



ELCA REGION 1 HAMMER & DANCE

February 9, 2021

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



[LIRS – Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service – makes the PBS Newshour February 2!!](#)

In this issue:

- [Fire and Ice](#)
- [Crises and Change](#)
- [Yea Though I Walk](#)
- [When Will I Be Vaccinated?](#)

The Earth is a system, an ecology, a living organism. Just as the Apostle Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 12 that the body (the Church) though one nonetheless has many members, so the Earth, though one, has many ecologies, climates and life forms.

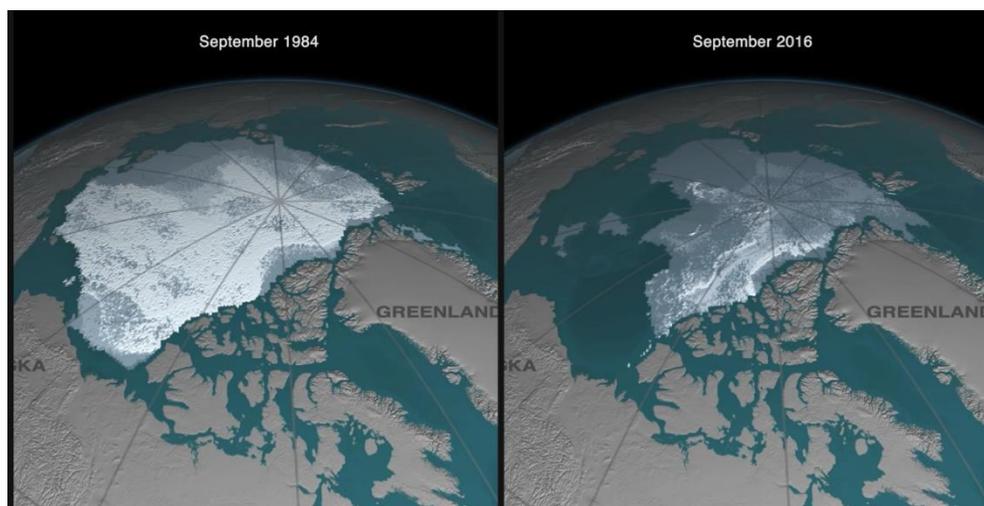
We may be used to thinking of disasters as “local,” “contextual,” or individual. Today, however, it is clear that intensifying hurricane seasons, extreme weather events, ravenous wildfires, species extinction, migrations of both animals and humans, and melting sea ice are all fueled by climatic changes. These changes, are human induced and crippling a natural system designed by God to support life. We are responsible.

Perhaps the question for us as we enter 2021 is “What have we learned?” What has the coronavirus taught us about our own resiliency and adaptability? What have Alaskan earthquakes, west coast wildfires, the 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helens, an anticipated Cascadia Subduction Zone event and more – what have these things taught us about responding to disasters and our responsibility to prepare? It is important to reflect!

Dave Brauer-Rieke

Fire and Ice

Wildfires have not only been an issue in the West this year. They have also been a problem in the arctic. “Wildfires blazed along the Arctic Circle this summer, incinerating tundra, blanketing



Siberian cities in smoke and capping the second extraordinary fire season in a row. By the time the fire season waned at the end of last month, the blazes had emitted a record 244 megatonnes of carbon dioxide — that's 35% more than last year, which also set records.” reports the [Sept. 10, 2020 issue of Nature](#). The release of CO₂ comes in large part from burning peat bands. Melting permafrost can release significant amounts of methane in addition to this. Methane is a greenhouse gas [84 times as potent as CO₂](#), although it is shorter lived in the atmosphere. In a compounding and progressively worsening cycle of arctic warming, sea ice is vanishing at an alarming rate.

The photos above tell the tale. The polar “ice cap” is really [a dance of moving ice sheets and fragments \(see video\)](#). During the course of a year the white ice above, “old ice,” will move around the arctic ocean. Some will spill out and down around Greenland to melt in the Atlantic Ocean. The grey ice is seasonal and to this day continues to cover most of the Arctic Ocean in the cold season. However, the trend is towards shorter cold seasons, less ice and increasing temperatures at twice the rate experienced at the equator.



