

Interim Ministry Resources

Chapter 13 Identity

Contents	1
Reflections and Resources (4)	
Contents	

#	Page	Topic
1)	1	COVID-19 Marks the End of an Empire
2)	5	COVID-19 Marks the End of Christendom
3)	5	Accommodators or Defenders?
4)	8	For or Against Gates/Schwab/Soros?
5)	9	Church in Society Excerpts Taken from Monthly Interim Ministry Reports January 2021 to January 2022

1) COVID-19 Marks the End of An Empire

Much has been written about the rise and fall of empires. See 8StewardshipReflections – The rise and fall of empires. John Bagot Glubb has traced the rise and fall of empires and found that for each empire their life cycle is approximately 240 years.

The Fate of Empires and Search for Survival by John Bagot Glubb

However, this may be, the thesis which I wish to propound is that priceless lessons could be learned if the history of the past four thousand years could be thoroughly and impartially studied. In these two articles, which first appeared in Blackwood's Magazine, I have attempted briefly to sketch some of the kinds of lessons which I believe we could learn. My plea is that history should be the history of the human race, not of one small country or period.

<http://www.rexresearch.com/glubb/glubb-empire.pdf>

<http://people.uncw.edu/kozloffm/glubb.pdf>

<https://www.isegoria.net/2014/07/summary-of-the-fate-of-empires/>

In these inspiring essays Sir John Glubb examines the human race over a period of 4,000 years and finds the same patterns of rise and fall of national greatness and all in the same time scale.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Fate-Empires-Search-Survival/dp/B00P7WZIV2>

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/6177860-the-fate-of-empires-and-search-for-survival>

Decadence is a moral and spiritual disease, resulting from too long a period of wealth and power, producing cynicism, decline of religion, pessimism and frivolity. The citizens of such a nation will no longer make an effort to save themselves, because they are not convinced that anything in life is worth saving.

<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/6357665-the-fate-of-empires-and-search-for-survival>

It may perhaps be incorrect to picture the welfare state as the high-water mark of human attainment. It may merely prove to be one more regular milestone in the life story of an ageing and decrepit empire.

<http://www.rexresearch.com/glubb/glubb-empire.pdf> Page 18

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LVbwY54Ue8> Sir John Glubb - The Fate of Empires – YouTube

[Images for Sir John Glubb - The Fate of Empires - YouTube](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7Gc1bv-Mj4> The 7 Signs of An Empire in Decline - YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDS13r7kY_k America's Collapse? The History Behind The Fall Of Empires - YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYd43DDB8AjO3SVtP2ZRj4mb7cpy5Kcyy> Fate of empires – YouTube

<https://www.conciliators-guild.org/sir-john-glubb-the-fate-of-empires/>

<https://spartanideas.msu.edu/2013/10/24/the-fate-of-empires/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bagot_Glubb

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Bagot-Glubb>

[Images for Sir John Bagot Glubb](#)

[Images for The Fate of Empires and Search for Survival by John Bagot Glubb](#)

The World Economic Forum makes a prediction about the United States.

8 predictions for the world in 2030 - YouTube

The US won't be the world's leading superpower

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hx3DhoLFO4s>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/11/8-predictions-for-the-world-in-2030/>

[Images for 8 predictions for the world in 2030 World Economic Forum](#)

A woman who lived through the horrors of socialism in Romania warns of the rise of authoritarianism in the name of advancing a utopian ideology.

The Red Devil and His Playbook – YouTube

Theoretical backgrounds of two opposing ideologies. One has created the most magnificent civilization in the history of mankind, while other has pushed civilizations into the abyss of Hell during the 20th century. **If not stopped, it will leave its bloody mark again in the 21st century,** and the world we knew will cease to exist, forever.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyeUl6bSTFY>

[Images for The Red Devil and His Playbook - YouTube - Katarina Jovanović](#)

<http://bastionofliberty.blogspot.com/2020/08/the-red-devil-and-his-communist-playbook.html>

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/armstrongeconomics101/economics/katarina-jovanovic-video-from-romania/>

For me, **15 Days to Slow the Spread | The White House** represents the end of an empire. The medicine became the hemlock.

The Price of Panic: How the Tyranny of Experts Turned a Pandemic into a Catastrophe by Jay W. Richards Ph.D. (Author), William M. Briggs Ph.D. (Author), Douglas Axe Ph.D. (Author)

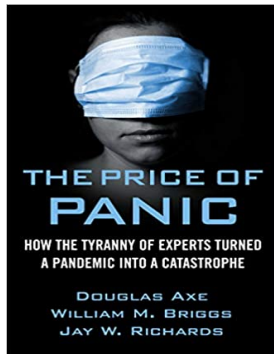
For the first time in history, the world shut itself down—by choice—all for fear of a virus, COVID-19, that wasn't well understood. The government, with the support of most Americans, ordered the closure of tens of thousands of small businesses—many never to return. Almost every school and college in the country sent its students home to finish the school year in front of a computer. Churches cancelled worship services. "Social distancing" went from a non-word to a moral obligation overnight. Moral preening on social media achieved ever new heights.

The world will reopen and life will go on, but what kind of world will it be when it does? It can't be what it was, because of what's just happened.

Professors Jay Richards, William Briggs, and Douglas Axe take a deep dive into the crucial questions on the minds of millions of Americans during one of the most jarring and unprecedented global events in a generation.

- *What will be the total cost in dollars, lives, and livelihoods of this response from governments, on advice from Science?*
- *What role have national and global health organizations such as WHO played in this? To whom are they accountable?*
- *What evidence do they rely on in sounding the alarm?*
- *How did science bureaucrats, relying on murky data and speculative computer models, gain the power to shut down the global economy?*
- *How did politicians, who know nothing of the science, decide whom to trust?*

We need to know what and how it happened, to keep it from ever happening again.



<https://www.amazon.com/Price-Panic-Tyranny-Pandemic-Catastrophe/dp/1684511410>

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/54553501-the-price-of-panic>

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-price-of-panic-jay-w-richards-phd/1137073706>

<https://www.regnery.com/9781684511419/the-price-of-panic/>

<https://www.scribd.com/book/475593443/The-Price-of-Panic-How-the-Tyranny-of-Experts-Turned-a-Pandemic-into-a-Catastrophe>

https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Price_of_Panic.html?id=kurdDwAAQBAJ

<https://wmbiggs.com/post/32871/>

<https://www.discovery.org/e/the-price-of-panic-how-the-tyranny-of-experts-turned-a-pandemic-into-a-catastrophe/>

<https://thebillwaltonshow.com/videos/paying-the-price-of-panic-with-dr-jay-richards/>

<https://www.nationalreview.com/podcasts/the-bookmonger/episode-323-the-price-of-panic-by-jay-richards-william-m-briggs-and-douglas-axe/>

<https://crossexamined.org/the-price-of-panic-with-dr-jay-richards/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gz6-a5-iasK> Ep. 1753 The Price of Panic: How the Tyranny of Experts Turned a Pandemic Into a Catastrophe - YouTube

<https://afr.net/podcasts/cross-examined/2020/october/the-price-of-panic-with-jay-richards/>

<https://podcasts.apple.com/mn/podcast/price-panic-by-jay-richards-william-m-briggs-douglas/id959714077?i=1000496112779>

<https://tomwoods.com/ep-1753-the-price-of-panic-how-the-tyranny-of-experts-turned-a-pandemic-into-a-catastrophe/>

<https://startingstrength.com/video/the-price-of-panic-with-william-briggs-starting-strength-radio-80>

<https://www.newsbreak.com/california/san-diego/news/2085421998259/the-price-of-panic-how-the-tyranny-of-experts-turned-a-pandemic-into-a-catastrophe>

https://www.amazon.com/s?i=stripbooks&rh=p_27%3AJay+W.+Richards+Ph.D.&s=relevancerank&text=Jay+W.+Richards+Ph.D.&ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1

https://www.amazon.com/s?i=stripbooks&rh=p_27%3AWilliam+M.+Briggs+Ph.D.&s=relevancerank&text=William+M.+Briggs+Ph.D.&ref=dp_byline_sr_book_2

https://www.amazon.com/s?i=stripbooks&rh=p_27%3ADouglas+Axe+Ph.D.&s=relevancerank&text=Douglas+Axe+Ph.D.&ref=dp_byline_sr_book_3

https://www.amazon.com/s?i=stripbooks&rh=p_27%3ADouglas+Axe+Ph.D.&s=relevancerank&text=Douglas+Axe+Ph.D.&ref=dp_byline_sr_book_3

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/2929824.Jay_W_Richards

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/684839.William_M_Briggs

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/4520668.Douglas_Axe

Images for [The Price of Panic: How the Tyranny of Experts Turned a Pandemic into a Catastrophe](https://www.amazon.com/Price-Panic-Tyranny-Pandemic-Catastrophe/dp/1684511410)

Egypt or Eden?

