



APRIL 2024

AN ERUPTING FORCE OF BROKENNESS – WORLDWIDE

Friends I know and love, as you do, try to focus on the things we can control, or say, or grasp or find helpful. Something that will make things better even as the conditions of the world, our country, the environment, continue to get worse. The harder we work to make things better, the worse they get. The greatest concentration of wealth is in the hands of a shrinking number of people. More and more people have nothing to believe in and so maniacs, crazy people or those who are focused on themselves, allow the rest of the world to seemingly rot away. People who have the power and capacity to dramatically improve what is growing like wildfire, are building safe places for themselves and their families. Three or four people in the United States have direct control of more wealth than half of the population of those living in the United States.



As we prepare to pay our taxes, we know that those people pay absolutely nothing in taxes. Rather they build their safe havens, in case the world goes up in flames, ensuring their own safety. That has nothing to do with people who need food, clothing, an end to violence, and return to normalcy. The reduction of the fears that envelope so many does not even speak to our borders, and those migrants worldwide looking with desperation for a new life.

It is remarkable that as we enter Women’s Month, we find women around the world suffering, as men, despots, vain and mentally disturbed and frightful with threats making sure that men have the power over their lives. Every single part. The Supreme Court of our Land has willfully destroyed the lives of women, by their stance relative to Roe vs Wade, and consequently removing their rights to care for their own bodies. Our own country is impacting others in Africa, where evangelicals have influenced at least one country to make homosexuality punishable by death. How would you like a handful of men and religiously-biased-women making decisions on your body for you, to require that you live by someone else’s religion and beliefs. That is not what our courts are for; in fact, this strike of the pen took away the rights of women, and what else can we expect? Men who know nothing of the biology or the life of women, are impacting their lives profoundly. Again, who is next?

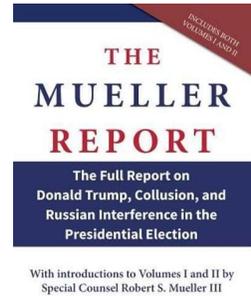


And then there is Putin, a source of money and influence in Trump’s election in 2016 who is a bloody partner with Putin who threatens the world with his ambitions, killing his way into power,

An Erupting Force of Brokenness - page 1 -2
Pastor’s Message - page 3
Texas Senate Bill 4 - page 4
An Earth Day Eve Gathering - page 5
Holy Week - page 6-8
IFTAR - page 9
Solar Eclipse - page 9
Pope’s Message - page 10
Peace Building Alum Builds Anti-Poverty Program in Nigeria - page 10-11
Turning Up the Pressure for a Ceasefire - page 12
The Rev. Dr. William Barber in Hartford - page 13
White Lutherans for Racial Justice Conference - page 14
CT Foodshare Walk - page 15
A Case for the 32 Hour Workweek - page 16-17
January 6th Must Be a Federal Holiday - page 17-19
Jesus is Hungry in Gaza - page 19-21
Solar Panel Report - page 22
Birthdays, Special Dates and Readers - page 23

and now, again, actively working to get Trump in power again. Remember when he used to yell out to crowds “Lock her Up” in 2016. And he publicly asked for Putin’s help to find the contents of Hilary Clinton’s computer which allegedly held “secrets” making her unfit for office. Hmm. No, it wasn’t quite like that, you see Paul Manafort got up close with a Russian Oligarch and managed to shuffle money to Trump, and other data for his campaign. This is the truth, yet only recently exposed.

The Mueller Report found these things, the findings of his impeachments again identified these things. Trump had hoped to build a huge building in Moscow, that’s why he got up close and personal with Putin. And, why as President, he spoke of Putin as a “great guy, he saw no problem with him at all”. Is it a surprise that misinformation created and promulgated by Putin has been poisoning the well of his opposition in this country even today. And he brings a Hungarian dictator to Mar a Lago perhaps to go through some boxes of top secrets stolen by him and held by him and only shared with buddies... or whomever he would like to use for this purpose.



Switching to another part of the world, the multi-billion dollar deal that Jared Kushner made with the Saudis at the end of Trump’s term, put him on easy street. He then seemed to disappear with Ivanka. At the time of his personal “deal” with the Saudi’s, he had a role in his father-in-law’s government. Just this past week Kushner’s assessment of the Benjamin Netanyahu war against Hamas and the Palestinians “Gaza would make a wonderful sea resort.” 30,000 + innocents dead, including many women and children is likely to do more damage to Israel than anything else they have done. The world is boiling over with despots and nuclear weapons, and ambitions.

Trump is trying to get into the action, by using our systems of justice to delay, delay and delay.

The only way to defeat him is at the ballot box. The structure of his campaign is to take care of that before the first votes are cast. Just as he unsuccessfully tried in the past. This is a very scary time, and we all must watch what is happening all around us. Our world is at stake. Our way of life is at stake. If we ever thought it was not our business to care, and that we can look away and live our lives without a problem. Please think again. Please watch closely and help find a way out of this mess that threatens the earth as we know it.



PASTOR'S MESSAGE - A BROKEN PASTOR HEALS: PART TWO – THE CHURCH STRETCHED



Grace Lutheran has no problem stretching at all. I am so grateful that through my own challenges little to nothing has happened save real progress, lots of new initiatives, a kind of team activity that I have not witnessed in some time, and a church that has come together and continues to do so. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Friday Gathering is serving, new relationships are evolving, new volunteers are coming and more people, too. Our relationship with other churches and organizations are strengthening, Dorothea has been a fantastic pastor, with Betsy, and Barbara Ruhe chipping in. Sue attended a remarkable program with a group of white Lutherans searching to learn how we must be part of the engine that helps our church grow and expand welcoming all people who are different from us, and understanding where they start from, as well as where we are. Maybe we could ask her to share with us if she has the time and inclination.

