



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

ELCA REGION 1 HAMMER & DANCE

November 17, 2020

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

Dave Brauer-Rieke, Consultant

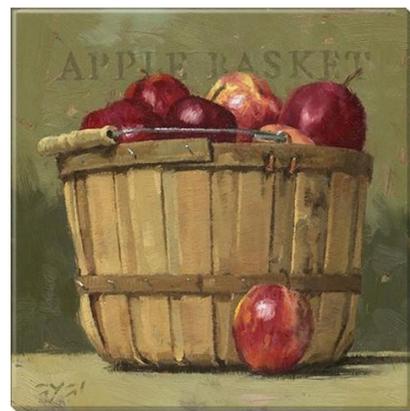
Region 1 Lutheran Disaster Preparedness & Response
971-255-9331 dave@climateimagination.com



The holiday season is upon us. Perhaps you lit candles in memory of the saints before the ballot counts began November 3. In a week and a half, it will be Thanksgiving. Three days after that is the 1st Sunday in Advent. If you are Jewish you may have honored Simchat Torah last month or be looking forward to Hanukkah in December. Muslims just celebrated Mawlid an-Nabī – the birth of the prophet – and others observe other days. What we all have in common this year is the pandemic, and its impacts on food, family and our observances of faith. Nonetheless, all people of faith give thanks even, or maybe especially, in the midst of difficult times.

This past year has layered COVID over floods and wildfires, over political stress, and economic hardship. We might reflect back, though, on how we have been able to draw together, to adapt, to find new ways, to serve, and to be open to a future rife with change. It is a strange and uncertain field that we plow these days. Yet, we must never stop spreading the good seed on the ground. Surely what we plant continues to be “fed and watered, but God’s almighty hand!” Let us be thankful in the days to come, for what we learn, what we have, all we can do, and all that is being done for us.

Dave Brauer-Rieke



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New Opportunities with Refugees

As the country moves towards a Biden administration in January 2021, one thing that will be changing significantly is our country's welcome to, and leadership with, migrants and immigrants. President-Elect Biden has suggested that he will set the country's cap on immigration at something like 125,000 rather than the 15,000 indicated by the Trump administration.

Fifth Straight Year of Central American Drought Helping Drive Migration

Recent rains have helped, but long-term climate change is likely to significantly increase migration

By AFP/Reuters on October 23, 2020



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POLICY & ETHICS

Shifting the Political Side of Science

the country will be seeking to rebuild capacity again after years of decline.

- **Why is this disaster related?** Our wonderful welcome to immigrants depends on congregations. We will all need to figure out together how to do this work in the days of COVID 19.
- **What do we need to know?** Our Lutheran agencies are once again beginning to have new conversations. We will keep you updated on opening horizons and new learning.

You will also find meaningful information and ministry opportunities with the [ELCA AMMPARO program!](#) There is so much that invites us anew!

As social ministry committees and congregations continue to look towards tomorrow, begin to weave new opportunities into your imagination today.



Climate Migration already is, and is rapidly escalating, as a serious global concern. It is also a reality for us in the U.S. and Region 1. Wildfires and Arctic warming have already set U.S. climate migrants adrift. It's a trend that is likely to continue.

Enjoy our recording of "[Revealing Relationships: Climate Migration and Disaster Preparedness](#)" from last Saturday, November 14, 2020. The conversation is gaining needed traction.



Additional webinars featuring knowledgeable panelists, reading lists and Faith Resources can be found at www.lirs.org/climate-migration. Lutherans are prepared for leadership on this issue. Join the team!

Preaching and Praying thru Advent

1st Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2020 – [Mark 13:24-37](#) – **Together Again!**



"From the fig tree learn its lesson." According to Genesis 1 the stars which fall, and the sun and moon which refuse to give their light in our first Advent Gospel, are for signs and seasons. They were hung by God from the dome of the sky – like Christmas decorations - but they themselves are not our sanctuary or safety. It is the firmament, the dome of the sky, which keeps us from death and chaos. Let the darkness of Advent 1, then, be a flashing of the lights before the second act. The stage is being reset as the angelic ushers gather us back together.

