



## REGION 1 HAMMER & DANCE

June 24, 2020

**United for Ministry in the Days of COVID-19.**

The Social Service Agencies  
and Synods of Region 1.

**Dave Brauer-Rieke**, Consultant

Region 1 Lutheran Disaster Preparedness & Response  
971-255-9331 [dave@climateimagination.com](mailto:dave@climateimagination.com)



A 5<sup>th</sup> century mosaic of "Christ Victor."

The book this very Roman looking Jesus holds reads

**"Ego veri sum taset via vita."**

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."

How does privilege - white, Roman, Euro-Christian or disaster prepared - lead you to act in various social situations?

What is at the intersection of issues we face today and a wholesome theology of the cross?

**M**y book group is currently reading Me and White Supremacy by Layla Saad. Saad starts out sharing a vocabulary readers may or may not be familiar with. Terms such as "white privilege," "white fragility," "tone policing," "white silence" and the like. And, Saad invites us to journal, not just read. "Where do you benefit from white supremacy?" she asks. "How does white fragility lead you to act in various social situations?"

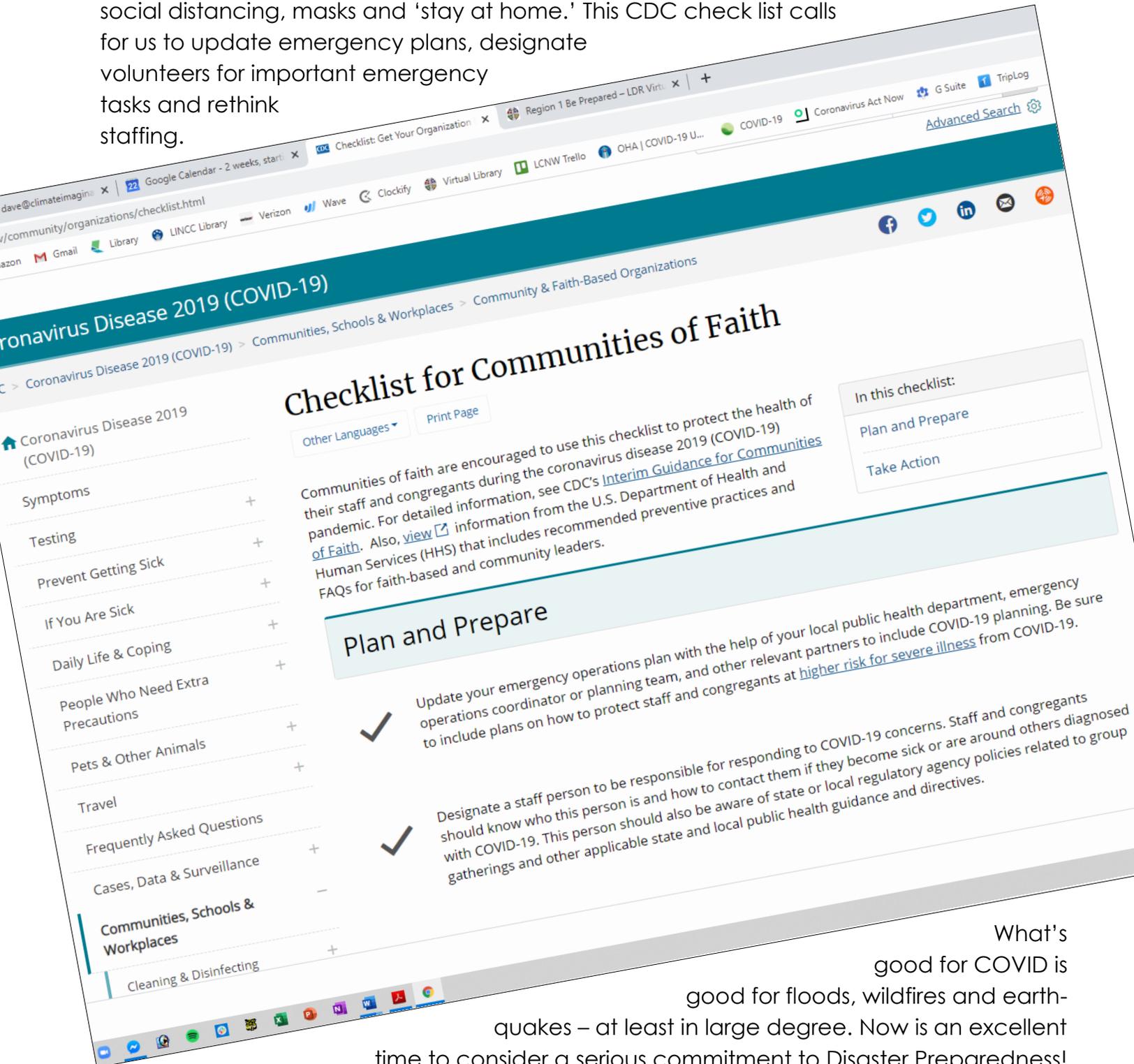
Natural disasters, to some degree, and underlying social injustices, to a larger degree, create the need for new vocabularies and concepts. Similarly, they create the need for new processes and disciplines.