The Israelites Are Oppressed

Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, 'Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.' Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labour. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labour. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

Moses at the Burning Bush

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

The Divine Name Revealed

But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I AM has sent me to you."' God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you": This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.

Exodus 1:8-14; 3:1-15 - oremus Bible Browser

<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=436959058>

God Creates and Equips People to Work (Genesis 1:26-2:25)

God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness." ([Gen. 1:26](#))

So, God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

([Gen. 1:27](#))

When God created humankind, he made them in the likeness of God. ([Gen. 5:1](#))

<https://www.theologyofwork.org/old-testament/genesis-1-11-and-work/god-creates-and-equips-people-to-work-genesis-126-225>

Planned society or human ingenuity?

The Great Reset – The Final Battle Against Marxists | Armstrong Economics

The rising civil unrest is starting to take notice of Bill Gates and his consortium hell-bent on changing the world economy. They have used the coronavirus as a ploy to shut down the world economy all for their Climate Change Agenda. There is a mountain of circumstantial evidence that points to Fauci funding the creation of this virus and transferring it to the Wuhan lab where neither China nor the United States leaked it, but this consortium which has planned this Event 201 on how to destroy the world economy and rebuild it from scratch. They are already introducing Guaranteed Basic Income, assuming they can wipe out over 300 million jobs and then pay people to sit home and watch TV, where they recreate the world in their own image which they are promoting as the Great Reset.

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/world-news/civil-unrest/the-great-reset-the-final-battle-against-marxists/>

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/tag/the-great-reset/>

Images for The Great Reset – The Final Battle Against Marxists | Armstrong Economics

The **Great Reset** may go down as the most important book perhaps with hindsight. I will be adding to it over the next month with a section reviewing the demise of every economy which has ever tried to impose precisely what they are doing. We need not just look at Russia and China and how Marxism collapsed force political change, and we need not even regurgitate the ongoing example of Venezuela. There are more shocking examples that warn of civil war and the breakup of nations such as Yugoslavia and the collapse of Spain which was the wealthiest nation in Europe that fell to a third world which became a serial defaulter beginning in 1557, 1575, 1575, 1596, 1607, and 1647. You would think that people would wise up and stop lending to governments. That is the definition of insanity when you keep doing the same stupid thing and expect a different result.

<https://chaosinformation.wordpress.com/2020/07/07/martin-armstrongthe-great-reset-the-elitist-coalition-to-resign-the-world/>
Images for Martin Armstrong: The Great Reset-The elitist coalition to resign the world

Schwab is so wrong it is laughable. It demonstrates that academics cannot learn everything without experience. Communism collapsed for the very same reason that a planned society cannot replace human ingenuity because bureaucrats, like academics, lack the experience to actually see how the economy evolves.

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/world-news/corruption/covid-v-flu-very-dangerous-people/>

Klaus Schwab or Benjamin Franklin?

8 predictions for the world in 2030 | World Economic Forum

You'll own nothing.
And you'll be happy.



<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/11/8-predictions-for-the-world-in-2030/>

Images for klaus schwab you will own nothing and be happy

Benjamin Franklin Quotes - BrainyQuote

God grant that not only the love of liberty but a thorough knowledge of the rights of man may pervade all the nations of the earth, so that a philosopher may set his foot anywhere on its surface and say: 'This is my country.'

Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom - and no such thing as public liberty without freedom of speech.

Where liberty is, there is my country.

Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God.

Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

It is the working man who is the happy man. It is the idle man who is the miserable man.

There cannot be a stronger natural right than that of a man's making the best profit he can of the natural produce of his lands.

Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade?

A house is not a home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as the body.

<https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/benjamin-franklin-quotes>

Images for benjamin franklin quotes



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benjamin-Franklin-U.S.-\\$100-bill.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benjamin-Franklin-U.S.-$100-bill.jpg)

Images for benjamin franklin

World Economic Forum or representative democracy?

The Global Takeover Is Underway

Story at-a-glance

- According to the World Economic Forum, by 2030 we will own nothing and be happy about it
- Terms like "the Great Reset," "the Fourth Industrial Revolution" and "Build Back Better" all refer to the same long-term globalist agenda to dismantle democracy and national borders in favor of a global governance by unelected leaders, and the reliance on technological surveillance rather than the rule of law to maintain public order

- For decades, war and the threat of war have enriched the technocratic elite and kept the population going along with their agenda. Today, pandemics and the threat of infectious outbreaks are the new tools of war and social control
- The Federal Reserve is working on a central bank digital currency (CBDC). An all-digital currency system is part of the system of social control
- Key globalist players working on the implementation of the technocratic agenda include the United Nations, the World Economic Forum, Bill Gates and foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, the UN Foundation and George Soros' Open Society Foundation, Avanti Communications, 2030 Vision and Frontier 2030, Google, Mastercard and Salesforce

The World Economic Forum public relations video above, "8 Predictions for the World in 2030," short as it may be, offers a telling glimpse into what the technocratic elite has in store for the rest of us. This includes:

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2020/11/the-global-takeover-is-underway/>

[Images for global takeover is underway mercola](#)

<https://www.technocracy.news/mercola-the-global-takeover-is-underway/>

<https://www.globalresearch.ca/global-takeover-underway/5727567>

<https://muckrack.com/joseph-mercola/articles>

Democracy in the United States - USCIS

Democracy in the United States

The United States is a representative democracy. This means that our government is elected by citizens. Here, citizens vote for their government officials. These officials represent the citizens' ideas and concerns in government. Voting is one way to participate in our democracy. Citizens can also contact their officials when they want to support or change a law. Voting in an election and contacting our elected officials are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy.

https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/lesson-plans/Government_and_You_handouts.pdf

Images for Democracy in the United States

<https://www.shutterstock.com/search/representative+democracy>

2) COVID-19 Marks the End of Christendom

Much has been written about the end of Christendom. See 13Identity6Resources - Christendom. For me, two statements symbolize how COVID-19 Marks the End of Christendom. One is the 'stay-at-home' order by civil authorities.

What To Know About Wisconsin's Coronavirus 'Stay-At-Home' Order

Crowds of 10 or larger are specifically banned at weddings, funerals and church services.

People who violate the order could face up to 30 days in jail, or a fine of up to \$250.

<https://www.wpr.org/what-know-about-wisconsins-coronavirus-stay-home-order>

The second statement that symbolizes how COVID-19 Marks the End of Christendom is when The Wisconsin Conference of Churches sent **July 7, 2020 The Honorable Scott Fitzgerald, Senate Majority Leader The Honorable Robin Vos, Assembly Speaker Wisconsin State Capitol Madison, WI 53708 WCC-COVID-Letter-to-legislative-leaders**, which included the statement **"This should include the possibility of a "Stay at Home" order, should conditions warrant."**

See my response to this statement in 13Identity3Reflections Page 33.

3) Accommodators or Defenders?

The choice facing those who name the name of Jesus is, on the one hand, to be accommodators to the rise of authoritarianism or, on the other hand, to be defenders of the faith?

[Bow to the king or pray to God?](#)

Daniel 6:10-24 NKJV - Daniel in the Lions' Den

Daniel in the Lions' Den

¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

¹¹ Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. ¹² And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

The king answered and said, "The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which ¹³does not alter."

¹³ So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is ¹⁴one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

¹⁴ And the king, when he heard *these* words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he ¹⁵labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. ¹⁵ Then these men ¹⁶approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that *it is* the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

¹⁶ So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast *him* into the den of lions. *But* the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." ¹⁷ Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

Daniel Saved from the Lions

¹⁸ Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no ¹⁹musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep ²⁰went from him. ¹⁹ Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ And when

he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²² My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

²³ Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So, Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Daniel%206%3A10-24&version=NKJV>

Images for daniel in the lions' den

Obey human authority or obey God?

Second Arrest of the Apostles

²⁷ When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, ²⁸saying, 'We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us.' ²⁹But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than any human authority.' ³⁰The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour, so that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³²And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.'

Acts 5:27-32 - oremus Bible Browser

<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=136810463>

Images for arrest of peter and the apostles

Retreaters or Advancers in the Early Church?

I studied New Testament under Dr. Lowell Satre at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN

Apostatized from the faith

⁴For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶and then have fallen away, since on their own they are crucifying again the Son of God and are holding him up to contempt.

Hebrews 6:4-6 - oremus Bible Browser

<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=34585056>

Images for Apostatized from the faith

Examples of faith

¹¹Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. ³By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

Hebrews 11:1-3 - oremus Bible Browser

<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=275225175>

Images for examples of faith in hebrews

and Early Church History under Dr. Carl Volz.

Justin Martyr - Wikipedia

Justin Martyr (Latin: *Iustinus Martyr*) was an early [Christian apologist](#), and is regarded as the foremost interpreter of the theory of the [Logos](#) in the 2nd century.^[2] He was [martyred](#), alongside some of his students, and is considered a [saint](#) by the [Roman Catholic Church](#),^[3] the [Anglican Church](#),^[4] the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#),^[5] and the [Oriental Orthodox Churches](#).

