



DECEMBER 2021

GIVING THANKS; THANKS; GIVING TO OTHERS

On Christ the King Sunday we gathered to worship on the last Sunday of the liturgical year. We remembered how Christ the King is the one who teaches us to share, to give, to serve, to visit, to feed, to nurture; in short to love. Initial thoughts about such a king are about how different this king is; what a strange kind of lordship.

Yet we are moved by this king who surrendered himself on a cross. Perhaps he does this for us to learn exactly what we gain by giving ourselves away.



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It had been more than two years since we stopped for a few hours to reflect on what it had been like in this very difficult period of pandemic, loneliness, poverty of the spirit, and poverty in relationships, finding food, holding on to shelter, in a deep hole that kept on getting deeper. We watched people suffer and die, we heard people crying in the night, we watched as violence and insurrection, lies and self-giving, drugs and alcohol seemed to overwhelm us even more.

And, here we are, what are we to do. What does God want us to do?

That was the simple part. That was the part to be trusted. That was the voice, and the guidance and the source of the desperation in our desire to serve. But it was truly overwhelming. We could no longer do things as we had done them. Everything was turned upside down, and it still is. There is very little that we can depend upon. With wars, people giving their lives and children to find places to safely live, horrific natural disasters, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, famine across portions of the globe, all impacting on the flow and tragedies in the lives of those impacted

the most. Those who could not escape, but had to; those who did not know where to turn.

In some ways we were like that, too. What can we do? What should we do? What risks should we take? Where do we draw the line? We need to do more, and more and more. We should do it this way, no, that way. As we struggle ourselves with the fast-changing realities we cry out to God for direction. We pray for help. We argued with each other; no one was doing anything right. We had to do more. But we, too, had to be careful of everything, as everyone was exposed to all of this.

In the midst of our own heart aches, ills and limitations, we knew instinctively that we had to do something. And you did. And you did. And you did.

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GIVING THANKS; THANKS; GIVING TO OTHERS

(continued from page 1)

With Christ the King in the lead, we followed as best we could and labored at doing that.

Sunday, November 21st after worship, we gathered to stop. To thank all that had been in the fray with us. To appreciate all that we accomplished, in all different ways, over a terrible two years. We took a break, broke some bread, listened to some gifted musicians (our wondrous David Eberly, and our gifted and giving Wayne Dixon), we ate together, laughed together, smiled at each other, and we thanked each other. Our burdens didn't change, our sinfulness is still with us, perfection is not in the cards, but somehow the Holy Spirit gathers us for the common good. And you made a difference.



The one, solid and to be trusted fact in all of this has been paying attention to others. Finding them jobs, building them up, giving them things that they need, offering them prayers as needed, embracing and loving them as the world shuts them out, nurturing independence, offering counseling, support, our space, clothing, a kind word, sharing a story, listening to theirs.

We may hold each other with joy for what we have done, no matter how imperfect it has been. The closer we follow His model, the better we are. The closer that we realize that we are all in the same rocking boat, the more we can survive the trip and know that we did what we could. Never enough. But we did what we could.



So, sixty plus people signed up to come for a meal, have some fun and reflect on what we have done for two years in a broken world. We did fine. Imperfect but fine. Heart-felt, with real toil, frustration, aggravation, anger, along with our love, our hope, our efforts to make things right even when we simply can't do that.

Thanks to all invited and to all that came. May we carry our commitments into the holidays, beginning with a reflective time of waiting that is Advent, culminating in the joys of the Christ Child in that trough made for animals... and the story, begins again and our lives are renewed in the hope that He brings.

It is in the midst of our cries for decency, fairness, truth and hope that we cling to the Holy Spirit within, the faces of Christ we see every day, and the sure knowledge of what is to come. Come Lord Jesus. Come Holy Spirit. Come God the Father. We listen. We hear. We offer our eternal gratitude for all that You have given us, shown us, and taught us. If we have ever known this in our lives, we know that now.



CHURCHES BEYOND BORDERS RELEASES DEVOTIONAL INSPIRED BY UNITED NATIONS ANTI-VIOLENCE EFFORTS

CHICAGO (Nov. 9, 2021) – Working alongside the United Nations' "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign, the four member churches of Churches Beyond Borders have compiled a 16-day devotional focusing on the campaign's theme opposing intersectional violence against women.

The devotional — an annual tradition for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada — dives into each of the 16 days in the U.N. campaign, which begins with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on Nov. 25 and ends on Human Rights Day, Dec. 10. This year, Mary's Magnificat — found in Luke 1:46-55 — was selected as the guiding text for the booklet in recognition of the campaign's alignment with Advent.