Saad writes, "White privilege protects people who are white and white-passing from having to discuss the causes and implications of racism. The privilege of whiteness means that one's day-to-day life is not impacted by skin color ..."

With deep gratitude and respect to Layla Saad's teaching, today we ask how privilege of all sorts keeps us from the work of disaster preparedness. Why don't we who can, prepare for those who can't? - Dave Brauer-Rieke

# The Vocabulary of Coronavirus Planning & Preparation

“Update your emergency operations plan with the help of your local public health department, emergency operations coordinator or planning team.” [We read from the CDC](#). It is important, but not enough, that we help congregations obtain PPP Loans, and find resources for online worship. COVID-19 brings us a new vocabulary of social distancing, masks and ‘stay at home.’ This CDC check list calls for us to update emergency plans, designate volunteers for important emergency tasks and rethink staffing.

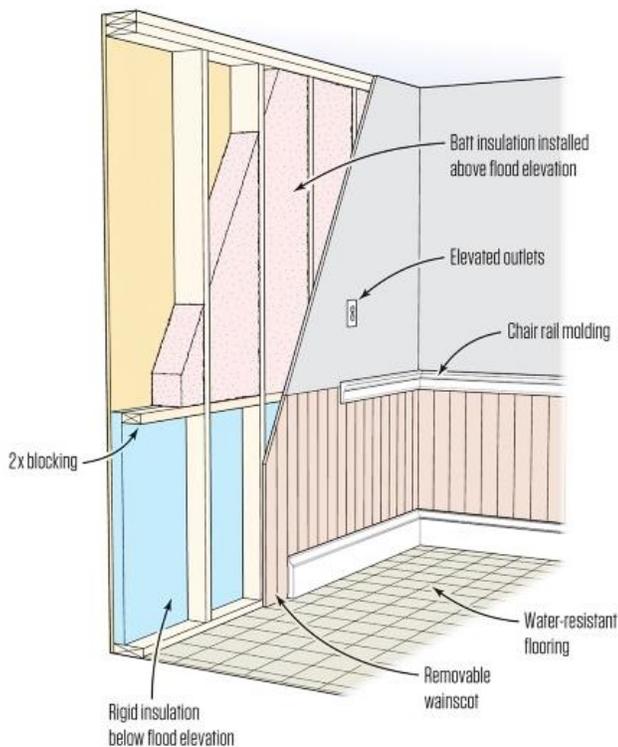
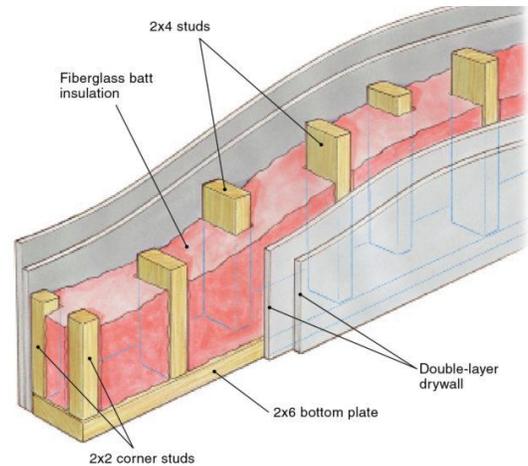


What's good for COVID is good for floods, wildfires and earthquakes – at least in large degree. Now is an excellent time to consider a serious commitment to Disaster Preparedness!

# The Vocabulary of Floods

The coronavirus pandemic literally *has* given us new vocabulary. Flooding we pretty much have down “word wise.” However, there is a persistent “vocabulary” of process and pattern we do not.

For example, basic home building in the U.S. uses wooden studs, spun fiberglass insulation, and gypsum-based drywall. These are great materials. Virtually all houses use them. They are economical, readily available, and easy to work with.



However, if you live in a flood zone such a wall is a disaster waiting to happen. If there is a flood the drywall will disintegrate, the insulation will wick water up into your wall, and all of the above will begin to grow a toxic black mold. Flood victims often have to strip damaged walls down to the studs, clean and redo everything.

Can we do better? Of course we can! One can build with metal studs. We now have closed cell, rigid insulation which does not absorb moisture. There are any number of wall coverings one could use other than gypsum-based drywall. So, why don't we do that? Because it costs more. The system often dictates that we repeat our mistakes. Insurance only covers replacement. FEMA only offers so much help. Habitat for Humanity builds inexpensive, basic homes.

