more permission to move, more permission to dance. I gained greater freedom in my body.

Freedom is not just ideological; it's embodied. Africa helped me physically embody freedom. Now, when I see myself on stage, I have a confidence I didn't have before. Africa gave me permission to be the *Rahiel* I'd never seen before—and helped me get back to that 5-year-old girl. That's the greatest gift that Africa ever gave me. It helped me reclaim her.

### **Your book works with themes of pain and power. What do you mean by “political” and “spiritual” power?**

Political and spiritual power have often been considered two distinctly opposite things. I'm beginning to see them intersect in ways I never have before.

We see the political power in the hands [of those] who seemingly are spiritually lacking. And then we see all the spiritual richness in those who have zero political power. So, there's a way in which we are now questioning what true power looks like.

We always thought power was about who we put into office. It was about the presidency, about local officials. We are living in a moment when we recognize we can have *all* of that in place, have all the ducks lined up — even have the “right party” in place — and still we see some of the worst acts of brutality ever witnessed with our own eyes. Then you get to a place where you say, maybe it's not about political power. Maybe it's about not giving the enemy power over our souls. It is not about which Pharaoh we pick. It's about whether or not Pharaoh is in our mind. If Pharaoh controls our mind, then it doesn't really matter anyway. Before, a lot of freedom fighters thought you had to come for the vote. But I want the minds. I want the hearts.

### **What is inspiring your imagination now?**

Palestine, without a doubt. I am so deeply inspired by the people of Gaza, the people of Palestine. They're helping me imagine a new world.

I don't know if the world has ever been on the same page as we are now; that the old must die away and the new must be born. Thank God for the digital era we are in, where they can't gaslight us the way they used to. Before, the narcissists controlled the frame and told us what they needed us to believe in order to do whatever they wanted us to do. Thank God for citizen journalism, for social media, for grassroots media. Kwok Pui-lan talks about “writing back.” Palestine is compelling us to “write back” history.

And those young people standing up in places of privilege: Yale, Columbia, Stanford. They're inspiring me because those are the sites of empire. Those schools are where the next generation of white supremacists are born; the next generation of capitalists are born. They nearly birthed *me* into a lifelong capitalist. I know what those places breed. For those young people to be rising up on those battlegrounds is important.

### **What do you hope that the church gets from reading your book?**

There are so many ways that people can't tell the difference between the body and Pharaoh. There's a challenge to the church right now: Choose this day which master you will serve. Some of us have, without knowing, bowed down to the idols of our day. God cared a lot about us making a calf of molten gold in the wilderness. And we've been doing it for a very long time. It was God's own people who did that, because we were mimicking the behavior of our



## AN IMMIGRANT WHO DIVORCED HERSELF FROM THE AMERICAN DREAM

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oppressors. There's a way in which we lived under Pharaoh and within Egypt for so long that we began to think like Pharaoh, move like Pharaoh, talk like Pharaoh. We embraced empire as home. I challenge the church to say once and for all: We know this is not our home!

If this is not home, then how does the church create, cultivate, and sustain a home on earth that welcomes everybody into the fold of liberation? The church has forgotten its command to free the captives. How does that command play out in our sermons? How does that play out in our worship? How does that play out in our fellowship? We have to free the captives. We have to do more than give people a prescription to just get through week by week.

The church is keeping people on life support. And those people want to wake up.