Most of his works are lost, but two apologies and a dialogue did survive. **The *First Apology*, his most well known text, passionately defends the morality of the Christian life,** and provides various ethical and [philosophical](#) arguments to convince the Roman emperor, [Antoninus](#), to abandon the persecution of the fledgling sect. Further, he also indicates, as St Augustine did regarding the "true religion" that predated Christianity,^[6] that the "seeds of Christianity" (manifestations of the [Logos](#) acting in history) actually predated Christ's [incarnation](#). This notion allows him to claim many historical Greek philosophers (including [Socrates](#) and [Plato](#)), in whose works he was well studied, as [unknowing Christians](#).



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justin_Martyr

Images for Justin Martyr early Christian apologist

Tertullian: Apology and De Spectaculis. Minucius Felix: Octavius

The African Q. Septimus Florens Tertullianus (ca. AD 150-222), the great Christian writer, was born a soldier's son at Carthage, educated in Greek and Roman literature, philosophy, and medicine, studied law and became a pleader, remaining a clever and often tortuous arguer. At Rome, he became a learned and militant Christian. After a visit to churches in Greece (and Asia Minor?), he returned to Carthage and, in his writings there, founded a Christian Latin language and literature, toiling to fuse enthusiasm with reason; to unite the demands of the Bible with the practice of the Church; and to continue to vindicate the Church's possession of the true doctrine in the face of unbelievers, Jews, Gnostics, and others. In some of his many works he defended Christianity, in others he attacked heretical people and beliefs; in others, he dealt with morals. In this volume, we present Apologeticus and De Spectaculis.



<https://www.amazon.com/Tertullian-Spectaculis-Minucius-Octavius-Classical/dp/0674992768>
<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=0674992768>
<https://books.google.com/books?id=czMAAAAAMAAJ>
<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674992764>
https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL250/1931/pb_LCL250.iii.xml
<https://archive.org/details/apologydespectac00tertuoft>
<https://archive.org/details/L250TertullianApologyMarcusMinuciusFelixDeSpectaculisOctavius/page/n3>
http://www.tertullian.org/articles/reeve_apology.htm
http://www.tertullian.org/articles/reeve_apology.htm
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tertullian>
Images for Tertullian: Apology and De Spectaculis. Minucius Felix: Octavius

The Early Apologists - CopticChurch.Net

THE APOLOGISTS

This name was especially given to Christian writers who first addressed themselves to the task of **making a reasoned defense and recommendation of their faith to outsiders**. They belonged to the period when Christianity appeared first in converts among the educated classes, and was also in conflict with the State over its very right to exist. Their object was to gain a fair hearing for Christianity, to dispel popular slanders and misunderstandings, and to provide for this purpose some account of Christian belief and practice. They had to meet pagan philosophy and the general outlook which it influenced, specifically Jewish objectors. They devoted much attention to the application of Old Testament prophecy toward Christianity, and to the position of the divinity of Christ in relation to monotheism, and especially in connection with the latter doctrine elaborating the teaching on the Logos and winning its permanent place in Christian theology.

<http://www.copticchurch.net/topics/patrolgy/schoolofalex/III-Athenagoras-after/chapter1.html>
Images for Early Apologists - CopticChurch.Net

At the time, I admit, I did not fully appreciate the martyrs and apologists. Now the lessons of the early church have taken on new meaning for me.

Collaborators or Confessors in Nazi Germany?

I first read **The Cost of Discipleship** by **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** as a freshman at Waldorf College in Forest City, Iowa in 1971. I took an elective course on Bonhoeffer from Dr. James Burtness my first quarter at Luther Seminary in 1975. At the time, I admit I did not fully appreciate this martyr for the faith. Now, the lessons of Bonhoeffer in Nazi Germany have taken on new meaning for me.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Confessing Church

Two institutions are commonplace and powerful around the globe: the state and the church. In Hitler's Germany, most churches went along with the Nazis. Some did so reluctantly, many were enthusiastic. But there was also dramatic resistance by churches and religious leaders who opposed Hitler at great personal risk. For example, the German Protestant Church became a battleground between the majority who supported the Nazis, either explicitly or implicitly, and a minority who resisted them. At the core of the conflict was the question of how the church should respond to the "Jewish question."

No man spoke more eloquently on behalf of the civil liberties of Jews than the Protestant pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He became a prominent voice in 'the Confessing Church' that was founded when approximately 3,000 Protestant pastors broke off from the main religious body in protest. (Confession is German for denomination.) **Bonhoeffer reminds us that there are people of conscience and moral courage in every nation. He is also a window into the institutional dynamics of church and state that both facilitated and hindered Hitler.**

<https://fb.org/dietrich-bonhoeffer-and-the-confessing-church/>
Images for Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Confessing Church

First they came ... - Wikipedia

"First they came ..." is the poetic form of a **post-war** confessional **prose** by the German **Lutheran** pastor **Martin Niemöller** (1892–1984). It is about the **cowardice** of German **intellectuals** and certain clergy—including, by his own

admission, Niemöller himself—following the [Nazis' rise to power](#) and subsequent incremental [purging](#) of their chosen targets, group after group. Many variations and adaptations in the spirit of the original have been published in the English language. It deals with themes of [persecution](#), [guilt](#), [repentance](#), and [personal responsibility](#).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_they_came_...

Images for quote by martin niemoller

4) For or Against Gates/Schwab/Soros?

Saint Malachy Prophecy & End of Times in All Religions | Armstrong Economics

Klaus Schwab is an extremely dangerous man who has even started indoctrinating school children into his agenda using the Sesame characters. Some say he is the anti-Christ while others point to George Soros or Bill Gates. Perhaps it is the evil Triumvirate.

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/international-news/politics/saint-malachy-prophecy-end-of-times-in-all-religions/?amp>

Images for Saint Malachy Prophecy & End of Times in All Religions | Armstrong Economics

Soros is forcing his open society which is really a one-world government, Gates is getting his climate change and population reduction by restricting the food supply, and Schwab is getting his new communist world order he has been pushing as stakeholder economics and the entire lot is being sold as the Great Reset.

Elected politicians are moving into the authoritarian mode, they will suspend elections killing democracy, we are the great unwashed, too stupid to understand what is best for us.

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/armstrongeconomics101/economics/they-are-desperate-to-steal-the-election-from-trump-as-europe-goes-100-into-the-great-reset/>

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/tag/klaus-schwab/>

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/tag/soros/>

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/tag/bill-gates/>

The Anti-Pope Movement – Will He Be the Last Pope | Armstrong Economics

There is probably no pope in history who has been so disliked than the current Pope Francis. He is clearly a communist and full on board with the Great Reset. This Pope is a real disgrace. He is preaching economics rather than the faith and is agreeing with Bill Gates and Klaus Schwab on everything from inequality to vaccinations. As even [Forbes](#) pointed out, this Pope came out with a “lengthy statement (entitled *Evangelii Gaudium*) in which one section called income inequality an injustice.” There is an [uprising even brewing](#) within the Catholic Church because this Pope is really preaching communism. “In an unprecedented move, faithful Catholics are calling for resistance against “the policies pursued by Pope Francis that threaten the West’s integrity, security and cultural identities.”

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/world-news/religion/the-anti-pope-movement-will-he-be-the-last-pope/>

Archbishop Viganò warns Trump of Great Reset is to Destroy Our Freedom | Armstrong Economics

Archbishop Viganò has sent an open letter to President Trump in which he stated plainly that this is a “**global conspiracy against God and humanity.**” Indeed, **NEVER** have churches or synagogues been closed by those in power outside of communism.

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/world-news/conspiracy/archbishop-vigano-warns-trump-of-great-reset-is-to-destroy-our-freedom/>

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/tag/archbishop-vigano/>

Archbishop Viganò warns President Trump about 'Great Reset' in an Open Letter

A global plan called the Great Reset is underway. Its architect is a global élite that wants to subdue all of humanity, imposing coercive measures with which to drastically limit individual freedoms and those of entire populations. In several nations this plan has already been approved and financed; in others it is still in an early stage. Behind the world leaders who are the accomplices and executors of this infernal project, there are unscrupulous characters who finance the World Economic Forum and Event 201, promoting their agenda.

The purpose of the Great Reset is the imposition of a health dictatorship aiming at the imposition of liberticidal measures, hidden behind tempting promises of ensuring a universal income and cancelling individual debt. The price of these concessions from the International Monetary Fund will be the renunciation of private property and adherence to a program of vaccination against Covid-19 and Covid-21 promoted by Bill Gates with the collaboration of the main pharmaceutical groups. Beyond the enormous economic interests that motivate the promoters of the Great Reset, the imposition of the vaccination will be accompanied by the requirement of a health passport and a digital ID, with the consequent contact tracing of the population of the entire world. Those who do not accept these measures will be confined in detention camps or placed under house arrest, and all their assets will be confiscated...