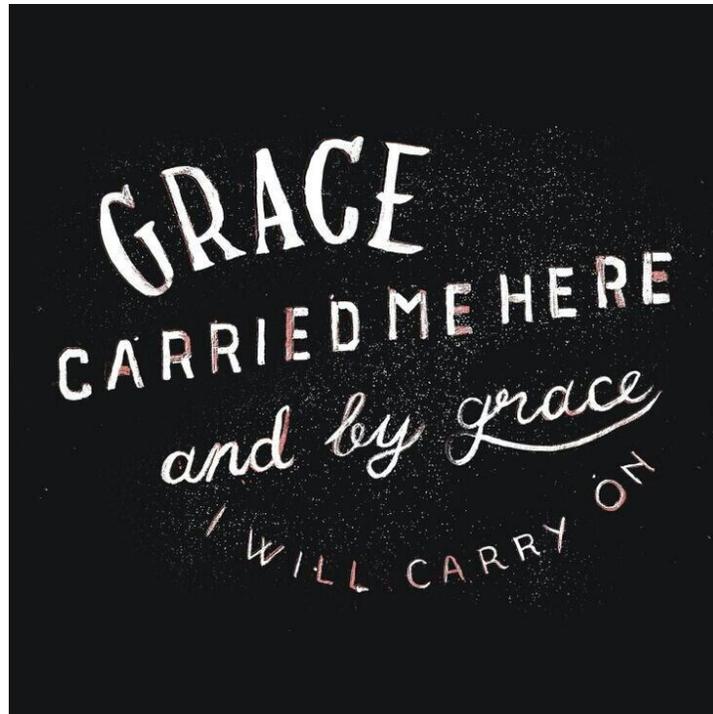
Lee is home and feeling stronger – I know because he calls me.

We will be well represented at Synod Assembly coming and I will look forward to attending myself. This is a time for healing, for hope and for coming together. Grace is doing that, our relationship with FoodShare has taken off, and we have new relationships that we will talk about as our working together is fully defined.

Let's all of us vote, and let's all of us support those who would embrace everyone, not just a few. We are all about embracing and showing love to all; After all, that is what Grace is all about.

Blessings+,

Pastor Rick



SB 4 — the Texas “show me your papers” law — is bad. Its disregard for 100 years of Supreme Court precedent defining federal supremacy on immigration and international relations is based on a deeply flawed claim that Texas is waging war against some sort of “invading army.”

While that rhetoric is really popular on the extreme right, it is in no way connected to the facts. And it’s going to end up making the people living here less safe, less secure, less protected by the law.

There are a lot of desperate people trying to seek refuge, join family, and find opportunity in this country. Without legal options, many are crossing in between legal ports of entry. That’s a problem that can be handled with more resources (though Trump and Republicans have blocked bipartisan solutions that would have added 4,300 new asylum officers and 100 new immigration judges, in addition to billions more in enforcement funds) and better policy (from more effective use of parole authority and work authorizations to completely overhauling our immigration laws).

But what’s happening at the border in no way constitutes an “invasion.” That kind of rhetoric is not only untrue, it inspires the unhinged and violent among us to terrorize our communities. Like when a man inspired by this rhetoric walked into an El Paso Walmart to kill 23 people, claiming to repel the “Hispanic invasion of Texas.”

And the only court that’s actually looked at the law (a federal district court in Texas) found that it is likely unconstitutional. Because it is. Over and over again for a century, the Supreme Court has clearly said that only the federal government can make and enforce immigration law.

But perhaps worst of all is the breakdown in law and order that this is sure to produce. How will police decide who looks like or acts like an immigrant in order to stop them or question them? This will lead to racial profiling and mass civil rights abuses against immigrants and U.S. citizens alike. And when a significant part of the population fears law enforcement, we will be less safe — people will be less likely to report crime, testify in a trial, serve as a witness.

Permanently blocking this law should be a no-brainer for the Supreme Court. But yesterday, it chose to punt the case back to a lower court, leading to even more chaos and more confusion when it comes to immigration policy in this country. My hope is that after fully hearing the case, learning the facts, and understanding the consequences of this deeply troubling bill, the courts will rule against it and restore rule of law. But we can only hope.

However, when it comes to elections — deciding who the government will be in Texas after 2024, who will represent us in the Senate starting in 2025, and whether we elect a President that believes in the rule of law and the value of immigration or one who thinks that immigrants are “poisoning the blood of America” — we can do more than just hope. We can vote and we can help others register and cast their ballots too.

To make sure Powered by People is doing its part, we’re training Volunteer Deputy Registrars (VDRs) every day who will help register and turn out the voters we need to change what’s happening here.

We will change this together.

Beto O’Rourke

AN EARTH DAY EVE GATHERING

by Nancy Urban

**You are invited to
An Earth Day Eve Gathering
Hosted by the New England Synod's
Greater Hartford Conference
Sunday, April 21, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
@ Emanuel Lutheran Church; 311 Capitol Ave. Hartford**

Join with others from congregations across the greater Hartford area for a dynamic, interactive program that will be followed by a potluck meal featuring foods that are the least impactful on the environment.