**Darren Saint-Ulysse**

Darren Saint-Ulysse is an associate editor at *Sojourners* magazine

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## THE POPE'S MESSAGE



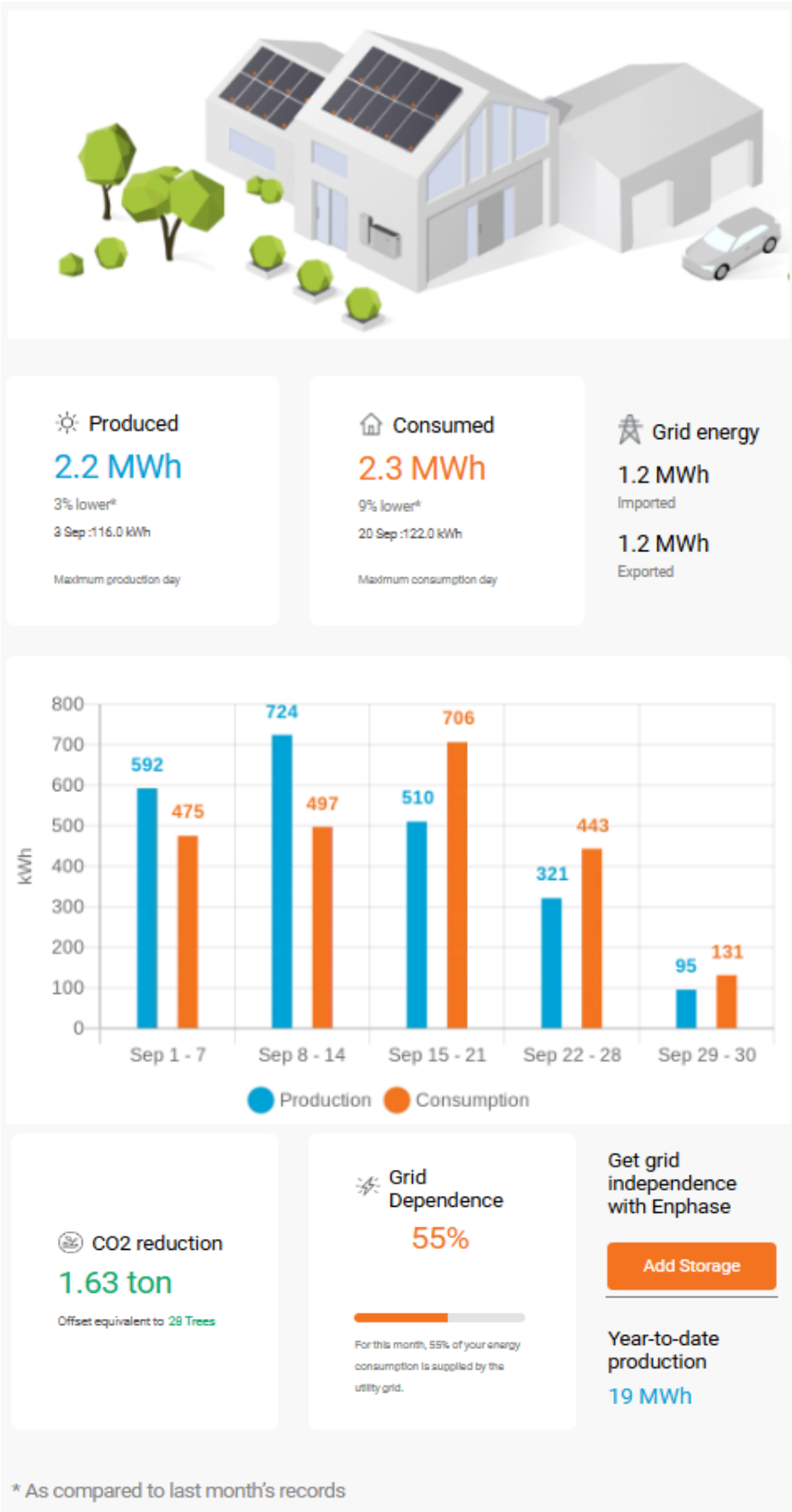
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2024

**"It is a time of courage, even if having courage does not mean having a guarantee of success. Courage is required of us in order to fight, not necessarily to win; in order to proclaim, not necessarily to convert. Courage is required of us in order to open ourselves to everyone, never diminishing the absoluteness and uniqueness of Christ, the one saviour of all. Courage is required of us in order to withstand incredulity, without becoming arrogant. Required of us too is the courage of the tax collector in today's Gospel, who humbly did not dare even to raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying: "God, be merciful to me a sinner!". Today is a time for courage! Today courage is needed!"**

POPE FRANCIS

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SOLAR PANEL REPORT - September 2024



## NOVEMBER 2024 BIRTHDAYS!

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

Allen Redding	11/03
Wendella Colbert	11/10
Jayden McAdams	11/11
Michael Gagnon	11/17
Dominick Mathura	11/20
Natalie Dugan	11/20
Hazel Abrom	11/22
Barbara Ruhe	11/25
David Eberly	11/26
Felicite Yigle-Kaljob	11/28



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

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

### **Grace Lutheran Church – Readers for November 2024**

***Note: If you are unable to read on your assigned Sunday, please switch with someone else.***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading #</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Reader</b>
11/3	1	Isaiah 25: 6-9	Sherri Girard
	2	Revelation 21: 1-6a	Betsy DeRoma
	Psalm	Psalm 24	Unison
11/10	1	1 Kings 17: 8-16	Mildred Unfried
	2	Hebrews 9: 24-28	Rebecca Lewis
	Psalm	Psalm 146	Unison
11/17	1	Daniel 12: 1-3	David Eberly
	2	Hebrews 10: 11-25	Judy Butterworth-Kremer
	Psalm	Psalm 16	Judy Butterworth-Kremer – non-bold; Congregation bold
11/24	1	Daniel 7: 9-14	Dale Eberhardt
	2	Revelation 1: 4b-8	Ivy Thomas
	Psalm	Psalm 93	Kasumi Campbell



Grace Lutheran Church  
46 Woodland Street  
Hartford, CT 06105



### Our Staff and Council Leadership

Reverend Richard H. Kremer, Pastor

rickkremer@aol.com

Emmanuella Hart— Ministry Coordinator

ministry.gracelutheranhartford@gmail.com

Nilda Bolorin, Parish Administrator

office.gracelutheranhartford@gmail.com

Dorothea Glatte, Lay Minister

Lloyd Smith, Lay Minister

Betsy DeRoma, President

Lou Oliver, Vice President

Dale Eberhardt, Treasurer

Judy Butterworth-Kremer, Secretary

Janice Potter, Financial Assistant

Dale Eberhardt, Organist

Emma Coleman-Carr, Altar Guild

Toby Scott, Sexton

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