As is now clear, the one who occupies the Chair of Peter has betrayed his role from the very beginning in order to defend and promote the globalist ideology, supporting the agenda of the deep church, who chose him from its ranks.

<https://www.catholic.org/news/national/story.php?id=85039>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1nilltWzI> Abp. Viganò warns Trump about 'Great Reset' plot to 'subdue humanity,' destroy freedom – YouTube

<https://www.catholic.org/news/national/story.php?id=85039&fbclid=IwAR1ZUEetPDITQgmxi2xSmHZv6EQ1jGRidWaJkudgUXd2CU54MgneWVj-gwA>

5) Reflections on Church in Society Excerpts Taken from Monthly Interim Ministry Reports January 2021 to January 2022

January 2021

I found the following book interesting on the long-term effects of the lockdown.

The Price of Panic: How the Tyranny of Experts Turned a Pandemic into a Catastrophe by Jay W. Richards Ph.D. (Author), William M. Briggs Ph.D. (Author), Douglas Axe Ph.D. (Author)

For the first time in history, the world shut itself down—by choice—all for fear of a virus, COVID-19, that wasn't well understood. The government, with the support of most Americans, ordered the closure of tens of thousands of small businesses—many never to return. Almost every school and college in the country sent its students home to finish the school year in front of a computer. Churches cancelled worship services. "Social distancing" went from a non-word to a moral obligation overnight. Moral preening on social media achieved ever new heights. The world will reopen and life will go on, but what kind of world will it be when it does? It can't be what it was, because of what's just happened. Professors Jay Richards, William Briggs, and Douglas Axe take a deep dive into the crucial questions on the minds of millions of Americans during one of the most jarring and unprecedented global events in a generation. • What will be the total cost in dollars, lives, and livelihoods of this response from governments, on advice from Science? • What role have national and global health organizations such as WHO played in this? To whom are they accountable? • What evidence do they rely on in sounding the alarm? • How did science bureaucrats, relying on murky data and speculative computer models, gain the power to shut down the global economy? • How did politicians, who know nothing of the science, decide whom to trust? We need to know what and how it happened, to keep it from ever happening again.

<https://www.amazon.com/Price-Panic-Tyranny-Pandemic-Catastrophe/dp/1684511410> <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/54553501-the-price-of-panic>
<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-price-of-panic-jay-w-richards-phd/1137073706> <https://www.regnery.com/9781684511419/the-price-of-panic/>
<https://www.scribd.com/book/475593443/The-Price-of-Panic-How-the-Tyranny-of-Experts-Turned-a-Pandemic-into-a-Catastrophe>
https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Price_of_Panic.html?id=kurdDwAAQBAJ <https://wmbriggs.com/post/32871/>
<https://www.discovery.org/e/the-price-of-panic-how-the-tyranny-of-experts-turned-a-pandemic-into-a-catastrophe/>
<https://thebillwaltonshow.com/videos/paying-the-price-of-panic-with-dr-jay-richards/> <https://www.nationalreview.com/podcasts/the-bookmonger/episode-323-the-price-of-panic-by-jay-richards-william-m-briggs-and-douglas-axe/>
<https://crossexamined.org/the-price-of-panic-with-dr-jay-richards/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gz6-a5-iask>

Ep. 1753 The Price of Panic: How the Tyranny of Experts Turned a Pandemic Into a Catastrophe - YouTube

<https://afr.net/podcasts/cross-examined/2020/october/the-price-of-panic-with-jay-richards/> <https://podcasts.apple.com/mn/podcast/price-panic-by-jay-richards-william-m-briggs-douglas/id959714077?i=1000496112779>
<https://tomwoods.com/ep-1753-the-price-of-panic-how-the-tyranny-of-experts-turned-a-pandemic-into-a-catastrophe/>
<https://startingstrength.com/video/the-price-of-panic-with-william-briggs-starting-strength-radio-80> <https://www.newsbreak.com/california/san-diego/news/2085421998259/the-price-of-panic-how-the-tyranny-of-experts-turned-a-pandemic-into-a-catastrophe>

It will be interesting to see if similar studies will be done on the results of the lockout of congregants from their churches in Mainline Protestant denominations. It will also be interesting to see the difference between the Catholics and the Evangelicals, on the one hand, who opened their doors and the Mainline Protestants who kept their doors closed, on the other hand.

Some predictions have been made, which will be interesting to see if they come true:

Will the church financially survive the COVID-19 pandemic?

Bill Wilson predicts that up to one-third of U.S. churches could be out of business by 2025. He points to LifeWay Research that says 5% of U.S. churches will close within the year because of the pandemic. That's five times the average closure rate for churches, according to The Christian Century magazine.

<https://faithandleadership.com/will-church-financially-survive-covid-19-pandemic>

The above prediction compounds an earlier prediction for the ELCA.

Will the ELCA Be Gone in 30 years? - Faith+Lead DWIGHT ZSCHEILE SEPTEMBER 5, 2019

New projections forecast just 16,000 in worship across the entire ELCA by 2041. Why is this happening and what can be done? According to projections from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) Office of Research and Evaluation, the whole denomination will have fewer than 67,000 members in 2050, with fewer than 16,000 in worship on an average Sunday by 2041. That's right: according to current trends, the church will basically cease to exist within the next generation. In some ways, this is old news. Mainline decline has been a reality for over half a century, and the trends are well established. Yet consider how rapidly this future is arriving—well within most of our lifetimes. The ELCA had over five million members when it was launched in 1988. It has only declined since, and the decline has been accelerating. For all the energy spent on trying to turn things around over the past 40 years, there is little to show. That is because the cultural shifts underpinning this decline are largely beyond our control. To the extent to which we've tried to fix the church, we've failed. I know a lot of really smart, faithful leaders who have poured their lives into this effort. It's not their fault. The forces dismantling the established congregational and denominational system are much bigger. Something deeper is at stake.

<https://faithlead.luthersem.edu/decline/>

Actually, the above projection is optimistic compared to the following article written in 2017 about Mainline Protestantism. If the title were to be re-written for 2020, it could ask, "Will Mainline Protestantism Be Gone in 20 Years?"

If It Doesn't Stem Its Decline, Mainline Protestantism Has Just 23 Easters Left

The news of mainline Protestantism's decline is hardly new. Yet the trend lines are showing a trajectory toward zero in both those who attend a mainline church regularly and those who identify with a mainline denomination 23 years from now.

<https://layman.org/doesnt-stem-decline-mainline-protestantism-just-23-easters-left/>

Even when churches open their doors again, how many congregants will return?

Five Early Findings from Churches That Are Regathering – Church Answers

1. **Early attendance is significantly lower than the pre-quarantine era.** At this point, one-half of the churches we have surveyed have an attendance of 60 percent or less than the pre-quarantine numbers. We rarely hear of a church that has an attendance of 80 percent or higher. For now, those churches are the outliers.

<https://churchanswers.com/blog/five-early-findings-from-churches-that-are-regathering/>

Funding Ministry in 2021 Will Be More Difficult Than Ever – Horizons Stewardship

32% of practicing Christians have stopped attending during COVID-19. 14% of practicing Christians have already switched churches. **Giving to the church is in decline.** Giving almost always falls in recessions. Changes due to COVID-19 are impacting the reasons many donors give to the church. Blog — Horizons Stewardship

https://www.horizons.net/blog/funding-ministry-in-2021-will-be-more-difficult-than-ever?mc_cid=d50f4f8686&mc_eid=f3389e1b88

How the coronavirus pandemic could change church attendance

Church participation has been declining for decades. Will the pandemic make it worse? Pandemic-related defections could harm houses of worship already struggling with empty pews. **Recent research found that around half of U.S. adults who attended church before COVID-19 hit are unlikely to return to church right now even if public health officials deemed it safe.**

<https://www.deseret.com/indepth/2020/6/5/21279399/coronavirus-church-attendance-religion-data-pandemic-covid-19-onlineworship-reopening>

Will coronavirus hasten the demise of religion – or herald its revival

Stephen Bullivant, whose book *Mass Exodus* studied Catholic attrition in Britain and America, offers three reasons why he believes churches will shrink after the pandemic. First, he says, churchgoers (both lay and clergy) tend to be elderly and therefore more likely to die of coronavirus. Second, many churches rely on a steady influx of immigrants. With the world in lockdown, that supply has, at least temporarily, dried up. **Third, churchgoing is a habit, and once that habit is broken it is hard to take it up again.**

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/will-coronavirus-cause-a-religious-resurgence-or-its-ruination>

My father lived to be 87. I am 67 now, and, if I make it to 87, I expect to see the end of the ELCA in my lifetime. In the meantime, I see many churchwide, synodical, and rostered ministers using their positions in the church to push an ideological platform so that the membership may become increasingly polarized. The Lutheran church used to be known as the Republican Party at Prayer. Now, the ELCA, in my opinion, following the various resolutions and march at the 2019 churchwide assembly in the same city as the Democratic National Convention a year later, can be thought of as the Democratic Party at Prayer. The presiding bishop called for the Republican president to resign. At the same time as the new Democratic president signed executive orders, the synod office sent out advocacy resolutions. A number of members and congregations left after the 2009 churchwide assembly. I expect members who do not agree with the direction of churchwide or synod may simply tune out the wider church or else drift away.

