



Region 1 Disaster Preparedness and Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.

ELCA REGION 1 HAMMER & DANCE September 15, 2020

United for Ministry in the Days of COVID-19
Lutheran Social Service Agencies, Synods
and ELCA Church Members Together

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Washington and Oregon are on fire. Unseasonably strong winds blew in off the Pacific Ocean for several days last week, aggravating existing fires, downing powerlines, and sparking new fires. Over a million acres of forest have been lost in Oregon in just the past week, twice the annual average. Damage assessments are being made. The whole of the Pacific Northwest is inundated by smoke. See pages 2-3 for a fuller report.

Climate Change is one reality that aggravates the fire picture in Washington, Oregon, California and the Southwest. You will find links to several engaging webinars available to you around this critical dimension of need in what follows. Sign up. We need your voice. You are welcome and vital to the conversation.

Subscriptions to the [Hammer and Dance](#) have tripled since our September 1, 2020 issue. Thank you to our Region 1 Synods for making this possible – and welcome to you if you are new. You are Disaster Relief and Response in your place. You are the Church. Please invite your friends and family to join in our mutual learning, caring, and preparing. [A note in your church bulletin, newsletter or on your website would be appreciated.](#)

Dave Brauer-Rieke



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Wildfire Report

“Wildfires are complex physical phenomena that come at extraordinary costs to human and natural systems. Climate change is already making wildfires more severe and new research finds that it will lead to more days with high wildfire potential in areas already prone to wildfires, and create hotter and drier conditions . . .”

[[Climate change and wildfires: Projecting future wildfire potential](#) Aerial photo of Amazon wildfires.]

Today is September 15, 2020. Every day is different. [The Daily FEMA Briefing](#) for September 15 reports on Tropical Cyclone Sally, and Emergency Declarations for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. In FEMA Region X, the Pacific Northwest, wildfires rage. 1,256,957 acres of forest have burned. 1,617 homes and structures have been destroyed in Oregon, 277 in Washington. We know of 15 fire related deaths. 253,344 people have had to evacuate their homes. It's Tuesday, September 15.

Most of Oregon, and much of Washington, is heavily inundated by smoke today. Wildfire smoke is toxic. Many have quickly learned the language of AQI, the air quality index, and now know how to check whether it is [safe to breathe outside](#). No, our COVID masks are not protection from wildfire smoke. So, what do we do? How do we help? What does it mean to love our neighbor and steward the Earth?

VOCATION

We are utility workers, foresters, farmers, fire fighters, first responders and families. Pray for and support those engaged in your safety and well-being. We begin at home. Reach out to congregation members who may need you. Ask for, and graciously receive, help if you need it. Another day you will be able to extend your hand to another. Inquire of your neighbor. Stay informed.

Lutheran Disaster Response begins with you, where you are, with those God has placed you with. Thank you for your care.

CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY

Some have had to evacuate their church properties, for fire now as well as COVID-19. Others are able to work with the Red Cross to provide food, or open their parking lot for fire refugees, or perhaps their building to house people. In disasters we share what we have and make available what we can. This takes conversation, creativity and decision making. We also benefit from strong relationships with other congregations, ministries, and agencies. We don't know where the need is, or who can help, if we are not connected. In disaster we find & celebrate mission with others.

Lutheran Disaster Response values the passions and possibilities congregations offer. You are the light on the hill for those in your community. Care begins and ends locally.

Synodical Support

Your Synod office, staff and Council are here to coordinate ministry with you in these difficult times. In addition to their usual work of call processes, consultation and visioning, they stand ready to coordinate your disaster response with that of other agencies and organizations.

Yesterday the bishops, various staff members, VOAD representatives and key disaster leaders of our Washington and Oregon Synods, participated in an hour long consultation with Lutheran Disaster Response national staff members, and Lutheran Community Services Northwest CEO David Duea and his staff. They are building and strengthening the ties we all need to be informed and ready to act as we are called.

For the moment, your Synod is most anxious to hear about damage or loss you may be experiencing. They are available to consult on requests you may receive to open up your building, or needs you may have. Many people are asking how and to whom they might make financial donations. You Synod will inform you soon about such opportunities.

Lutheran Disaster Response looks to Synods to connect you to the boarder resources of the ELCA.

Lutheran Disaster Response

Lutheran Disaster Response-US deals with all the variety of major disasters citizens of our country experience. The ELCA also has an international ministry of outreach and care.

Currently Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) has a [dedicated wildfires webpage](#) offering worship resources and support. Behind the scenes, though, your national Lutheran Disaster Response ministry does so much more.