For the first time, the annual contributions include devotions written by laity and clergy in addition to ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and the other heads of communion. New writers were selected for their work related to anti-violence, missing or murdered Indigenous women, trafficking, women at the borders, and domestic violence.

Joining Eaton as authors from the ELCA are the Rev. Joann Conroy, president of the ELCA's American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association; Denise Rector, womanist theological student at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; and the Rev. John Lund, director of Emmaus Campus Ministry at the University of Montana in Missoula.

Readers of "Churches Beyond Borders Joint Devotions 2021" are encouraged to utilize the writings throughout the year. The devotional can be found here. <https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/8123>



About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 worshipping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands.," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA's roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.

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Pastor's Message: JOY AND CONSTERNATION—LOOKING FOR RESPITE IN THE TRUTH

In this issue you'll read about an event that celebrated the people who made a real difference over the past couple of years in serving, volunteering, remaining sensitive to the needs of others less fortunate, caring enough to regularly serve and listen, love and care. 52 of them came to that celebration more than 78 qualified. It was a great time... those ill, traveling, and needing to care for family and friends, couldn't make it. We hold them up, too, as they have been part of a massive attempt to keep things going through pandemic, threats to our very existence presented by climate change, a government meltdown, insurrection, lies and dysfunction on a scale we have never seen in our lifetimes.

It was a joyous note, with little appreciation given over an extended period of time. More than two years of labor, toil, our own struggling, the constant bad news, the threat to our country's constitution, our democracy and the rule of law. How can some contribute, work so hard in doing so, including risking lives (medical and related workers), while others argue for the open carry of weapons, white supremacy, racism, and blaming everything on those who desperately want to live in this country, many of whom who risked their lives and their families lives to get here.

We don't understand it. We are barraged by social media and the constant dissemination of misinformation from "normal" media outlets. Hundreds of Emails a day bury my heart in it. They tire me. Take my attention away from those challenges that exist all around us. Yes, we need to take a break. All of us do.

My consternation is that so much good has been done at the very same time. The pandemic has been substantially reduced, we have extracted ourselves from a war of more than 20 years, we have passed legislation to address national infrastructure challenges, the markets have remained strong, unemployment has dropped dramatically, and some of us seem to have found our hearts once again.

We hope that you and yours find a time to reflect on what is better in your life today from where it was two years ago. We ask that we all return to our faith in grasping how best to address the challenges that we face. God is here. The Lord is here with us. The Holy Spirit speaks to each one of us, otherwise how could we have possibly lasted through all this?

So, we do give thanks. Grace is a blessing+ in the darkness. May we continue to embrace the people all around us who suffer and come to see how their gifts are a-plenty, just as ours. May we also take the time, a bit more than once every two years to appreciate one another. When Wayne Dixon played and sang Amazing Grace Sunday afternoon, I felt that "grace" in the room. As David Eberly played throughout the afternoon, I was actually at peace.

All of us, even as much as we have bumped heads, been insensitive in failing to understand each other, we can put that away. Not to say that perfection will happen, but compassion may grow in our hearts and impact all those around us.

Please realize that we are all in this rocky boat together. And Jesus is lying there knowing that all will be fine.

LANDSCAPING PROJECT AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



Volunteer Luncheon , November 21, 2021



THE BOOK YOU NEED TO READ



Welcome to the monthly Leah and Ezra newsletter, where we take a step back and talk about what we're grappling with.

This monthly letter is fully dedicated to a book you need to read -- *The Sum of Us* by Heather McGhee, former head of Demos (and a founding member of Indivisible's board!).

Heather spent years analyzing how racism has been used to strategically divide Americans, what racism has cost us all, and what's possible when we refuse to be divided. Her book opens with a simple, haunting question: "Why can't we have nice things?"

The drained pool

At the center of Heather's book is the story of public pools in America. You may know -- I certainly didn't -- that we used to have a network of thousands of enormous, beautiful public pools across the country. These community institutions were often built with public investment during the New Deal. For decades, they were reserved for white people. As desegregation progressed, cities and towns overwhelmingly made the choice to fill in, abandon, or privatize the public pools rather than allow them to be shared with Black people.

This is, first and foremost, a story of anti-Black oppression. But it's also a story about what racism costs everyone. It's a story about how our political imagination has been limited, because for generations, so many of us white people have chosen to go without rather than to share.

Drained pools are everywhere - and that suits the rich just fine

Once you've heard the story of the drained pools, you start to see it constantly in American life. You feel it in the things we don't have -- a real social safety net, universal health insurance, good jobs, childcare, or eldercare.