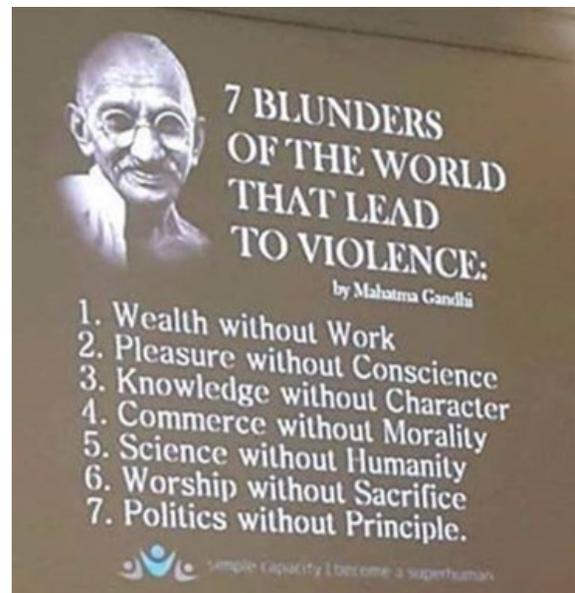
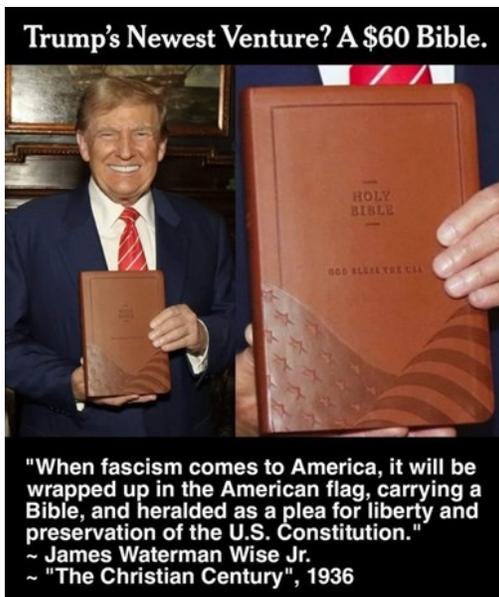
Using materials from Lutherans Restoring Creation, the New England Synod Green Team and Awakening the Dreamer, together we will explore our current situation and hopeful possibilities for now and into the future.

As people of faith and caretakers of God's creation, come learn what our role is, and can be in helping to create...

**An Environmentally Sustainable
Spiritually Fulfilling
Socially Just
Human Presence on this Earth.**



For more details and a quick sneak preview of the event, join Nancy Urban in the Forum Room on Sunday, April 7th following worship.



HOLY WEEK - What lies ahead for all of us. by James Hazelwood



THE NOTEBOOKS OF JAMES HAZELWOOD

It's arrived early this year. On Sunday in the Western church, we remember Jesus of Nazareth's entrance into Jerusalem with Palm Sunday. It is the beginning of a week involving triumphant expectations, rituals of washing and caring, betrayal, injustice, brutal capital punishment and death. We call it holy.



Why? Most likely because life is filled with beautiful and terrible things. Holy Week fills out all the drama of the human condition.



Several years ago, I presided at the funeral of an older man. He had lived a long life, and the family gathered for the memorial service. They asked if the man's teenage granddaughter could read a lesson during worship. She approached the podium with a kind of grace unusual for early teens. She opened a Bible and, before reading, said, "I chose this passage because it best shows the qualities of my grandfather." She then began to read First Corinthians 13.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

I must have heard those verses read hundreds of times at weddings. But, now, hearing this child read this passage as a description of her grandfather. I was slain, as was the congregation. Nothing more needed to be said.

The columnist David Brooks describes two different kinds of virtues for living. In the first half of life, we work on our résumé virtues. These qualities help us earn a living, establish a family, and plan a career. We desire to impress people with the capabilities of our competence, education, and acuity for success. However, different questions begin to arise in the second half of life. An increasing awareness of the limits of life primarily brings this on. We realize we will not live forever. Therefore, our focus shifts from résumé virtues to eulogy virtues. We hope people will recount these qualities and characteristics at our funeral. Were we kind, compassionate, and thoughtful? Were we a good listener, a generous person, an encourager? Or were we a complainer, a know-it-all, a braggart? The second half of life brings an opportunity to ask questions of ultimate significance.^[2]



Death is a tremendous gift to us. It forces us to face our limits and thereby helps us choose how we wish to spend our time and energy.

In many ways, Holy Week is a week of death. The historic liturgies of the Christian church turn our attention to a brutal death using an ancient form of capital punishment, namely crucifixion. We should not trivialize this form of execution. The Romans invented it to inflict maximum suffering on the victims and used it to convince other would-be rebels to think twice. This event culminates in the Good Friday liturgy.

HOLY WEEK - What lies ahead for all of us.

(continued from page 7)

and grief that we most profoundly connect with God: not exclusively; but something in the human experience of loss unites us.

Who has not experienced loss, heartache, shattered dreams, grave disappointments, all the little deaths of life, not to mention the significant deaths of loved ones who have passed away? In the past few years, more than a million Americans died from COVID-19; globally, the number has soared to six million. Add to this all the recent deaths, losses, addictions, and traumas as the result of a broken world. I remain convinced that a significant part of our current engagement with aggressive and even violent behavior is deeply connected to unexpressed grief.

We need more than a splendidly profound funeral, though that always helps. What we need is a cultural recalibration, maybe even an intervention. This reorientation would center around sorrow, loss, and grief. Every person reading this book could step forward to encourage their local church, synagogue, temple, community center, school, or even place of employment to form a grief group. There are free guidebooks available.^[5]



Regardless of one's religious affiliation, Holy Week serves as more than a reminder of the presence of death in life. It suggests a particular way in which death *is* life. As the mystics throughout history, the theologians of ancient and present times, and depth psychologists have all noted, the idea of God embracing death is a most meaningful embrace of life. We do well to see in death the gift of life.

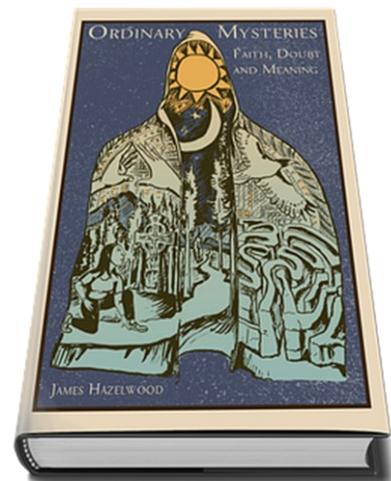


So death is not something to run from, hide from, or pretend does not exist. Instead, if we are engaged in healthy and kind ways, we can encounter death as a friend. Death is the ultimate definer of what makes us human.