February 2021

Connections

-Two members of each of the congregations at Spencer, Riplinger, and Unity to meet 3/2. Spencer reps will report back to council meeting on 3/9.

I would characterize the response of Riplinger as interested so that expenses could be shared. I would characterize the response of Spencer as hesitant. There are a number of reasons for this hesitancy. First, there was a conversation previously about shared ministry when Unity pulled out abruptly and asked their interim pastor to stay on. An older informal leader serving on the Transition Task Force stated, "They had their chance." Second, the fact that Unity wants out of a parish agreement only 3+ years into the agreement does not bode well for the future. One of the complaints that was given was that "the pastor does not show them enough attention." The congregation went from a solo pastorate throughout their history to a two-point parish. Moving to a three-point parish may only make the feeling worse. Third, Spencer pre-COVID offered an organ driven service of worship and a video driven service of worship. The latter offers the most potential for future growth. Fourth, Spencer went through a Comprehensive Ministry Review with the DEM a few years back, and the report came back that the congregation might be better off terminating the long-term relationship with Riplinger. Congregation meetings decided by one vote to continue with the relationship. The chair of the Worship Committee stated, "Maybe Unity and Riplinger should go together." Fifth, certain council members received specific pushback on the overture that there was a reluctance to move forward, so that I stated, "You have to at least talk to them." Sixth, when key influential people express strong reservations, caution flags are raised. The previous chair in a conversation with me asked, "Why can't Unity close its doors and its member attend Spencer?" Seventh, the newly elected president at Unity used to belong to Spencer but objected to an action by the pastor and transferred. Now, he is upset with their pastor. This trajectory invites the question of whether the same dissatisfaction would happen again. Eighth, the polity practiced at Unity evidently made for conflict as the leadership wanted to resume in-person services of worship, while the pastor did not. I read with interest the 2/11 message from the bishop

I imagine as folks receive the vaccine and the number of cases continue to decline that more will decide to return to in person worship. I am aware that there has been much tension between pastors, council and members about when and how and who makes the decision to return to in person worship services. I know there has been some blaming and scapegoating. I know it has been particularly challenging to continue virtual worship when neighboring churches have opened their doors for in person worship. This is an anxious time for everyone. But we will get through this. We are in this together. Please respect the decisions that other congregations have made even if you disagree with them.

Some have wondered how the decision to return to in person worship is made. I hope what follows is helpful.

The ELCA has what is called "congregational polity." It is organized so that individual congregations make their own decisions about basic day-to-day operations.[1] During this pandemic, the local church council has full authority to make any

decision it felt was best for the physical safety and spiritual wellbeing of the pastor, congregation and community. It is the church council and only the church council that decides when to return to in person worship.

· Holding in person worship is not the pastor's decision. The pastor is the spiritual advisor for the church council. It is not the synod bishop, synod ministers or the ELCA. We all make recommendations, but the final decision is made by the church council.

· As bishop, I make recommendations based on the science and research done by the Wisconsin Council of Churches, Centers for Disease Control and health experts for the state of Wisconsin. The recommendations are made to keep pastors, members of ELCA congregations and our neighbors safe from a disease that has killed nearly a half a million people in less than a year in the United States. The recommendations are just that, recommendations based on medical science, not based on politics.

I think it would have been helpful to have articulated this polity last May instead of the discharging the following directive on 5/14

To protect the most vulnerable members in our congregations, the elderly and those with underlying health conditions **we will not be having normal in person face-to-face worship for a long while.**

rather than waiting until 40% of the congregations have resumed in-person services of worship in one form or another in contradicting the WCC guidelines keeping congregants locked out of their churches. Trinity may not have sought to terminate the relationship with the parish and their pastor if such polity had been articulated then.

I found the dating-engagement-marriage-divorce metaphor for presenting *Holy Conversations: Options for congregations considering a vital and sustainable future* to be problematic and told the DEM so in a 2/10 Zoom meeting (in which I lost internet connection half way through and had to restore) with the Unity pastor. First, the church speaks of marriage as a covenant until death parts and not a contract that lasts as long as the agreement is mutually beneficial. Second, divorce is trivialized in that, if the arrangement does not work out the two parties break apart. Third, the

Resolution on Education and Resources for the NW Synod of Wisconsin on LGBTQIA+ Conversation complicates matters especially for this parish when this parish states in their constitutions:

*C9103.A10. In Regards to Marriage

This congregation declares that marriages, civil unions, or blessings of persons in same-gender relationships will not be performed in this church building or authorized by this congregation.

If the presenter goes ahead with this analogy, then it may be helpful to remember the rule of thumb that, if two people get divorced, at the very least, they are advised to stay apart for a certain period of time before entering into another relationship. Also, they are advised to engage in a review of what led to the dissolution of the relationship. Otherwise, trying to find a new partner while still in a marriage sounds morally compromising. Perhaps, Unity may be better off going back on its own and be served by a retired pastor since they really liked the retired interim pastor. If, at some time in the future, the congregation feels confident to enter into a new relationship, then the congregation may do so.

I suggest a preferred alternative to the marriage metaphor to be:

Dating	Exploratory Conversations
Engagement	Preliminary Understanding
Marriage	Parish Agreement
Divorce	Relationship Termination

March 2021

[Letter from Congregation Council to the congregation on 3/29.]

Dear St. John's Family,

We are living in a unique and important moment. Our church is on the verge of big changes.

Change can be perceived as challenging and exciting. Our leadership has had to make very difficult and time-sensitive decisions. With God's help, they are doing the best they can with the information they have at the time. We have seen how God's faith has lived out in the lives of His people in the Bible and in our own lives, and our faith gives us courage to face all the new challenges that lie ahead.

The goal of this letter is to provide clarity and information to our members to increase our unity, kindness, and understanding of one another and reduce division and fear.

MAJOR CHANGES IN THE PAST YEAR:

- March 2020 - our church was suddenly and unexpectedly closed due to the COVID pandemic.
- Volunteers worked to create online worship, support online giving, and continue to provide the COME Meals (Community Outreach Meals for Everyone) as a drive-through service.
- Financial changes were made in order to provide cost-savings during the pandemic.
- May/June 2020 - the 2020 church council carefully considered recommendations from the health departments at the local, state, and national levels; the ELCA; and our area community churches to make a decision on reopening.
- June 2020 - St John's re-opened with changes for masking, social distancing, and cleaning in order to allow those who felt safe to return to worship in person to attend church.
- August 2020 - after 17 years of service and over a year of prayerful consideration, Pastor Rebekah informed church council she had accepted a new role and offered her resignation.
- September 2020 - Our church secretary, Abby Wash, returned to the office
- Our Minister of Faith Formation, Jenny Nieman returned to the office

- October 2020, Sunday school (JAM), Cross Training (confirmation), and LIVE (high school) classes resumed.
- Bible studies resumed.
- Our secretary Abby Wash, had surgery and was off of work and then in December of 2020 offered her resignation as she took a new full-time job
- November 16, 2020 - Pastor Bolstad, interim pastor, came to guide us in our transition to find a new pastor
- January 2021 – the current council was installed
- Trinity Lutheran Church, Unity reached out to St. John's to discuss becoming a 3-point parish.
- January 24, 2021 - Annual congregational meeting in person and on Zoom
- January 31, 2021 - singing resumed in worship

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- Church services are open at 9 AM on Sunday mornings for a blended service of organ and I-worship music. We are singing in worship, offering communion, and serving hospitality. Sermons are available for viewing online.
- We currently have about 60 people in worship on Sundays and Wednesday night Lenten services.
- We are following recommendations from the insurance company and local health departments for safety guidelines. There is not assigned seating. Social distancing is available. Masks are encouraged but not required.
- We have resumed singing in church!
- After careful consideration and review of health guidelines, resumed in-person Lenten soup suppers
- Financial: while our church mortgage is paid off, we continue to break even monthly. Recently our water heater broke and 2 of our 5 furnaces went out and needed repairing. Our building is 17 years old and is in need of new roofing (leaks). We've been fortunate compared to other churches due to continued offerings and are grateful for ongoing support.
- We have hired a new church secretary.
- A volunteer team of members created a ministry site profile (information/job description for potential pastors to review)
- On March 16, 2021 – Trinity Lutheran Church, Unity decided to continue with their current arrangement and are not interested in further discussion with St. John's at this time.
- On March 21, 2021 - the call committee was elected.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- We continue to need help for readers, greeters, ushers, communion servers, technology, hospitality, lawn mowers, cleaning crew, sign changers, etc. as we lack many people for these roles at our current service. Please fill out the time and talent survey (available on paper or online) , sign up on the bulletin board or talk to Luanne Schwarze (for worship volunteers) or any of the council members if you have interest in serving in any area.
- For those interested in a mask mandated service, please complete the following survey to help the council/worship team be able to try to move forward on that option.
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdSD6174F2a9iDV54LQ5sUrI8Mn1JZb74xh5znmMiRMX75n4w/viewform?usp=sf_link
- Continue to pray for our leadership, our church, our new secretary, our call committee, Jenny Nieman, Pastor Bolstad and our future pastor.
- Spencer and Riplinger's call committee will begin meeting to seek out and offer guidance on electing our future pastor.
- Easter worship services will be as follows: Maundy Thursday at Spencer 7pm, Good Friday at Riplinger 7pm, Easter Sunday, Spencer –7am and 9am; Riplinger – 11am.