You hear it in the racially coded appeals that Republicans and some Democrats (hi, Joe Manchin!) used to dismiss, undermine, and often successfully destroy the idea of universal programs. You see it in the racist attacks that regularly form the center of the Republican message.

Because, as Heather notes, this doesn't happen accidentally. Racism is weaponized, and stoked, and used strategically to undermine the possibility of public goods or cross-race solidarity. Someone benefits from hollowing out public life. When the public pools are drained, or the public schools are gutted, the rich get to keep their taxes low. When faith in government and collective action is destroyed, corporations can rake in profits, evade regulations, and crush worker power.

The drained pool of democracy

At Indivisible, we think a lot about why our democracy is under threat and what could make it truly inclusive and functional. Heather's book offers a historical frame for the arc that we're living through.

Our democracy is young. It began not in 1776 but in 1965 with the Voting Rights Act, which finally guaranteed, at least on paper, the right for all to vote. The lost era of bipartisanship, so often fetishized by pundits in Washington, was rooted in the exclusion of whole classes of people from the halls of power. It's a lot easier to agree on things if everyone at the table is a rich, white man. Now that those halls of power are a bit more diverse, voices that had long been excluded are being heard -- and not everyone's happy about that.

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THE BOOK YOU NEED TO READ

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As our democracy becomes more diverse and more representative, there's a backlash, just like the backlash to desegregation. Our first Black president faced a rise in white grievance politics, first in the form of the Tea Party and then in the rise of Donald Trump. And over the last decade, there's been an effort -- through voter suppression, extreme gerrymandering, packing the courts, and most shockingly, a literal violent attack on the Capitol -- to enshrine minority rule.

Some people -- specifically, some white people -- would prefer minority rule, if they're the ones whose group will remain represented in power.

This may sound overly dramatic. Unfortunately, it's not. Look no further than what happened in the Senate this week, where Republicans filibustered the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. They are, quite literally, opposed to the successor to the 1965 Voting Rights Act -- the very law that made us an actual democracy.

In other words, the fight over our democracy right now is a fight over whether to drain the pool or share it. We can have a democracy. We can have health care, public goods, and a government that works for us. We can't be naive about the power of racial grievance -- it's the central force in American politics (and our political campaigns, policy solutions, and strategies have to reflect that). But we have joined across lines of difference in the past to make our country better before, and we can do it again.

A multiracial democracy with a government that works for all of us is possible in this country; in fact, it's on the horizon. We have to fight for it.

What can you do?

Well, it's Indivisible, so first, we're going to tell you you need to call your senators and tell them to end the filibuster so we can pass the Voting Rights Act and the Freedom to Vote Act.

Then, let's pass those game-changing policies that improve peoples' lives and show them they have more to gain from solidarity than division. That's the Build Back Better Act, and now that Congress has passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework (BIF), we need to complete the Biden economic agenda by moving Build Back Better forward. Tell your representative and tell your senators that you want the Build Back Better Act passed now -- no more excuses, no more delays.

And of course, you should read *The Sum of Us*. It's incredibly rich, and, perhaps even more precious in this moment, it's deeply optimistic. It will give you a sense of not only what's at stake, but also the good things that are possible if we come together and build solidarity and some of the ways that people are trying to do that work right now. It's also just a great read -- I finished it in about 24 hours. Read it, give it to your friends, and try out some of the frames that Heather uses, and see how they work in your own life.

In solidarity,

Leah Greenberg
Co-Executive Director, Indivisible

P.S. -- It's not a monthly newsletter without a picture of Zeke, our 1-year-old! Here we are trick-or-treating together as Calvin, Hobbes, and Susie Derkins.



WHAT'S IN THE BBB PLAN? LET ME BREAK IT DOWN FOR YOU

<https://www.bonamiciforcongress.com/2021/11/17/whats-bbb-plan-let-me-break-it-down-you/>



It's historic!

Build Back Better will help Oregonians and Americans in many ways; Congress must pass this legislation as soon as possible.

Here's where things stand, Richard. Build Back Better will include:



Universal Pre-K for 3 & 4 year olds. The cost of sending children to preschool is unaffordable for many Oregon families. This bill will provide every 3 and 4 year old with access to early childhood education, which is critical to children's development and long-term success.



Expanded Child Tax Credit. The bill extends the expanded child tax credit for nearly every American family, giving families \$300/month per child ages 6 and under, and \$250/month per child ages 7-17. Research shows families are using this tax credit toward food, child care, and utility bills.



Lowers Child Care Costs. The bill makes the largest investment in child care in our nation's history. Under Build Back Better, working families will not pay more than 7 percent of their income on child care, and states will be able to expand access to high-quality child care.