"The heart that breaks open can contain the whole universe." Joanna Macy^[6]

This essay appears in the upcoming book *Ordinary Mysteries: Faith, Doubt, and Meaning*, which will be released on April 30. Next week, I'll announce a presale of a limited hardcover edition. Proceeds of all sales will support the hospitals, schools, and congregations of the [ELCJHL](#)

James Hazelwood, writer, bishop, and spiritual director, is the author of [Weird Wisdom for the Second Half of Life](#) and [Everyday Spirituality: Discover a Life of Hope, Peace, and Meaning](#). He has a new book, *Ordinary Mysteries: Reflections on Faith, Doubt & Meaning*. His website is www.jameshazelwood.net



IFTAR

Amar Al Moussawy, a student at HIU from Lebanon, prepared an Iftar to share with Pastor Rick, Judy, Nilda and Ismael, Emmanuella and Philip on March 18th.

The food and tea was delicious!

Muslims observing the holy month of Ramadan abstain from eating and drinking from sunrise to sunset in an effort to increase compassion to those less fortunate, improve their discipline, strengthen their faith, and practice mindfulness.

Once that sunset or Maghreb prayer is called, families gather around the dinner table and break their fast, and it's usually a highly anticipated feast! **Iftar**, the meal that breaks the fast during the holy month of Ramadan, is a cherished tradition in Lebanon and other Muslim countries.

Thank you for sharing, Amar!



The **total solar eclipse of 2024** will be visible along a narrow track stretching from **Texas to Maine on April 8, 2024**. It's an astronomical event that captures our imagination—a moment when the Moon aligns perfectly with the Sun, casting its shadow upon our planet. During this celestial dance, daylight turns to twilight, and the Sun's corona—the fiery halo around it—becomes visible.

NASA map shows where and when to see the total solar eclipse of April 2024, as the path of totality crosses the US.



Mythical Figures and Creatures:

- **Hindu Mythology:** According to Hindu beliefs, serpent demons named Rahu and Ketu swallow the Sun during an eclipse to stifle the life-giving light. To scare away these demons, some Hindu communities bang pots and pans or light fireworks.
- **Korean Folklore:** In Korea, it is believed that a dog stealing the Sun causes a solar eclipse.
- **Vietnamese Legend:** In Vietnam, people once thought that a giant frog devoured the Sun during an eclipse.
- **Norse Cultures:** Norse cultures attributed solar eclipses to wolves eating the Sun.
- **Ancient China:** The Chinese associated solar eclipses with a celestial dragon that lunched on the Sun.
- **Native American Tale:** The Pomo tribe in the northwestern United States tells a story of a bear that fought with the Sun, taking a bite out of it. They even call a solar eclipse "Sun got bit by a bear".

POPE'S MESSAGE



"The "blessed" are those who respond to the forms of poverty with love, with service: not by turning away, but by giving food and drink, by clothing, sheltering, visiting; in short, by being close to those in need. And this is because Jesus, our King, who calls himself the Son of man, finds his favourite sisters and brothers in the most fragile women and men. His "regal hall" is set up where there are people who suffer and need help. This is the "court" of our King. And the style with which his friends, those who have Jesus as their Lord, are called to distinguish themselves is his own style: compassion, mercy, tenderness. They ennoble the heart and descend like oil on the wounds of those injured by life."

Pope Francis

PEACEBUILDING ALUM BUILDS ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAM LEASING MOTORBIKES IN NIGERIA



March 14, 2024

Dogara Simon Danbaba, MA in International Peacebuilding '22, has implemented a project he began planning while a student at HIU. Dogara reports that the Muna-Tare Empowerment Center in Northern Nigeria is now in full operation. The center has been able to purchase 40 motorbikes, which have been distributed under a "lease-to-own" program.

"I am profoundly happy and fulfilled as the founder of Muna-Tare Empowerment Center, an interfaith social enterprise that aimed to bring Christian and Muslim communities in Northern Nigeria to harmoniously live together in a cohesive society with a sense of shared identity and purpose," Dogara said via What's App.

This effort to lift young people of both faiths out of poverty happens, he said, "by empowering them through ownership of motor bikes and tricycles, which will open up employment and educational opportunities for the youth in the community."

The program will help Nigerian youth address poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, giving them access to transportation that will allow them to work and learn. The lease payments will allow the center to invest in more motorbikes.

"The mission is to establish a viable joint Christians/Muslims interfaith organization to launch and provide a social enterprise which will educate, train and enable young people to participate in an affordable 'lease to own' program for motorbikes and tricycles to provide their communities with needed delivery and taxi services," he said.

Through its work, the organization will work to promote social justice, restorative justice and

PEACEBUILDING ALUM BUILDS ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAM LEASING MOTORBIKES IN NIGERIA

(continued from page 10)

equity in the communities, needed to address the serious issues of poverty, crime, discrimination, violence, gangs and terrorism that currently exist in Northern Nigeria.

"Witnessing the launch and the handing over of 40 bikes to young people gives me joy and happiness," Dogara said. "Knowing that transformation in the lives of our youth, empowered with bikes to combat poverty and extremism, fills me with boundless joy."

Some of the funding for this cause was raised from individuals Dogara met while a student at HIU.

"I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Hartford International University for Religion and Peace for the incredible opportunity provided through the scholarship that supported my entire studies. I pledge to serve as their ambassador, dedicated to promoting peace and reconciliation in Northern Nigeria and beyond."

Interest in the least-to-own program has been extremely high with more than 1,000 applications.

"To everyone who has contributed, whether through financial support, encouragement, or advocacy, please accept my sincerest gratitude," Dogara said. "Your generosity and belief in our cause inspire us to press on in our mission of fostering peace, opportunity, and prosperity in Northern Nigeria."





It's a terrifying possibility, but the Israeli government seems determined to expand its ground invasion to Rafah, where 1.4 million scared, starving, and desperate people are sheltering in an area roughly the size of Arlington, VA.

A pause in the violence could save their lives and get the remaining hostages home to their families. That's why the U.S. government *finally* speaking out for a ceasefire is so important.