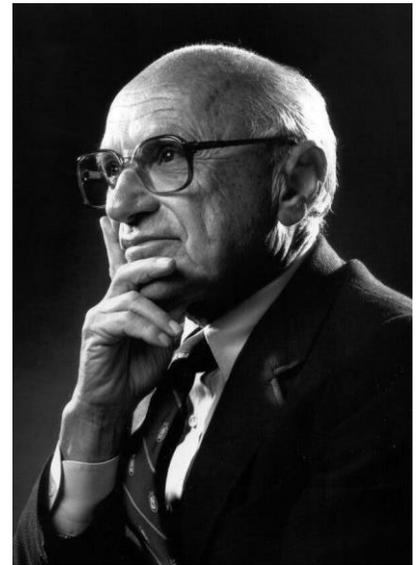
The Polar Bear has long been a symbol of vanishing sea ice. However, the possible extinction of various forms of arctic sea life – including indigenous cultures – is not the only concern. What scientists call the “Blue Ocean Event” (the point where there is less than a million square miles of sea ice left) is only 5 to 10 years away by conservative estimates. [As the Arctic warms the Jet Stream slows resulting in the](#)

[severe winter storms the country is now experiencing](#). It extends the fire seasons on the west coast and elsewhere, and it compounds the fire issue as it dries out our forests. The Blue Ocean Event is no longer an “if.” It is a “when” and the when is soon.

Just Lying Around

“Only a crisis - actual or perceived – produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes the politically inevitable.”

Milton Friedman



Milton Friedman, well known 20th century American economist, wrote the above quotation in the preface to the 1982 republication of his book Capitalism and Freedom. “Only crisis creates real change,” Friedman suggests, and our reactions to crises depend on whatever ideas are just “lying around.”

What ideas were “lying around” when the coronavirus hit? Travel restrictions? Infection controls? Denial? mRNA vaccines? What ideas have since been imagined? What is in our toolbox for next time? And what about our responses to wildfires, or floods, racism, immigration stresses or hurricanes? As the impossible becomes the inevitable do we have enough wisdom, imagination or will just “lying around” to respond to what will be?

January 24-26 Lutheran Disaster Response held its annual consultation, and such questions were front and center for us all. We understand that traditional “response” is no longer a sufficient framing for disaster work in a world where Climate Change alters what we’ve known as “natural.” How can we as Church and society become a innovative community of care that develops new options for tomorrow? What we formerly thought was “impossible” is indeed becoming the “inevitable.”

[I reflected on these questions in my devotional summary of the consultation.](#) Join us! - *Dave Brauer-Rieke*

[President Biden Signs Executive Orders on Environmental Policy](#)

Response to Climate Change was the focus of three Executive Orders signed by President Biden January 27. The Administration’s commitment is to Climate Change actions that are systemic, just, science based and wide reaching. This is important work for disaster response planning and preparation.



The ELCA was one Climate resource the new administration reached out to in the consideration of meaningful Climate Change policy. Thank you for being there ELCA!

Yea, Though I Walk – Lenten Reflections

Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 14, 2021 – [Mark 9:2-9](#) – Listen

“Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.” Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus, then disappear. The disciples in their terror wanted to memorialize the event. Jesus tells them to remain silent until even he has likewise disappeared, and then returned. *“This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”* Grandma always said I had two ears but only one mouth for a reason. Listen. Listen.



1st Sunday in Lent, February 21, 2021 – [Mark 1:9-15](#) – Look

This is the third time we have touched on this text in only six weeks. Once we celebrated Jesus' baptism. Once we noted his beginning of ministry and call of his disciples. Now we note both, and the temptation that stands between them. *“Jesus*

was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.”

It is Lent. The wild beasts among and around us are very real - as are the angels. As we listen, we must look. The truth is never what we think it is going to be.