Investing in Affordable Housing. A comprehensive solution to ending the housing crisis is long overdue. This bill will enhance rental assistance and leverage private funding to build more homes, upgrade our public housing infrastructure, and make a significant contribution to ending homelessness.



Reduces Prescription Drug Prices. The bill will finally allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices to bring down costs for seniors and reduce out-of-pocket costs.



Fighting Climate Change. The bill will help us transition to a clean energy economy and create thousands of good-paying jobs right here at home.

And the Build Back Better Agenda is paid for by finally requiring the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share in taxes, and requiring large corporations to pay taxes on their profits overseas.

We must pass the Build Back Better Act now to invest in our children, families, communities, planet, and future.

Thank you for standing with me,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Suzanne Bonamici".

A LIGHT AGAINST THE DARKNESS

As the setting sun marks the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, I'm reminded of what underlies so many of our sacred celebrations this holiday season: The commitment to bring light to a world shrouded in darkness.



Bringing light in times of darkness is the work of Faith in Action. Our commitment to faith and justice — especially through the darkest of times — is what brings us together and shows us the way forward in the face of antisemitism, racism, and xenophobia.

The last few years have indeed included dark times. And yet your light brings me faith and sustains our community. Through your efforts I know that we can create a pathway to citizenship for our undocumented friends and neighbors, and that we can ensure that every voice is heard in our democracy. **When we come together, our light of justice burns brightly.**

Happy Hanukkah to those who celebrate, and may our faith be fueled with love for the many nights ahead.



**HIS WORDS.
YOUR JOURNEY.
TOGETHER.**

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2021

"The Lord always acts in secret in the peripheries, even in our souls, in the peripheries of the soul, of feelings, perhaps feelings of which we are ashamed; but the Lord is there to help us move forward... In particular, Jesus goes in search of sinners... He also goes in search of those who have done no evil but have suffered it: the sick, the hungry, the poor, the least. Jesus always goes towards the peripheries. And this should bring us great trust because the Lord knows the peripheries of our heart, the peripheries of our soul, the peripheries of our society, of our city, of our family, that is, that slightly obscure part that we do not show, perhaps out of shame."

Pope Francis

GENERAL AUDIENCE NOVEMBER 17, 2021

SOLIDARITY IS A VERB-<https://berniesanders.com/>



During our campaigns for president, I stated over and over again that the future of our country was dependent upon our willingness to make a political revolution — to think big, not small and to involve millions of our fellow citizens in the struggle for human rights.

I stressed that real change never occurs from the top on down. It always happens from the bottom up. In fact, no real change in American history, not the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the gay rights movement, the environmental movement, or any other significant movement has ever had success without grassroots activism — without people standing up, taking on powerful special interests and fighting for justice.

Now, as then, change only comes when people demand it and are prepared to challenge the status quo — in the voting booth, on the streets in peaceful demonstrations, and at the workplace.

I am pleased to write to you today about a growing movement of workers all across the country who are sick and tired of the obscene corporate greed they are experiencing. These trade unionists are standing up, fighting back and are winning real victories against large and powerful corporations.

Striking workers at John Deere waged their first strike in more than three decades. They overwhelmingly rejected the first contract that was offered to them, stayed on the picket lines and eventually won a contract with decent wage increases, a ratification bonus and improved health insurance. They even fought for future workers, people they don't even know, to preserve their pension options.

Striking nurses in Buffalo reached a tentative agreement that would raise their wages, including moving all workers above \$15 an hour and reduce staff shortages — once again fighting for people they don't know: patients and future colleagues at their hospitals. They went on strike for weeks — and they won.

Kaiser Permanente health care workers won a major victory after rejecting a contract that would have given new workers lower wages and fewer benefits.

Nabisco workers, struggling against forced overtime, inadequate wages and pensions and the outsourcing of jobs, recently ended their strike in victory.

And these workers are winning strong support from their fellow Americans who are more than aware of the growing income and wealth inequality that we are all experiencing. A recent poll in Iowa showed over 75% support for striking UAW workers at John Deere. And a national poll showed 68% of Americans now approve of labor unions, the highest Gallup has measured since 1965.

You'll recall the teacher strikes in several states before the start of the pandemic where teachers fought not only for better pay and benefits for themselves but also to make sure that their schools were adequately funded and that their students received a quality education. They went on strike and in state after state, they won.

These workers did not wait for Congress to raise their wages or improve their working conditions. They stood up, fought back and they won.

These workers did not wait for Congress to demand adequate staffing levels or provide government funds to do it — they demanded it from their employer and they won.