The problem? It's not enough. While the rhetoric is changing, the reality on the ground remains horrific. **Right now, the U.S. government continues to supply the Israeli government with weapons, even as Israeli forces use those weapons to keep crucial humanitarian aid from reaching people in Gaza.**

It's not only an egregious violation of our values — it's likely illegal.[1] The law is clear: A government cannot receive U.S. weapons to fight a conflict while obstructing the flow of U.S. humanitarian aid to the area. We've said it before: No one is above the law. Not former President Trump, not Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The good news is that the shifts in rhetoric show our pressure is working. **But to get the policy changes necessary to save lives, we need to ramp up our advocacy, movement support, and grassroots mobilization — everything. That's where you come in.**

Expert international observers have declared that famine in Gaza is imminent, and major humanitarian and human rights groups, including Oxfam and Human Rights Watch, agree that the Israeli government's obstruction of aid is fueling the crisis.

Reporting, videos, and stories coming out of Gaza all confirm the dire and heartrending conditions, but they aren't the only reason we're worried. **Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant is on his way to DC — and Axios reports he's bringing "a long list of U.S. weapons Israel wants to receive in an expedited manner."**

Without swift action from the Biden administration, the horrors we've witnessed over the last 168 days will likely continue.

It's time the U.S. government demonstrates to Prime Minister Netanyahu that U.S. military support has firm limits.

Creating the political space to push the U.S. government to change course is an uphill challenge — but we're as undeterred as ever. Join us.

Thank you for working for peace,

Sara, Eric, Shayna, and the Win Without War team

1. *Washington Post*, "[U.S. to review Israeli assurances it is not violating international law](#)"

THE REV. DR. WILLIAM J. BARBER II COMES TO HARTFORD

An Afternoon of *CHALLENGE* and *HOPE*

with

Renowned Civil Rights Leader
The Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II



Sunday, May 5th, 3 pm

IMMANUEL
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

10 Woodland Street, Hartford (corner of Woodland St. and Farmington Ave.)

A freewill offering will be collected.

The Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II is President and Senior Lecturer of Repairers of the Breach; Co-Chair of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call For Moral Revival; and most recently, a Professor in the Practice of Public Theology and Public Policy and Founding Director of the Center for Public Theology and Public Policy at Yale Divinity School.

Parking available next door at the Town & County Club and across Woodland Street at the Hartford Medical Building.

NEW ENGLAND SYNOD ANTIRACISM ADVISORY BOARD- White Lutherans for Racial Justice Conference

by Sue Carey

Dear Siblings in Christ,



New England Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

I am a member of the New England Synod Antiracism Advisory Board. As part of that work, I attended the association of "White Lutherans for Racial Justice" conference in Minneapolis in early March. The conference was a jam-packed three days of meeting Lutherans from across the country, learning about the antiracism programs they lead, and pushing ourselves to further confront racism in ourselves and white supremacy in the church.

Highlights included:

Jen De Leon, the ELCA director for racial justice, and Rev. Christina Montgomery, ELCA manager for racial justice, who joined us for the entire conference. The association is committed to following and supporting these leaders in their work.

ELCA pastors, all women of color, discussed their experiences with racism in the Lutheran church. These included Rev. Angela !Khabeb (you may recognize her from the columns she writes for Living Lutheran), Rev. Jenny Sung, and Dr. Kelly Sherman-Conroy.

Rev. Dr. Jia Starr Brown preached on Micah 6:8, to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God." She said: "The Hebrew word for 'mercy' is hesed, which translates to deep, loving relationship, loyal and unflinching. I do not enter into a hesed relationship with anyone who does not actively work for my overall good: defending my character and advocating for my justice when it is questioned, compromised, or stolen. And neither should you." You can hear more of Rev. Dr. Starr Brown's preaching on YouTube. I recommend her sermon, "The Prison of Privilege" at <https://youtu.be/vU3tWxdiffi?si=LDeoRMmgqDpJMy5->.

We spent a full day at the George Floyd Global Memorial (<https://georgefloydglobalmemorial.org>). Calvary Lutheran Church, located one block from where George Floyd was lynched, hosted us. Angela Harrelson, George Floyd's aunt, and five other community leaders led tours of the memorial and spoke about how racial violence impacts their families and neighborhoods. Sheri Seifert, recently published *Ashes To Action* (<https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/9781506496788/Ashes-to-Action>), about how her congregation, Calvary, put aside their privilege to stand with the neighborhood. I brought a copy back to share with all of you. It resonates with how Grace is living out its calling through the Friday Gathering and it challenges us to go deeper.

Currently, there are ELCA Ethnic Specific Multicultural Ministries for Lutherans who identify as African Descent, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations, Latino, and White ([go to https://www.elca.org](https://www.elca.org) and search under *Our Work*). I encourage you to sign up for their newsletters and consider attending their next conference—you don't need to be a member of an Advisory Board to participate. My expenses in Minneapolis were covered by the "I Have a Dream" fund, which former Bishop Margaret Payne established for the New England Synod.

In closing, I urge you to sign up for the New England Synod Antiracism Advisory Board newsletter. Send an email to mwhyte@nesynod.org to be added to the distribution list. Learn about and participate in the work for racial justice. Read about the board's expectations for the next synod bishop; https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Kt84Fwt04drgu1_ge8MEHu8emLDkBLJP/view. Join a book study. Participate in the twice-monthly drop-in prayer gathering.

Thanking God for you, Sue Carey

CT FOODSHARE WALK - MAY 4, 2024 - DUNKIN PARK

USE THIS HASHTAG ON SOCIAL MEDIA WHEN POSTING ABOUT THE WALK!

#CTFOODSHAREWALK

Join Connecticut Foodshare at our annual Walk Against Hunger on Saturday, May 4th, 2024, at Dunkin' Park, home of the Hartford Yard Goats! Register here if you would like to participate to raise funds and awareness about food insecurity in Connecticut. Participating benefitting programs will receive 100% of the funds that you raise. Benefitting programs do not need to attend the Walk Against Hunger in person to participate in the online fundraising opportunity.