Flooding alone is not the point, of course. 'Rethinking the rules' is the point. 'Taking disaster preparedness seriously enough that we look beyond the surface' is the point. 'Asking how those who can prepare might assist those who can't' is the point.

The Church is not FEMA. The Church is not the CDC. The Church's vocabulary is not one of fiberglass insulation or social distancing. The Church's vocabulary is about the poor. The Church's vocabulary is about serving our neighbor, being present in the present, and it is all about preparation. The Church's calling is rich and wonderful. We just need to remember who we are.

Why don't we who can, prepare for those who can't? Now is an excellent time to consider a serious commitment to Disaster Preparedness!

# The Vocabulary of Policing

**“In the South the economics that drove the creation of police forces were centered on the preservation of the slavery system. Some of the primary policing institutions there were the slave patrols tasked with chasing down runaways and preventing slave revolts ...”**

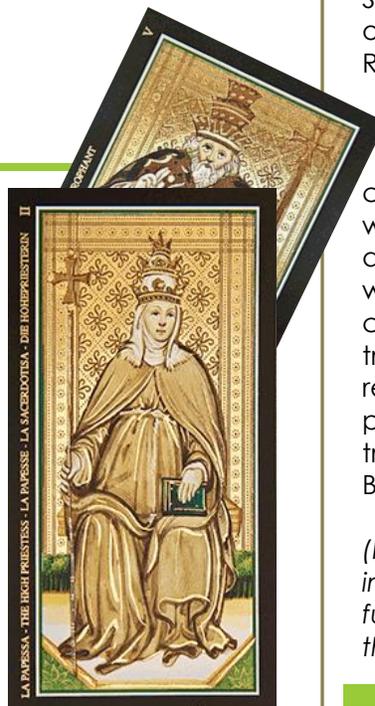
[How the U.S. Got its Police Force](#)

Volunteer police in colonial times, *in the north*, mostly watched for fellow colonists engaged in prostitution or gambling. Later efforts in the north focused on the protection of property.

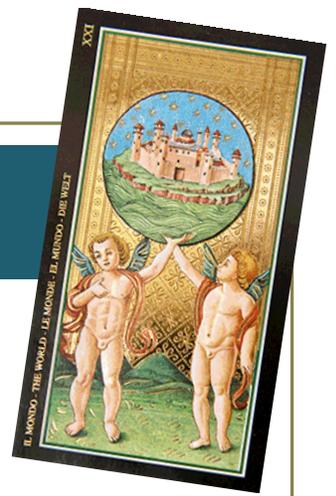
The definition of “public order” in the U.S. depends on whom you ask. Today, in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, we see that the disparate roots of policing have a significant social impact. How does this relate to natural disasters?

Vocabulary. Vulnerability. Unexamined social biases – that is how. Marginalization and social disruption. How might we make sure that our conversations about white supremacy, poverty and social justice keep disaster preparedness firmly in mind? They are two sides of the same coin.

One of the oldest extant Tarot decks dates back to 1451. This trump card from that deck is called “La Papessa” or “The Popess.” It is believed her face is that of Sr. Manfreda, a member of the Visconti family who commissioned the deck. Sr. Manfreda was a member of a heretical Catholic sect called the Guglielmites who elected her as their pope. In this picture she wears the same three-tiered crown seen on the Pope card and holds a similar papal cross in her right hand.



## Hidden Vocabularies



Bridge is a well-known card game which employs the use of “trump” cards to win tricks. Bridge itself is an evolution of an 18<sup>th</sup> century game called “Whist” – Whist being a replacement for a popular 16<sup>th</sup> century game called “Ruff and Honours.” French Ruff, or “Triomphe” was called “Trionfi,” or Tarot, in Italy, Tarot was a 15<sup>th</sup> century game with 22 trump cards including a Pope (the Popsess,) the Emperor, a Chariot, Magician, Empress, Fool, etc.

The notion of trump cards, or ‘triumphs,’ comes from the ancient Roman Empire where parades were held to celebrate conquests. Defeated peoples and plunder would lead such parades, followed by the Roman soldiers who defeated them, their commanders and a strict hierarchical ordering of other military personnel. Such parades reinforced the pecking order of life. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, “Triumphs” were no longer held.

With the Renaissance in the 14<sup>th</sup> century came a new humanism which drew heavily on Roman politics and Greek philosophy. Tarot grew with the Renaissance and its 22 trump cards reflects a resurgence of triumphalism (both politically and religiously.) Tarot juxtaposes cards of popes, princes, and powers. Who trumps who? It is a social teaching. Bridge, like policing, carries this history!

*(P.S. - There is no ‘Christus Victor’ card in this Tarot deck, but the most powerful trump card – above – does feature the New Jerusalem!)*