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SOLIDARITY IS A VERB

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These workers did not wait for Congress to pass a law improving their health care or helping them to retire with dignity after a life of work — they demanded it from their employer and they won.

These workers remind us that improving our lot in life, through government or at the workplace, is not a spectator sport. It's something we have got to fight for.

But the struggle is not theirs alone. There are millions of other Americans in exactly the same position as these striking workers. Throughout the country, in every sector of our economy, they are working for inadequate wages, health care, pensions and working conditions.

As progressives, we all have a role to play in these fights.

Solidarity is a verb.

You'll recall we raised more than \$150,000 in small-dollar donations to support the strike funds helping John Deere and Kellogg's workers maintain their strikes.

All of the credit goes to the workers who risked so much by walking off the job, but you helped lighten their burden even just a bit. Your support helped those John Deere workers maintain the strike they ended with their tremendous gains for workers at the company.



And it is no coincidence that after weeks on strike, Kellogg's has now agreed to come back to the table with the more than 1,400 workers of theirs who are on strike in several states — a strike those who have contributed helped to maintain.

We show solidarity in these moments because these workers are not only striking for themselves and their co-workers, but for all of us. They are striking for an economy that works for all Americans, not just powerful CEOs and the 1%.

Everything is connected to everything. And it often goes unnoticed that the struggles of the working class in communities across the country ultimately determine the quality of wages, benefits, and the ability to retire with dignity in seemingly unconnected industries.

These are struggles we must continue to engage in and support.

We cannot have a moral society or a strong economy when so few have so much, and so many have so little. That's the struggle workers are increasingly engaging in all across this country.

It is a struggle we must support.

In solidarity,

Bernie Sanders

STOP WATCHING AND READING THE PUNDIT BOOBERY-

<https://www.michaelmoore.com/p/stop-watching-and-reading-the-pundit>



Look — what's the problem here? Do I have to explain everything? I don't want to! Stop watching and reading the pundit boobery! Unbelievable! I'm trying to get through the last of my Thanksgiving day leftovers and I now have to stop and summon all my Marvel superpowers to turn the Speeding False Train of Knuckleheads around and shoot bolts of facts and wisdom into everyone's heads. I didn't ask for this job. If you've noticed lately I will actually wait for weeks now as I listen to piled on before I step in and try to straighten things out. So here I go:

1. Biden's approval ratings are at an historic low!

No, they're not! The polls say 52% of us disapprove. That's because when they call me or you and ask us if we approve we say "No!" We don't approve of the human infrastructure bill being chopped down. We don't approve that there's *still* no voting rights bill. We disapprove of Biden not getting Manchin and Sinema in line to vote for these bills. We disapprove of him pulling OSHA back from forcing companies to require employees be vaccinated as a workplace safety issue!

But let's get this straight — *none* of this means that the 52% who disapprove are the people who are voting for Trump's Republicans next year — or for Trump in 2024. A big chunk of the 70% who say they think "the country is going in the wrong direction" are people like you and me and millions of our friends because we believe not passing these laws after nearly a whole year means we ARE heading in the wrong direction. If Biden and the Democratic Congress doesn't deliver on the promises they ran on, then millions of Biden voters will simply stay home on Election Day next year and then we WILL truly be going deep, deep, deep in the wrong direction.

Again: when 52% say they disapprove — *at least a fifth of that number are us!* And we are disapproving for the right reasons. Not because we'll vote for Trump.

2. The country rejects Bernie, the Squad, Democratic socialism, Black Lives Matter and critical race theory!

No! They do not! They may not like AOC or me or Bernie or the word socialism but the vast majority of this country *agrees* with *everything* we are trying to get passed in Congress:

- 73% of all Americans believe everyone should have paid family leave (CBS poll)
- 63% believe community college should be tuition-free (Pew poll)
- 64% want stronger gun control laws (Morning Consult poll)
- 75% believe "climate change" is real and must be addressed NOW (AP poll)
- 62% believe the minimum wage should be raised to at least \$15 an hour (Pew poll)
- 84% believe Medicare should cover hearing aids, glasses and dental (CBS poll)
- 67% believe children should have access to free pre-K (CBS poll)
- 67% of voters say that federal voting rights legislation is necessary (Navigator poll)

3. Inflation is at an all-time high!

NO. It is not. The temporary higher prices are the result of a once-in-a-century global pandemic — and they are already self-correcting. When you've got pundits saying gas is up 50% over last year — well, of course it is! Because nobody was driving last year! And don't forget, the oil companies, not wanting to be left out of the record wealth accumulation by the rich during the pandemic, have jacked these prices up worldwide. Stop being conned by a media that knows

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squat about economics. None of this has anything to do with Biden. I promise I'd be the first to point it out.