Event Safety

Connecticut Foodshare is committed to keeping our participants as safe as possible. We follow the guidelines of Dunkin' Park, our host sponsor for this event. All in-person walkers over the 16 are required to register. During the registration process, walkers will be asked to acknowledge and sign our safety waiver.

Walk Day Schedule

Saturday, May 4, 2024 - Dunkin' Park, Hartford, CT

8:00 AM - Check-in opens, entertainment and family activities begin

9:30 AM - Walk program begins with local media personalities, Renee DiNino from iHeart Media/the River 105.9 and Scot Haney from WFSB/Channel 3

10:00 AM - Walk steps off, the route is 1.5 miles, starting and ending at Dunkin' Park

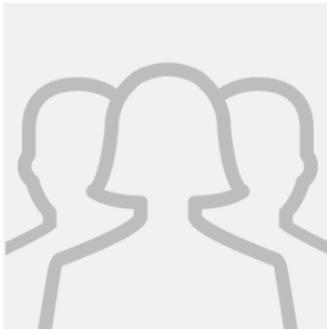
Use this path: <https://donate.ctfoodshare.org/event/walk-against-hunger/e553428>

Or

<https://ctfoodshare.org/> - then at the top of the page select "Register today"

Grace Lutheran Hartford-Friday Gathering

Lets walk until the homeless, hungry, immigrants, and refugees are housed and feed.



JOIN TEAM

DONATE

THE CASE FOR A 32-HOUR WORKWEEK WITH NO LOSS IN PAY



by Bernie Sanders and Shawn Fain

Although it is rarely discussed in the media, the Senate overwhelmingly passed legislation to establish a 30-hour workweek in 1933. While that legislation ultimately failed because of intense opposition from corporate America, a few years later President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Fair Labor Standards Act into law and a 40-hour workweek was established in 1940.

Unbelievably, 84 years later, despite massive growth in technology and worker productivity, nothing has changed.

Today, American workers are more than 400 percent more productive than they were in the 1940s. And yet, despite this fact, millions of our people are working longer hours for lower wages. In fact, 28.5 million Americans now work over 60 hours a week and more than half of full-time employees work more than 40 hours a week.



The sad reality is, Americans work more hours than the people of most other wealthy nations. In 2022, U.S. workers logged 204 more hours a year than employees in Japan; 279 more hours than those in the United Kingdom; and 470 more hours than those in Germany. Despite these long hours, the average worker in America makes almost \$50 a week less than he or she did 50 years ago, after adjusting for inflation.

Let that sink in for a moment. In a 1974 office, there were no computers, email, cellphones, conference calling or Zoom. In factories and warehouses, there were no robots or sophisticated machinery, no cloud computing. In grocery stores and shops of all kinds, there were no checkout counters using bar codes.

Think about all the incredible advancements in technology — computers, robotics, artificial intelligence — and the huge increase in worker productivity that has been achieved. What have been the results of these changes for working people? Almost all the economic gains have gone straight to the top, while wages for workers are stagnant or worse.

While CEOs are making nearly 400 times as much as their average employees, many workers are seeing their family lives fall apart, missing their children's birthday parties and Little League Baseball games, as they are forced to spend more time at work. What stresses them out even further is that many still do not have enough money to pay rent, put food on the table and send their kids to college without going deeply into debt.

This should not be happening in the United States of America in 2024. It's time for a 32-hour workweek with no loss in pay.

Let's be clear. This is not a radical idea: Belgium has already adopted a four-day workweek. Other developed countries are moving toward this model, such as France (35-hour workweek and considering reducing to 32) and Norway and Denmark (roughly 37-hour workweek). In 2019, Microsoft tested a four-day workweek in Japan and reported a 40 percent increase in productivity.

Last year, the United Kingdom conducted a four-day workweek pilot program of 3,000 workers at more than 60 companies, and it was a huge success for both workers and employers. Over 73 percent of workers who participated in this program reported greater satisfaction with their

THE CASE FOR A 32-HOUR WORKWEEK WITH NO LOSS IN PAY

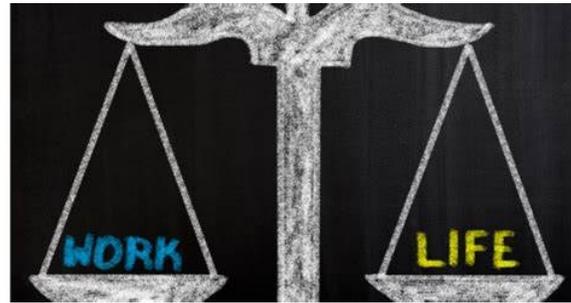
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work. Businesses that participated in this program saw a 35 percent average increase in revenue, and 91 percent of businesses opted to continue a four-day workweek after the study concluded.

Studies have shown that workers are either equally or more productive during a four-day workweek — one study found that worker productivity rose, with 55 percent saying their ability at work increased after companies adopted this new schedule. In addition, 57 percent of workers in companies that have moved to a four-day workweek have indicated that they are less likely to quit their jobs.

Moreover, at a time when so many of our people are struggling with their mental health, 71 percent of workers in companies that have moved to a four-day workweek report feeling less burnout, 39 percent reported feeling less stress and 46 percent reported feeling less fatigued.

Even Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, and Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan Chase, predicted last year that advancements in technology could lead to a three- or 3½-day workweek.



The question is: Who will benefit from this transformation? Will it be the billionaire class or workers? In our view, the choice is obvious. At a time of massive income and wealth inequality and huge increases in productivity, the financial gains from new technology must go to workers, not just to the people on top.

As part of their historic contract negotiations with the Big Three automakers — General Motors, Ford Motor Co. and Stellantis (formerly Chrysler) — the United Auto Workers called for the introduction of a four-day, 32-hour workweek at the same rate of pay and overtime pay for anything beyond that.