- LDR staff have been in constant communication with our Region 1 Disaster Preparedness Coordinator, Dave Brauer-Rieke, to help assess the needs and realities on the ground.
- LDR has conducted a consultation with key Oregon and Washington Synodical and Social Service Agency leadership proactively offering their presence, partnership and resources.
- LDR offers training, connections and experience for disaster situations which, thankfully, we may not have encountered before in Region 1, or recently.
- Through local volunteers and Synod staff LDR is present with state VOAD communities so that we might offer what we can, when we can. Coordination is always key in disaster response.
- LDR offers immediate recovery grants and a long term recovery presence in situations just like ours – just as they have been present for the whole Church in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

This is how Lutherans respond to disaster. We respond through you, your congregation, and our community partners with the aid, experience and resources of the larger church. These are coordinated through your Synod and our Social Service. It is hard, but we are here.

Preaching/Praying thru Disaster

Don't Forget – ELCA Caring for Creation Online Worship Service
September 20th
www.LutheransRestoringCreation.org



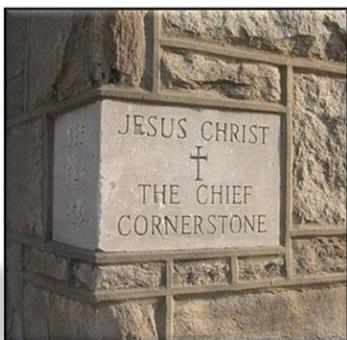
Sunday, September 27, 2020

[Matthew. 21:23-32](#) – *Showing Up*

Two sons. One tells his father he will do a task but doesn't. A second tells his father "No!" but follows through anyway. **"Which one,"** asks Jesus, **"did his father's will?"** *"Truly I tell you the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you."*

When disaster strikes half the battle is just showing up. The other half is being prepared in the first place.

Sunday, October 4, 2020 - [Matthew. 18:33-46](#) – *Corner Stones and Crises*



Some disasters are human induced. Take Climate Change for example. Many people today seem to agree with Jesus – sometimes old, inflexible leaders just have to go. Those who retreat into privilege and won't lead into change – they forfeit integrity. *"Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'?"* You can do better.

Sunday, October 11, 2020 - [Matthew. 22:1-14](#) – *The Imperative of Joy*

There is a wedding banquet set in the midst of fires and COVID-19. Do you see it? In any and every disaster this banquet is set. Why? Because every cloud has a silver lining? No! Because God is Love and God wills it to be so. Weep, grieve, lament, feel loss ... but in Christ we must also and always celebrate. *"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and ... the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness.'"*

Connect – Learn – Engage

Revealing Relationships: Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness Webinar

Good Trouble For A Healthy Planet

More than 45 global interfaith organizations gathered a year ago for the ELCA's first interfaith based consultation to address the climate emergency. This year's 2020 virtual consultation will address the impact of human activity on the planet, the urgent need for action, and the development of recommendations for moving forward. Join other ELCA leaders in this vital conversation.



WHAT: "Good Trouble for a Healthy Planet."

DATE & TIME: Thursday, Sept. 24 2020 from 7 AM – 10 AM PST

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Sept. 22, 2020

[FURTHER INFORMATION and REGISTRATION](#)



- Dr. Barbara Rossing, LSTC professor of New Testament and leading ELCA Climate Educator;
- Solomon Duke, Energy & Technology Major WWU and Portland based Climate Advocate;
- Rev. Charley Brower, retired UMC pastor, Native Alaskan, Iñupiaq Hunter, Climate Educator.

Saturday, September 26, 2020
9 AM Alaska Time, 10 AM Pacific,
11 AM Mountain

Join these amazing teachers and advocates for learning, inspiration, community and conversation.

[Details and Registration at Region1BePrepared.org/webinars](https://www.beprepared.org/webinars)

Saturday, October 17, 2020 a second **Revealing Relationships** webinar is being offered. The topic here will be **Racism and Disaster Preparedness**. Once again, we have an amazing panel of leading educators and advocates for you to be in conversation with. [Registration is now open and waiting for you.](#)



Hammer and Dance Newsletter

Please encourage your members to [subscribe to the Hammer and Dance directly](#). Put a notice in your newsletter or bulletin.



Cut and paste the following invitation into your bulletin or newsletter if you would. Thank you!!

Subscribe today to our new ELCA Region 1 Disaster Preparedness and Response Newsletter, [The Hammer and Dance](#). Find support for these days of compounding disasters, devotions, new friends, and more. [The Hammer and Dance](#) is offered by our Region 1 Disaster Preparedness Program Coordinator Dave Brauer-Rieke, Bishop Emeritus of the Oregon Synod. [Subscribe here](#).