Companies are raising prices well above increases in their costs.

Let's be clear: America wants help with its kids, help for their aging parents, help with reducing college debt, and Americans want Big Pharma to stop charging us \$795 for a single pill. The public hates politicians saying they're going to do something and then don't.

4. *Employers can't find enough employees because people just don't want to work!*

WRONG! Everybody needs work! But the pandemic has been a wake-up call. And millions of workers have decided they will no longer work for low wages, poor health care, no paid vacation, no pension, no future. Why go to work and risk your life being closed-in with a half-unvaccinated group of idiots? For *what*? Ten bucks an hour? And then rush to get to your second job? NO!

And so with no planning, no leaders, no movement, the working class of America has said NO WAY to the business world, the corporate bosses, the cubicles and the assembly lines. They are refusing to go back to work until they are paid a real middle class wage. They've decided to *suffer* without a paycheck and are willing to holdout until they are treated right and paid what they deserve. The Left has always hoped for a nationwide strike that would bring about economic justice. No one, though, could figure out how to pull it off. Until Mr. Covid-19 came to town.

Well, now we have a nationwide workers strike underway! The media will never claim that's what's going on because to do so would acknowledge the power we hold and that we are defeating the most important weapon the rich have over us: the power to demoralize us, to crush our spirits, to always remind us who is in charge. Until that day that they're not. *And that day has arrived.* So now I ask liberals, the Left, good Democrats, and our anemic but much-needed labor unions — *what are we going to do with this miraculous moment?* Millions of workers are refusing slave wages — but that can only hold on for so long. Time to support them! Time to organize! Time to pass around those Union vote cards! Time to demand a \$20 minimum wage (you bastards should've taken Bernie up on his bargain-priced \$15/hr offer when you had the chance)! A raise for retirees on Social Security! Free health care for all! I beg you all — ***this is an historic moment and we will regret it if we miss it.***

(Here's something I did recently. In re-opening our nonprofit theater in Michigan, we needed to hire staff to check people's vaccination cards at the door. I was told I wouldn't find workers. I offered \$22.50 an hour. Within two hours of posting the job openings, we had 40 applicants. Nuff said.)

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STOP WATCHING AND READING THE PUNDIT BOOBERY

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The State Theatre re-opening in Traverse City, Michigan

The first “bi-partisan” infrastructure bill was so watered down. An exhausted President Biden, hunched over his desk as he signed it into law — the poor guy, already feeling half-defeated and pretending to be excited about touring the country at 90 mph in an electric Hummer to rah-rah up the American people over his great accomplishment (ROADS! BRIDGES!) — when *he knows* the legislation was chopped to pieces and won’t really give us what we truly need. An example: The American Water Works Association said it would cost \$60 billion to replace all the dangerous lead pipes in America. To get this bipartisan infrastructure bill passed, he whittled the lead pipe replacement funds down to just \$15 billion. So, for every 100 cities that are poisoning their children and giving them permanent brain

damage, only 25 will get help? Or perhaps all 100 will get to replace just 25% of the pipes so we can con Black and Hispanic America into believing we’re doing something for them. Who gets to be the lucky Flint of this decade? Who gets to pick the 25% who will get to drink clean water? King Solomon, there’s a call for you...

Old rusty utility pipes sit on the ground where workers are installing new water pipes in Oakland, California. Who decides which lead pipes stay and which get replaced? (Justin Sullivan/Getty)



Imagine if when Lincoln ended slavery, and the only way he could get any bill passed was to compromise and say “OK, in the spirit of bipartisanship, we’ll agree to only free the slaves in Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky. It’s a start! We’ll free the others later!” Or when women were finally allowed to vote, suffragists, in order to get the Amendment passed, gave in and agreed that only married women would get the vote.

In this “Build Back Better” human infrastructure bill — a bill that **MUST** pass the Senate in the next 3 weeks — we must all stand firm for what is right and just.

And I just want to distinguish the painful difference between actually creating real change — such as, *no child shall ever be poisoned by any government-delivered water ANYWHERE in the United States, period* — and the creation of the *illusion* of change, the pretense that your government is actually doing something that matters. Well, thankfully most citizens can now see this coming at them faster than a runaway Pillsbury Doughboy balloon at a Thanksgiving Day parade.