Despite significant gains for workers in their new contract, they were not successful in winning that demand. The struggle continues.

JANUARY 6TH MUST BE A FEDERAL HOLIDAY — DEMOCRACY DAY — SO WE NEVER FORGET



On this, the third anniversary of that day in 2021, when the then still-President of the United States, who had but just two weeks left in office, having recently been removed by the vast majority of the American people who had ousted him from the presidency at the polls... on this day, January 6, 2021, he decided to stage a coup and called upon his rabid right wing followers to come to the nation's Capital to halt, with violence if necessary, the peaceful transfer of power.

With his fraudulent catalogue of outright lies, perjury, slander, fake video, nonexistent witnesses, soon-to-be-disbarred lawyers and not one scintilla of evidence to prove his claim that the election had been “stolen” from him, nearly 90 judges across the country, many of them Republican appointees, had ruled against him, a number of them accusing him of trying to overthrow a proven, legitimate, free and fair election and inventing a conspiracy to fool millions of people that he was somehow still the President.

JANUARY 6TH MUST BE A FEDERAL HOLIDAY — DEMOCRACY DAY — SO WE NEVER FORGET

(continued from page 17)

He then declared he had no intention of leaving the Oval Office. He had called for millions to stand with him and fight on January 6th, 2021. He told the angry mob he would march with them up Pennsylvania Avenue to storm the Capitol and stop Congress from doing its duty to officially certify the results of the 2020 Presidential election in which Joe Biden won by seven million votes.

His incitement of what became a vicious, violent riot where thousands, heeding his orders, attacked the Capitol Building, resulting in the deaths of five law enforcement officers, plus the injuring of another 140 policemen and women (many of them severely), the ransacking of both houses of Congress, the hunting down of Congressional leaders whom the mob sought to maim or kill (including the vice president whom they intended to lynch), and then, amidst all of this horror, they raised their victory flag and paraded throughout the Building — the Confederate Flag from the Civil War, a fete the defeated Confederate Army was never able to accomplish themselves.



On January 6, 2021, that flag of white supremacy, slavery and treason, for the first time ever, “flew” inside our United States Congress.

But maybe the worst thing that happened that day, though, was not the feces and broken glass strewn throughout the Capitol Building. It's what happened a few hours later that night, after order was restored. The members of Congress came out of hiding and returned to their respective House and Senate Chambers. They still had one job left to do: Officially certify that Joe Biden was the elected President of the United States of America. Of the 535 Representatives and Senators who had earlier taken the oath of office to uphold and defend the Constitution, 147 of them — all Republicans — *just hours after they ran for their lives to survive this coup attempt*, chose to side with the treasonous mob and voted to block Joe Biden from entering the White House to do the job the American people elected him to do. It was a stunning mass action of treason, to violate their Constitutional duties and give “aid and comfort” to the insurrectionists. Section 3 of our 14th Amendment states quite clearly that any elected official who participates in such an uprising — or gives aid to that uprising — is **prohibited** from holding office. Yet remarkably, 121 of those Republicans were reelected to Congress on November 8, 2022 to serve another term.

Since that day in 2021, over 1,200 of these rioters have been arrested. Over 900 have been convicted, with more trials to come. And the Ringleader, whose coup attempt failed, was himself eventually placed under arrest and charged with 91 felony indictments in a conspiracy to overthrow the government's free election. He is currently awaiting at least five separate trials.

Friends, I think this day of infamy must never be forgotten. The lessons learned from it — how we came *this close* to losing our Democracy — must be passed down to future generations. Democracy, as we and the rest of the world all know, is a fragile enterprise, and it can be lost in the blink of an eye. A renewed commitment, a mass outpouring of support for liberty, freedom, equality and solidarity, must take place this year.

And here's my simple idea I'd like everyone to get behind:

JANUARY 6TH MUST BE A FEDERAL HOLIDAY — DEMOCRACY DAY — SO WE NEVER FORGET

(continued from page 18)

Make January 6th a National Holiday. The day each year when we remember what happened on January 6, 2021 — and when we celebrate the right for everyone to vote, without harassment or suppression, and where no one, regardless of wealth or position, is above the law.

Democracy Day, January 6th.

Let's do it! We might have to defeat a slew of Democracy-Haters at the polls this November 5th — but we can do that, too! We must do that, too!

Wherever we are or whatever we do today, let's talk to the people we see and simply say, "you know, what happened on this day three years ago, this should be a federal holiday — a day of remembrance so we never forget how precious The Vote is, how necessary it is to create a real and full Democracy — and why we must always defend it against any and all enemies, foreign and domestic. Especially domestic."

Let me know what you think. I think we're worth it.
Michael Moore

JESUS IS HUNGRY IN GAZA. WILL WE FEED HIM?

SOJOURNERS



I know I am not alone in feeling heartbroken by the horrific terrorist attacks in Israel on Oct. 7 and the dire humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza. The entirety of Gaza's population — 2.2 million people — is ensnared in the grasp of extreme food insecurity and the outbreak of infectious disease; **more than a quarter** of these people find themselves in the throes of famine. I continue to pray for the release of hostages, for a lasting cease-fire, and for peace to reign in the region.

As Christians, addressing the distress of our neighbors is woven into the very essence of our faith. Christ's fervent teachings in Matthew 25:37-40 make it plain:

"... 'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?' Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me'" (The Message).

Yet in Gaza, **millions** are being "overlooked or ignored." Right now, people are starving and clinging to the fading hope that somehow territorial, historical, religious, and political crisis can yield to compassionate humanity.

This, friends, represents our highest and most crucial calling. We are compelled by the teachings of Jesus to offer help — and we must act.

Understanding the best way to help can often be complex.

While international efforts focus on negotiating a cease-fire and seeking a diplomatic resolution to the conflict — with countries like the United States, Egypt, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates at the forefront — it's crucial to consider immediate actions we can take to alleviate the suffering of millions.