2nd Sunday in Lent, February 28, 2021 – [Mark 8:31-38](#) – Die

Suffering, rejection, murder, rebuke. *“Jesus said all this quite openly.”*

Temptation continues to stand between what we wish and what is. As Christians we walk *through* the valley of the shadow of death, not around it. *“Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”* Be bold. Blessings on the journey.



3rd Sunday in Lent, March 7, 2021 – [John 2:13-22](#) – Rage

“Jesus also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables ... “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!”

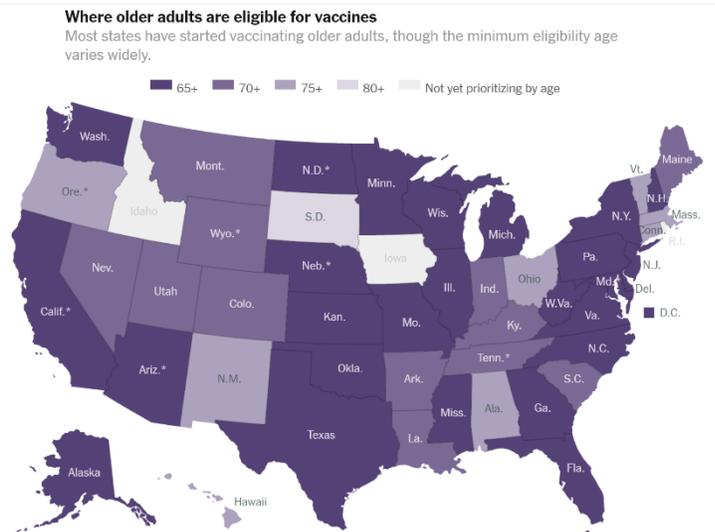
Exchange rates, equivalencies, intangible objects that are supposed to represent real lives, needs or human value. As the Passover nears the faithful prepare once again to tell the story of true freedom. Jesus, in his own self, prepares for abuse. Someone, somewhere, should understand. May the temple of our bodies and soul never fail the world again,



Vaccination Eligibility by State

In general vaccines across the country are being offered to front line workers, the elderly and the most vulnerable first. However, each state has its own priorities and schedule. Information about what your state is prioritizing and what their timeline looks like is available. Making sure congregations or agency offices share this information will be most helpful. Here are helpful links.

- [Alaska](#) [Washington](#) [Oregon](#)
- [Idaho](#) [Montana](#)



As of Monday, February 8, 2021 the New York Times reports that:

- **Alaska** has vaccinated 150,934 people or 15% of its population. 5.6% of Alaskans have received their second vaccination. **This makes Alaska #1 among the 50 U.S. states!!**
- **Oregon** has vaccinated 554,440 people or 9.8% of its population. 3.3% have 2nd shots.
- **Montana** has vaccinated 139,273 people or 9.6% of its population. 3.4% have 2nd shots.
- **Washington** has vaccinated 937,926 people or 9.6% of its population. 2.5% have 2nd shots.
- **Idaho** has vaccinated 195,591 people or 8.4% of its population. 2% have 2nd shots.

It is the case in some states that rural areas can distribute vaccine more quickly than urban. The result can be limitations on rural vaccine availability as state's seek to keep the population on a par. This can be misunderstood or unappreciated in rural areas. There are also reports of white populations 'jumping the line' over populations of color. Can our churches help build islands of understandings around these two issues?

Health Workers, Stuck in the Snow, Administer Coronavirus Vaccine to Stranded Drivers



Public health workers in Josephine County, Oregon, said they had walked from car to car, giving shots to drivers with vaccine doses that would expire in six hours.

One of the Health workers called it “one of the coolest operations” he had ever been a part of and said it had been an easy decision to administer the shots on the highway.

“Honestly, once we knew we weren’t going to be back in town in time to use the vaccine, it was just the obvious choice,” he said. “Our No. 1 rule right now is nothing gets wasted.”