STOP WATCHING AND READING THE PUNDIT BOOBERY

(continued from page 14)

Here's an example of why no one has taken to the streets with passion to help Uncle Joe:

In order to make it look like the Dems are doing something for "climate," fully one-third of this second \$1.6 trillion infrastructure bill — \$555 billion — is, as they like to say, "devoted to climate!" Here's the truth: \$320 billion of that \$555 billion for "climate" is not actual cash to go toward saving the planet. It's \$320 billion in *tax credits* — gifts to corporations! — who promise to do what they should *already* be doing with their earth-abusing industrial products and their fake green efforts — all being set up so that they get to pay less taxes! THAT is not going to save Mother Earth. We are in the middle of an environmental catastrophe. An extinction event is underway. Young people know it. Many of the old time leaders of our environmental movement are in bed with Wall Street, corporate America, capitalism. Tricking people into thinking a full \$555 billion in this bill is going toward thwarting the planet's collapse — well, people aren't stupid. They know this isn't the real green new deal we need because it funds the wealthy class and does nothing to reduce consumption and the profit motive. Sadly, few "leaders" in "the movement" will tell you the truth.

Let's cut the crap and get this bill passed. Cut out the corporate welfare hidden under the guise of "green" and tell Manchin and Sinema, "there — now you got the number you wanted. Vote for the damn bill!"

The House has passed it. The Senate will take it up this week. It's time for all of us to activate, make noise, call Senators, buy Senators, do what we need to do in West Virginia and Arizona and come up with any idea that may just get this bill passed.

Who's game?

GUENTHER AND EDITH MAMET

The Mamets send their love to all their friends at Grace. They are well and hope to be joining us virtually, soon!



One Sunday morning at a small southern church, the new pastor called on one of his older deacons to lead in the opening prayer. The deacon stood up, bowed his head and said, "Lord, I hate buttermilk."

The pastor opened one eye and wondered where this was going. The deacon continued, "Lord, I hate lard." Now the pastor was totally perplexed. The deacon continued, "Lord, I ain't too crazy about plain flour. But after you mix 'em all together and bake 'em in a hot oven, I just love biscuits."

"Lord help us to realize when life gets hard, when things come up that we don't like, whenever we don't understand what You are doing, that we need to wait and see what You are making. After you get through mixing and baking, it'll probably be something even better than biscuits." Amen.

Romans 8:28



MONTHLY QUIZ

Who is the real drummer boy?



AFGHAN NEIGHBORS AND RECEIVING COMMUNITIES DESERVE PEACE OF MIND, AND CONGRESS CAN DELIVER!



An Afghan Adjustment Act would provide Afghans with humanitarian parole here in the United States the opportunity to apply to adjust their status, providing long-term stability and security for themselves and their families.

As we join with partners like Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) in supporting recent arrivals for the “long welcome,” as Presiding Bishop Eaton has said, communities need a lift from Congress to ensure that our new neighbors have what they need to thrive. Recognizing the potential in all, we seek timely measures to meet the needs of our neighbors. The Afghan Adjustment Act would allow Afghan humanitarian parolees to seek legal permanent residence in the U.S., and we encourage you to use the LIRS Action Alert to promote its passage with your member of Congress.

PLIGHT SHAPING NEED FOR THE POLICY

The end of the U.S.’s lengthy war in Afghanistan was met with a world-wide effort to support displaced Afghan nationals. Thousands arrived in the United States, hopeful that passage meant safety and the chance to rebuild anew.

Lutherans understand this journey well. Following World War II, one out of every six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or displaced person. This experience invites us to be gracious, ever learning and responsive hosts to the needs of the newcomer among us.

This brings us to the plight of recent Afghan arrivals. During the evacuation operations, many Afghan nationals were admitted to the United States under temporary humanitarian parole status. These Afghans will need to apply for a legal status before their humanitarian parole expires. No direct path to legal permanent residency is presently available. Thus, the stability and security that families seek starting a new life remains out of reach.

A path to lawful permanent residency after one year strengthens our communities and supports integration. “We can’t say enough how much we appreciate the advocacy and support in terms of the [Afghan] Adjustment Act,” shared Salah Ansary, an Afghan America and refugee resettlement expert in the recent ELCA webinar, “Walking Beside Our Afghan Neighbors.” Congress has authorized similar legal pathways for Cuban and South Asian refugees. Calling it a matter of “equity,” Ansary noted that many Afghans would have been eligible for permanent residency had they been admitted as refugees. Instead, recent Afghan arrivals with humanitarian parole status will have to secure a means to remain in the country. Congress can avoid hardship by taking proactive and compassionate steps now.