Please feel free to reach out to council members with questions or concerns, or if you'd like to get more involved or are interested in filling our empty Beyond our Doors council position. Please read the Wednesday e-mail and monthly newsletter to stay abreast of our congregational happenings.

Sincerely,

P.S. We continue to offer online services as well as in-person worship with communion so that you and your family can best decide what works best for you.

April 2021

Connections

-I serve on the Resolutions Committee but did not receive any resolutions to review from the committee or any other correspondence relating to the committee, so do not know if the committee was operative this year for the synod assembly and its numerous social justice resolutions.

-Wisconsin Council of Churches

The following call to action demonstrates again that the WCC acts as an unabashed apologist for a Democratic governor and a persistent critic of a Republican legislature. If I were to relay all these partisan calls to action to the congregations I serve, I would be faced with a call to defund mission support to the wider church.

Thu, Apr 15, 12:38 PM

Call to Action

The Governor's budget calls for a wide range of investments to make child care more affordable and support child care workers, protect the right to vote, address climate change and promote environmental justice, respond to firearm violence, reform criminal justice, and expand access to health insurance. However, the Joint Finance committee is expected to reject most or all of these proposals.

This is our chance, as people of faith, to speak up for our priorities. "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21) -- and it is also true that where our heart is, there we will put our treasure.

In an April 27 "Remind: The Legislature Needs to Hear from the People of Wisconsin," the Coordinator for Justice and Witness wrote, "However, many of us still do not feel safe attending such large public gatherings during the ongoing pandemic..." In this way, he claims a position of privilege in being able to shelter in place.

-One of the principles of the just war theory is that of proportionality. In other words, a combatant is expected not to use more force than is necessary to meet the challenge. I would like to see this principle applied to conducting an assessment of this synod's response to the virus. In the larger framework, the Roman Catholic Church and the denominations in the Reformed tradition, for the most part, opened up their facilities after the directives imposed by the governor of this state were lifted, while mainline protestant denominations gave directives to congregations to lock out congregants from their church facilities until 50-70% vaccinated and, in the case of the WCC and its signatories, urged the governor to impose another lockdown of the state if needed. On 2/21/2021, when the 2 congregations I serve canceled services of worship because of sub-zero temperatures, I attended a service of worship that morning at The Christian Family Center of Eau Claire and a concert at Jacob's Well of Lake Hallie that evening. I found out that the former never locked their doors but limited attendance to avoid the penalties imposed by the governor. **Wisconsin's Coronavirus 'Stay-At-Home' Order March 25 through April 24** with its provisions that "crowds of 10 or larger are specifically banned at weddings, funerals and church services and people who violate the order could face up to 30 days in jail, or a fine of up to \$250." More locally, I would like to hear an explanation of how Trinity Lutheran Church of Unity is better off for waiting until 2/28/2021 to open their doors to their congregants than St. John's Lutheran Church of Spencer 5.3 miles away which opened the doors to their congregants on 6/20/2020. I would also be interested to know why congregations which waited until 2021 to open their doors went against the directives to wait until 50-70% vaccinated. According to the WCC on April 21 around 40% have received one dose, so no congregations should be unlocking their doors yet. My hypothesis is that the mainline denominations used one-dimensional thinking in overreaching, while the Roman Catholics and the Reformed used multi-dimensional thinking in protecting religious liberty, and that the latter will end up better off after all. I do not think history will look kindly at religious bodies justifying lockdowns and lockouts. I want to be on the right side of history even if it means going against the dominant narrative now. This contrast is taking place regarding states. In 2020, states that did not lock down were lampooned for their actions and warned of dire consequences. California and New York adopted restrictive measures. Florida did not adopt such restrictive measures. The question can be asked, "Which state(s) is/are better off? In California, the governor is facing a recall petition because of the restrictions he imposed. In New York, the governor is facing investigations and possible impeachment proceedings because he placed patients infected with the virus in nursing homes and then attempted to cover up his actions. In addition, this one, who wrote **American Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic by Andrew Cuomo (Author)** **NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER** • Governor Andrew Cuomo tells the riveting story of how he took charge in the fight against COVID-19 as New York became the epicenter of the pandemic, offering hard-won lessons in leadership and his vision for the path forward.

<https://www.amazon.com/American-Crisis-Leadership-COVID-19-Pandemic/dp/0593239261>

and won an Emmy Award for his press conferences, is accused of inappropriate behavior towards young female staff. People are crossing the borders from these states and migrating in a mass exodus into other states. The most forceful leadership in Washington D.C. is coming from these 2 states. Synod staff have enjoyed positions of personal privilege in being able to shelter in place while being compensated for working from home. I realize it is human nature for leadership at any level committed to an ideological stance to stonewall pushback, so I am not optimistic that such an assessment will be forthcoming, but I do think it is important that at least someone raise the objection.

The moment I lost confidence in ELCA churchwide leadership is when I saw the photo of the presiding bishop and the bishop of the Milwaukee synod leading a protest march on ICE headquarters in Milwaukee as part of the 2019 churchwide assembly to declare this denomination a sanctuary church. I said, "Beware of those in clerical garb who like to parade on the street to demonstrate their social consciousness."

In addition, I can now say, "Be careful what you ask for." The southern borders have now been opened, and immigrants are streaming into this country overwhelming the border states and eventually straining the rest of the country. For instance, in nearby Colby the school already consists of 60% Hispanics. When I served at Curtiss, the previous pastor and the intern who now serves as the pastor, provided an afterschool ESL program until they could not sustain the effort any longer. The secretary of the Congregation Council related that her son who attended school in Abbotsford asked for help from the teachers only to be told that the teachers were so overwhelmed helping the ESL students, most of whom according to the Hispanic pastor in Medford were undocumented immigrants, that they could not spare time to help him. If I thought the executive order to open the borders was taken on the basis of compassionate humanitarianism, I might be more sympathetic, but I see the action as a cynical attempt to gain more voters for the party now come into power. Combine this executive order with the proposed HR1 voting bill, the proposed admission of Washington D.C. to statehood, and the proposed expansion of the Supreme Court, I see an attempt to tip the elections in their favor and an attempt to make for a hostile takeover of the court. FDR used the depression as a reason for accumulating power. This president seems to be using the virus as a pretense to expand the federal government in a way not seen since FDR. God warned the Israelites about desiring a king. I can only say now, "Be careful what you ask for."

Instead of issuing a press release,

ELCA Church Council approves sanctuary church guidelines

In response to action taken by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly that declared the ELCA a sanctuary church body, the council approved a motion to recognize that the ELCA's ministry as a sanctuary church body is a public witness that calls ELCA members to value the dignity of each human being made in God's image. The council also encouraged an understanding of the word "sanctuary" that is rooted in the principles of walking alongside, or accompanying, immigrants and refugees but acknowledged that "sanctuary" has no legal or universally accepted definition. This action also affirmed the guidance provided in the "ELCA Sanctuary Church Guidelines" for ways congregations, synods and the churchwide organization can accompany and support the ministry of sanctuary.

<https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8100>

are these marchers prepared to travel to the southern border to witness the conditions and talk to those most directly affected under the bright lights of the cameras? It is one thing to pass a resolution, march down the street, and 2 years later issue a press release in order to demonstrate social consciousness; it is another thing to provide shelter.

I am wondering if these marchers, many of whom have enjoyed positions of privilege in being able to shelter in place and who have been compensated the last year for working from home and who have employed an abundance/scarcity dichotomy, are prepared to provide shelter in welcome some of these unaccompanied minors into their homes. I am wondering if these marchers will urge the Bible Camps to house immigrants at their camp facilities, congregations to shelter immigrants in their newly opened church facilities otherwise used only a couple hours a week, and members to shelter immigrants in their homes. It is not enough to talk the talk, it is important to walk the walk. In the past in rural areas, people left their doors unlocked because somebody might be stranded and need help. When I lived in the countryside near Prairie Farm in the 1990s, the neighbor farmer told me, "Locking your doors only tells the neighbors you aren't home." I am wondering how many of these marchers leave their doors unlocked as a gesture of hospitality or would welcome an encampment on their front lawn by immigrants and homeless who protest inequality and demand to be taken in. As for me, I took in a homeless man in the middle of the winter a few years back and let him stay until he could get on his feet. He credited me with saving his life. I paid him to help rehab my house and pay him now to help with repairs and to watch after the house while I am away on assignment.