Advent 1, November 29, is a "5th Sunday." Please let your congregations or pastor know that a video sermon will be available by Dave Brauer-Rieke at www.Region1BePrepared.org/sermons for Sunday worship use. It will be posted for download or live viewing no later than Monday, November 23.



2nd Sunday of Advent, December 6, 2020 – [Mark 1:1-8](#) – **The Beginning of the Gospel**



And now the curtain rises. *"The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."* The Gospel in Mark's imagination does not begin with a baby. No. The good news of Jesus begins with a messenger, a prophecy, a hope, a baptism, a wilderness and souls hungry for love. *"One is coming ... who will baptize you with fire ..."* Today we light two candles. The good news begins with fire.

3rd Sunday of Advent, December 13, 2020 – [John 1:6-8, 19-28](#) – **It Will End**



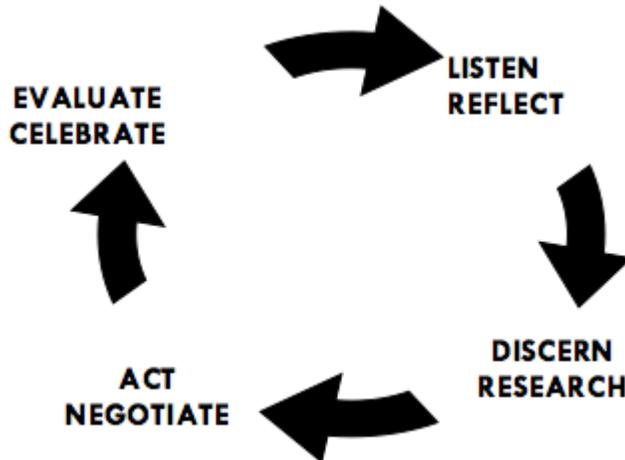
"He himself was not the light." Yes, let us be clear. John is not the guy. He is not Elijah. He is not the Messiah. He is not a prophet. So, what the heck?! What are you? Who are you? Why do you baptize? As we light three candles today we remember there is nothing but one pressing message, nothing but a growing fire - and water into which the willing commit themselves to a new hope and wholeness. *"I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I (alone) am not worthy ..."*

Budgeting into the Unknown

Congregations often focus on “stewardship” in the fall. Generally, there is a parallel emphasis on budgeting for the new year. In fact, “stewardship” and “budgeting” may be synonymous for many of us.

Did you benefit from the U.S. *Payroll Protection Plan* in 2020? It was a provision of the Care’s Act passed by Congress in the wake of the coronavirus. There is no certainty that such money will be available again in 2021. Perhaps your congregation or agency depends on facility use or rental fees. This money has been largely unavailable the past several months, and we do not know when responsible facility use will be an income producer again. “Stewardship” often gets viewed as questions about responsible use of what we have. If this is your situation you are likely looking at the expense side of your budget and asking where you can cut costs.

There are other lenses you might use, however. Faith Based Organizing would be one. Organizing is a process of setting commonly held goals with one’s constituency or network and then working to “*organize people*” and “*organize money*” to meet those goals. Expenses are not looked at through a lens of scarcity, but considered in light of getting the work done. The focus thus turns to the income side of the equation. Who are our ministry partners and where will we find the money we need for mission?



What would happen if . . .

- **What would happen if your congregation took a moment to commit to your primary missional objectives without first saying “No” because of decreased income?**
- **What would happen if you acknowledged the uncertainty we live in by looking at a 6-month budget rather than a year long guess?**
- **What would happen if your members made a 6-month pledge, based on creative goals and unusual circumstances, with a mind for getting from here to there?**
- **What would happen if you talked with one another, collaborated with ministry partners and worked the problem from a different angle?**

You may have a deacon, pastor, synod staff member or friend who understands Faith Based Organizing. You may be familiar with [the ELCA's Organizing for Mission Network](#). You may be ready to try something new.

What would happen if you asked somebody to help you ask different questions?