EXTENDING OUR WELCOME AS CHURCH THROUGH POLICY ADVOCACY

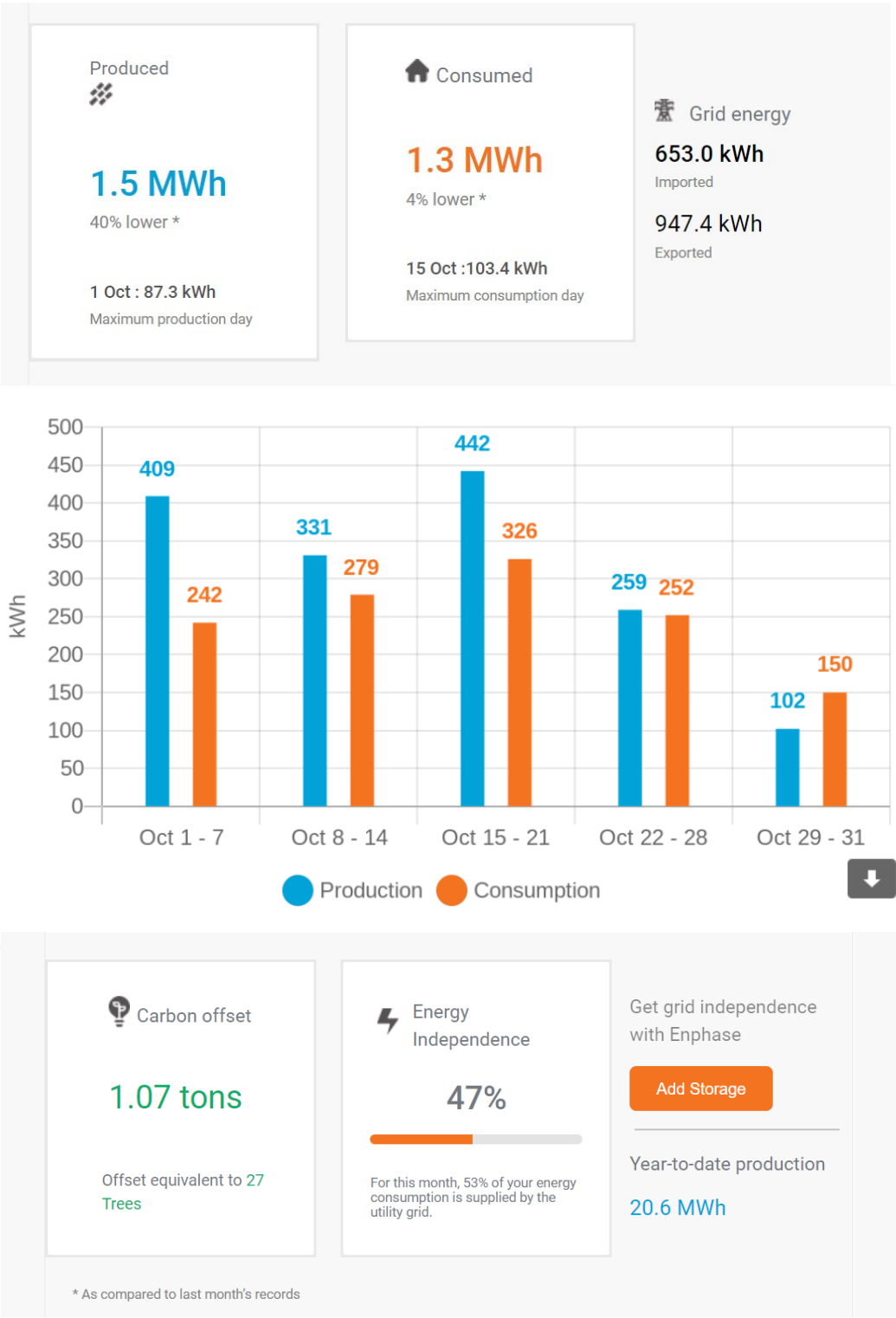
Find many ways Lutherans are stepping up to provide accompaniment in the ELCA Advocacy Blog post: “Welcome of Afghan newcomers.”

At a time like this, the church is called to be a serving presence in society, to advocate for generosity and compassionate welcome for all those in need of a new home. “The Church serves when it holds power accountable, advocates justice, stands with those who are poor and vulnerable, provides sanctuary, and meets human need,” says the ELCA social statement *For Peace in God’s World*. Our ELCA social message on “Immigration” commends “fair and compassionate legislative solutions to the plight of refugees whose present temporary legal status is threatened.”

Congress must pass the Afghan Adjustment Act to provide lasting safety for Afghans evacuees! announces the LIRS Action Alert. ! announces the LIRS Action Alert.

>> [Connect to the LIRS Action Center](#) <<

SOLAR PANEL REPORT



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CREATION CARE CORNER: BY NANCY URBAN

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