I traveled to Mexico, El Salvador, and Nicaragua with Augsburg Center for Global Education; Peru and Bolivia with Lutheran World Relief; Cuba (2X), Columbia, and Mexico on my own; Mali, Niger, *Mauritania*, Senegal in West Africa with LWR; and the Philippines with the Augsburg Center for Global Education. I caught a glimpse of conditions that might compel citizens of other countries want to flee to this country. I intend, as far as possible to continue to serve in compensated positions, and to shelter my pension, annuities, and savings so that I can leave as much money as possible behind to LWR to invest in development so that the people can continue to live in their homelands without crossing the border into this country. But I am not prepared to take in immigrants into my home at this time. I choose to operate out of a creative tension of the generosity/sustainability dialectic.

Maybe, it is just me, but I see an incongruence between sheltering in place, on the one hand, and opening the borders, on the other hand. Perhaps someone can explain that seeming incongruence.

The problem with religious leaders aligning so tightly with one end of the political and cultural spectrum is the resulting inability to call to account both sides. The problem with this kind of social activism is that the preaching of the gospel devolves into works righteousness moralism.

I resonate with Grace Bureau a student at one of our church colleges.

I've lived in Minneapolis my entire life. I'm leaving Friday. I no longer recognize my hometown.

[GRACE BUREAU - GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE](#)

My church — my beloved, tiny, Lutheran church — organized social justice justice marches for our congregation while refusing to reinstate in-person services (they're still virtual, by the way)...

<https://www.thecollegefix.com/ive-lived-in-minneapolis-my-entire-life-im-leaving-friday-i-no-longer-recognize-my-hometown/>

I did not attend the conference meeting because the meeting convenes on Thursday, and after being on the road since 1990 in interim ministry, my time off is too valuable to go to a meeting.

Besides, the following agenda item is not something I plan to take part in:

And, a request from the Wisconsin Council of Churches:

The WCC is partnering with the State of Wisconsin and member churches to reduce barriers to COVID vaccination, which are particularly strong in the northwest part of the state. We need:

- Churches willing to host vaccine clinics (see [guidance from the state](#) on what that involves)
- People willing to transport community members to vaccine clinics
- Medically-trained individual to help administer vaccines
- People willing to lend an empathetic ear to those hesitant or resistant to receiving a vaccine
- Signups for our weekly newsletter with more information and opportunities

For more information, [a brief overview](#) of the program is available, or people can reach out to me at danielschultz@wchurches.org.

This effort by the WCC is another example of partisan politics in which the churches are being used to forward a particular agenda in a highly polarized matter. Would the WCC recommend a similar partnership if the governor came from the other party? It is a very

slippery slope to become a willing agent of the state in partisan politics. I recall in the 1980s when the local pastors met with school officials where the officials asked the clergy to speak well of the state mandated curriculum of sex education to lessen resistance. The officials admitted that the state implemented this curriculum to cut down on unplanned pregnancies so that the state did not have to pay out aid to dependent children. Personally, I am sufficiently skeptical of the vaccinations so as to not avail myself at this time. I believe in a health approach rather than a disease approach. Focusing on building up an immune system rather than so much relying on restricting behavior and relying on Big Pharma to save the day.

I got an adjustment at Stucky Chiropractic in Eau Claire and picked up their newsletter.

Should Unvaccinated and Obese Be Penalized by Government?

• As of April 15, 2021, some 5,800 Americans who had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 had been diagnosed with COVID-19; 396 (7%) were hospitalized and 74 died. Preliminary research found people who had received both doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine were eight times more susceptible to contracting the South African variant of SARS-CoV-2

For the rest of the article visit Dr. Mercola at https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2021/04/23/should-unvaccinated-and-obese-be-penalized.aspx?cid_medium=etaf&cid=share

<https://www.stuckychiropractic.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/May.pdf>

Page 2

Here at this congregation, even some of the medical professionals will not be getting the vaccines. To suggest such a move would invite a polarized response. An announcement is posted on the bulletin board for a Free Community COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic – Northcentral WI at the Northcentral Technical College-Wausau. This congregation is community minded in hosting a community meal 1X a month but I would not suggest hosting a vaccine clinic.

Mission

Whereas the local high school offered a senior prom with numerous restrictions, this congregation offered a more inclusive prom on May 8. Attendance 45 with 14 chaperones. HS prom attendance of 18.

May 2021

Other comments

-I choose to embrace the vision of MLK

['I Have A Dream' Speech, In Its Entirety : NPR](#)

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

<https://www.npr.org/2010/01/18/122701268/i-have-a-dream-speech-in-its-entirety>

rather than that of CRT and BLM

[Op-Ed: The civil rights legend who opposed critical race theory](#)

Critical race theory, or CRT, is in the news these days but many people still may not know what it really means. They think CRT is part of the Rev. Martin Luther King's civil rights efforts. In truth, it is directly opposed to the central concept and vision he most stood for. One of the last and greatest civil rights leaders of our time – and one of King's closest friends and advisers – did understand CRT, and explicitly rejected it.

https://www.thecentersquare.com/national/op-ed-the-civil-rights-legend-who-opposed-critical-race-theory/article_0a5c3e86-0d85-11eb-aa21-efdee365ff22.html

[MLK Versus BLM in Changing Hearts and Minds | Opinion](#)

Martin Luther King, Jr. proved the great practical value of nonviolent protest. One can't change people's hearts and minds through intimidation and violence. Unfortunately, the Black Lives Matter movement and its progressive supporters seem to have forgotten Dr. King's lessons.

<https://www.newsweek.com/mlk-versus-blm-changing-hearts-minds-opinion-1522073>

June 2021

Other comments

-Why I will not be putting the following Black Lives Matter photo from the synod website on the congregation website:



[Black Lives Matter cashes in on black capitalism – World Socialist Web Site](#)

The real substance of the group's policies is the unremitting injection of racial divisions and animosity into the movement of opposition to police violence. It aims to update the age-old tactic of divide and conquer, seeking to prevent the unity of the

working class—black, white and immigrant—from challenging the capitalist system, the source of the deepening social and political oppression.

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2017/04/04/blm-a04.html>

Black Lives Matter activists denounced by mothers of victims – World Socialist Web Site

Samaria Rice, the mother of Tamir Rice, and Lisa Simpson, the mother of Richard Rishner, released a joint statement Tuesday accusing **activists associated with the Black Lives Matter movement of profiting from the police killings of their children.**

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2021/03/20/blma-m20.html>

1619 Project lead writer Nikole Hannah-Jones paid \$25,000 for virtual lecture. - WSWs

The wealth and privilege of the leading proponents of racialism demonstrate the reactionary character of identity politics. It is entirely divorced from the real concerns and experiences of the working class. Fearful of a unified workers' movement, the ruling class seeks to sow artificial racial divisions among workers through the promotion of identity politics. Additionally, middle class layers seeking a bigger slice of the pie see identity as a means of advancing their own wealth and social position.

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2021/04/14/nhjp-j01.html>

I am reminded of how Daniel Ortega became the darling of progressives when his Sandinista National Liberation Front led an insurrection against the dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle in 1978-79. I traveled to Nicaragua in 1985 as well as Mexico and El Salvador on a travel seminar sponsored by the Augsburg Center for Global Education.

From rebel to strongman: How Daniel Ortega became the thing he fought against – Washington Post

Ortega rules Nicaragua with a small group of family and loyalists. He made his wife, Rosario Murillo, his vice president. Together they fostered an image on billboards and government broadcasts as beneficent parents of the nation. Their Sandinista party, which began as a guerrilla group in the 1960s, has become a stand-in for the state: At a border crossing into Costa Rica, black-and-red Sandinista banners fly, but not the blue-and-white flag of Nicaragua.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/from-rebel-to-strongman-how-daniel-ortega-became-the-thing-he-fought-against/2018/08/24/117d000a-97fe-11e8-818b-e9b7348cd87d_story.html

-I submitted the following letter to the WCC Coordinator for Justice and Witness and the Executive Director on 6/21 and received a confirmation of submission.

When I received the WCC Call to Action from Peter Bakken Coordinator for Justice and Witness- Contact your State Senator NOW to oppose bills restricting our freedom to vote! Wed., Jun 9, 7:16AM- I remembered 2012. I seldom purchased hard cover books but bought [The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream](#) by [Barack Obama](#) intending to vote for the author. I was denied the ability to vote because I was residing in a parsonage at the time and was not able to provide a copy of a utility bill as proof of residence. I did not assert that I was a victim of voter suppression and I did not employ the status of my office to oppose the law. Now in 2021, instead of providing background on legislation and allowing the reader to make an informed decision, the WCC Coordinator for Justice and Witness once again acts as an unabashed apologist for a Democratic governor and as a persistent critic of Republican legislators this time in the debate between election integrity and voter suppression. Such an action by this coordinator fails in my mind to act in integrity for a non-profit agency.