A good first step would be reducing the **bottlenecks** of aid trucks stalled at the only remaining Gaza-Egyptian border crossings so food aid that has already been donated reaches people in desperate need — instead of just sitting in storage. Another good step would be providing additional medical assistance and sanitation, including **safe drinking water**. To do this, we must ensure U.S. global assistance programs and partner international aid organizations like the U.N. World Food Programme have enough funding to address this ongoing humanitarian crisis.

But the problem is bigger: Virtually all families in Gaza are forced to **skip meals daily**, and many adults go entire days and nights without eating so their children can. Yet, sadly, Gaza's suffering is only one chapter in a global narrative of hunger and despair. The world stands amid the gravest hunger crisis of our generation, with up to a staggering **783 million people enduring chronic hunger**. Among these, 47 million individuals in 54 countries face hunger at "emergency" levels or worse, as reported by the World Food Programme.

In **Sudan**, for example, following months of civil war, nearly 18 million people face extreme food insecurity, including 5 million people experiencing emergency hunger conditions.

In **Yemen**, 17 million people are food insecure; 1.3 million pregnant and breastfeeding women and 2.2 million children under 5 are suffering from extreme malnutrition.

Other countries grappling with severe malnutrition and famine — a list that includes, but is by no means limited to, Afghanistan, Armenia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, and South Sudan. Each of these nations remind us of the widespread affliction of hunger that touches every corner of our world.

Even as the need for funding grows, Samantha Power, the leader of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) — the U.S. government's agency that administers foreign aid from the American people — **has warned** that the agency's total budget for humanitarian aid will be 35 percent lower in fiscal year 2024 than in 2023. This is caused, in part, because Congress has not provided supplemental humanitarian funding this year, which has been critical to the agency's ability to respond to ongoing crises in years past.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Therefore, USAID has submitted an emergency supplemental humanitarian funding request to Congress to address these unprecedented crises. The supplemental funds requested will help to address the humanitarian crises in Gaza and elsewhere by providing food, shelter, water, medical supplies, and other critical relief items. Without the supplemental funds, USAID will be forced to drastically cut humanitarian funding from multiple regions, potentially including Gaza, leaving millions of people at risk of malnutrition and death.

As is the case in Gaza, conflict is a leading driver of hunger. In fact, 8 out of 10 of the world's worst hunger crises are **caused by conflict**. And it is innocent people, particularly children, who suffer the most. Of the approximately 1.7 million people who have been internally displaced in Gaza, half are children.

While a diplomatically settled peace is the most obvious and lasting solution, a robust humanitarian response from the U.S., other nations, and partner international aid organizations can help address some of the suffering caused by these conflicts.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Senate **passed** an emergency supplemental humanitarian assistance package, with bipartisan support, that would provide more than **\$9 billion** in aid to assist tens of millions of families in need, in Gaza and elsewhere. However, the humanitarian aid package was part of a **\$95 billion bill** that included military aid to Israel, Ukraine, and other nations — and unfortunately the leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives has **thus far not** brought that bill to the floor for a vote.

Late last week, House lawmakers introduced a **“compromise”** to the larger spending bill that does not include the humanitarian aid package nor additional funding to assist the crisis in Gaza and elsewhere in Palestine. The potential impact of these outcomes is large-scale suffering and death.

Which brings us back to you, and what you can do *today*.

As the president of Bread for the World, I lead a Christian organization that stands in the breach, advocating for swift action by the House to secure this aid that is so vital for the sustenance of the people of Gaza and other regions. Your voice, too, can echo in the halls of power.

By **writing your representative** and urging them to support the humanitarian aid package, members of Congress will pay attention and, hopefully, be compelled to act. Reaching out to your representative to support this humanitarian aid package is not just an act of advocacy, but a profound expression of our shared commitment to alleviate suffering.

Our moral compass compels us to act — Jesus compels us to act and to extend our hands in compassion to those who are hungry. Inaction is simply not an option for us.

Let us proceed with purpose, always bearing in mind the imperative: “Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me — you did it to me.”



Eugene Cho

Rev. Eugene Cho is president and CEO of **Bread for the World**, a Christian advocacy organization urging U.S. decision makers to do all they can to pursue a world without hunger.

SOLAR PANEL REPORT— February 2024



☀️ Produced
1.7 MWh

111% higher*
25 Feb :95.9 kWh

Maximum production day

🏠 Consumed
1.5 MWh

10% lower*
2 Feb :101.1 kWh

Maximum consumption day

⚡ Grid energy
933.4 kWh

Imported

1.1 MWh
Exported



🌳 CO2 reduction
1.24 ton

Offset equivalent to 21
Trees

⚡ Grid Dependence
62%

For this month, 62% of your energy consumption is supplied by the utility grid.

Get grid independence with Enphase

Add Storage

Year-to-date production

3 MWh

* As compared to last month's records

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APRIL 2024 BIRTHDAYS!



***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
to update our records.

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER!

April 21st - Earth Day Eve Gathering - 3 to 5 p.m. Emanuel Lutheran Church
May 4th - Foodshare Walk - 8:30 a.m. Registration; 10 a.m. Walk Starts
May 4th - Annelise Koenig Celebration of Life 11 a.m.
May 5th - Rev. Dr. William Barber in Hartford - 3 p.m.
Immanuel Congregational Church
May 12th - Mother's Day
June 6-8th - NE Synod Assembly - Worcester, MA

Grace Lutheran Church – Readers for April 2024

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

Date	Reading #	Reading	Reader
4/7	1	Acts 4: 32-35	Betsy DeRoma
	2	1John 1: 1-2; 2	Marty Holmeen
	Psalm	Psalm 133	Unison
4/14	1	Acts 3: 12-19	David Eberly
	2	1 John 3: 1-7	Barbara Calogero
	Psalm	Psalm 4	Unison
4/21	1	Acts 4: 5-12	Judy Butterworth-Kremer
	2	1 John 3: 16-24	Rebecca Lewis
	Psalm	Psalm 23 - King James Version	Unison



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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

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