[Understand The Limitations - Learn What's Prohibited](#)

Political Campaign Activities - Risks to Tax-Exempt Status

2. Lobbying

Lobbying is when an organization contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body (or any executive branch official who may participate in the formulation of legislation) for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation, or when the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation. While a 501(c)(3) organization is allowed to do some lobbying, too much can hurt its tax-exempt status. Its lobbying activities cannot be more than an insubstantial part of its overall activities.

<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/How%20to%20Lose%20Your%20Tax%20Exempt%20Status.pdf>

I think, if the WCC insists on acting as a political operative, the agency should act with integrity and voluntarily relinquish its non-profit status and reconstitute as a Political Action Committee.

[GEORGE CARLIN quotes about "Church" | inspringquotes.us](#)

“I don't know how you feel, but I'm pretty sick of church people. You know what they ought to do with

churches? Tax them. If holy people are so interested in politics, government, and public policy, let them pay the price of admission like everybody else. The Catholic Church alone could wipe out the national debt if all you did was tax their real estate.”

<https://www.inspiringquotes.us/author/3471-george-carlin/about-church>

July 2021

Identity

- I asked the husband of the organist (Vietnam Vet, NRA member, grandson is drill sergeant in National Guard) what he thought of [Biden Announces Door-to-Door Outreach to Boost Vaccines](#)

and he replied, “I think they would be in for a big surprise. They may not realize how independent people are out in these parts.”

I asked (his wife serves as the town treasurer and as an election teller) what he thought of the statement by the vice president,

“Because in some people’s mind, that means well, you’re going to have to Xerox or photocopy your ID to send it in to prove you are who you are. Well, there are a whole lot of people, especially people who live in rural communities, who don’t... there’s no Kinkos, there’s no OfficeMax near them.”

and he replied, “We know how to vote out here.”

-I inquired of the parish secretary if the school will mandate vaccines in the fall. She said, “No, but, if they did, I would find another school.” She also stated that parents insisted that the school board allow masks to be optional in the fall.

Connections

-I decided not to insist that the congregation follow the latest from the WCC as it would only escalate the desire to terminate:

By Faith We Stand Firm:

Ministry in the Era of COVID Variants

2. Maintain masking expectations FOR ALL PERSONS indoors and when not distanced outdoors until COVID transmission is very low in the community. Although vaccination protects us well against serious illness, breakthrough infections do happen, and viral shed of the delta variant can be as high among the vaccinated as among the unvaccinated. This means universal masking is warranted even among the vaccinated.

If your church is gathering for worship outdoors, and you are not providing for distancing, we recommend that you make wearing face masks a standard for all. Being outdoors is not automatically protective against illness if you are in a crowd and are re-breathing the same air others have exhaled.

-While I was working in my garden in Rice Lake on 7/30, the neighbor behind me came over to talk. She is a retired school teacher. I asked her about the schools this past year. She said the superintendent is originally a local farm boy and understands the people. He realized the factory workers especially could not furlough to home school their children and he kept in-person learning as available as possible throughout the year. On the other hand, this retired school teacher said she has relatives in Madison who recounted they only had in-person learning at the very end of the school year for maybe 2 weeks.

August 2021

Preaching On 8/22, I preached on the second reading for 13 Pentecost Ephesians 6:10-20 “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.” I think this is the message people need to hear from their pastors and the office of bishop rather than If you are NOT vaccinated please do not come for your own safety and for the safety of others. When I looked at the gospel for 14 Pentecost Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23, I began to wonder if all of these protocols in the church are becoming the new Pharisaism, especially with the move from social distancing to vaccine apartheid.

Collegiality

-I visited an older member in a memory care unit on 8/29. I was asked at the front desk if I was vaccinated, and I said no. The visit was requested by a member who would like this congregation to terminate its relationship with the ELCA. Her sister is married to the former council chair, and their daughter is the pastor at Bone Lake. They have left the congregation because of its affiliation with the ELCA. It strikes me as interesting that I can still visit in the nursing homes but am told in regards to the [Fall Ministry 2021 - Northwest Synod of Wisconsin](#) We Look Forward To Seeing You At The 2021 (In Person!) Fall Ministry Retreat A Time Of Relaxation, Collegiality, And Spiritual Renewal.

If you are NOT vaccinated please do not come to this event for your own safety and for the safety of others

I am wondering if these attendees shelter-in-place to protect themselves from the unvaccinated otherwise and only agree to record virtual services of worship for the congregation.

It would be one thing if I saw citations from the WCC and CDC but there are not, which leads one to wonder if this is a case of chilling bureaucratic overreach. I am wondering if mission support from congregations subsidizes this event. I am also wondering if this decision was approved by the synod council.

-I am wondering if vaccine apartheid is going to be the new normal now for conference and synod events.

-I participated in the Zoom meeting for the Interim Ministry Gathering on 8/17. I responded to comments like “Many congregations are really just building preservation societies.” and “Some of these congregations should just join together and use one building.” by replying, “I respect the identity of individual congregations and their right to be responsible for their life and mission.” I am reminded of a clergy meeting of area pastors of different denominations in the Mondovi area where a retired pastor of another denomination who stayed on after retirement to do visitation asked me about my ministry. When I told him I served 3 congregations, he stated, “Why don’t you close 2 of them and have everybody worship at 1 of them.” I replied, “Next time you are at your neighborhood block party, why don’t you suggest that the neighbors move into one house because all these people don’t need their own house.” He never said another word to me that day or in any subsequent meeting.

Other comments

I first read the letter on recommendations for responding to the most recent mutation on the virus on my Android phone on 8/12. I tried to recover the email on my laptop computer at the pastor's study on 8/15 but could not so I requested and received the link from the Synod Minister for Administration on 8/16. The following comments are made in response to the invitation to do so.

If you have questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact me or one of the synod ministers.

Concerned if the ELCA is right for St. John's?

1 Corinthians 12:14: For the one body does not consist of one member but of many.

The council is aware that some congregation members are questioning specific actions within the ELCA and how this relates to St. John's affiliation with the ELCA. These members will be meeting to discuss the specifics of their concerns on August 22. If you would like more information, please contact Allen or Gail Jicinsky. 715-659-4053.

Please note, this is not a council driven team. St. John's council's job is to ensure due process is followed and all congregation members are heard.

Please pray for St. John's as we continue in this pattern of transition. May God lead us as we look into the future.

Thank-you,
Pam Hardrath
Council Chair

If I would have insisted to the Congregation Council on 8/11 and the Worship Committee on 8/18 that the gathered assembly move outside for services of worship and that social distancing and masks be reinstated, and furthermore if I had urged the gathered assembly on 8/25 If you are NOT vaccinated please do not come for your own safety and for the safety of others. those stipulations would have given even more reason to terminate the relationship with the ELCA.

6. Do everything you can to encourage folks to get vaccinated. This is now a "pandemic of the unvaccinated."

This psychological othering in the "pandemic of the unvaccinated" has taken concrete form by the following instruction for the fall ministry retreat:

If you are NOT vaccinated please do not come to this event for your own safety and for the safety of others.

One Body, Many Parts

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' ²²On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. **1 Corinthians 12:12-26**

Evidently the Body of Christ in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin is now being divided into those who chose to receive the experimental gene therapy for the respiratory virus and those who choose not to receive the experimental gene therapy for the respiratory virus.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, so that we do not lie about, betray or slander our neighbor, but excuse him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

Small Catechism by Dr. Martin Luther

The following articles expose the lie, betray, and slander of the "pandemic of unvaccinated" accusation.

[The Lies Behind the 'Pandemic of Unvaxxed'](#)

[60% of Those Older Than 50 Who Die From COVID Are Double Vaxxed](#)

[medRxiv August 23, 2021](#)

[MedRxiv August 25, 2021](#)

[ScienceMag August 26, 2021](#)

1 John 4:18

¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.

A 5/14/2020 letter from the Office of the Bishop includes the following phrases:

Church is a dangerous place.

Part of leadership, in my mind, is to instill confidence. Even as economic life is all about confidence, congregational life is about confidence. I regard the above phrase as highly unfortunate. To ask rostered ministers to convey the message from the bishop that the "church is a dangerous place" is to unintentionally sabotage the life of the congregation. There is so much fearmongering going around without a bishop adding to it. Perfect love casts out all fear. To be sure members can exercise due diligence and self-regulate in their precautions, but speaking of the church as a dangerous place is counterproductive in the long run.

your friends that show no symptoms

Part of leadership, in my mind, is to instill trust. I regard the above phrase as highly unfortunate. Though unintentional, this kind of language is common to the psychological warfare of divide and conquer used by repressive regimes.

This statement If you are NOT vaccinated please do not come to this event for your own safety and for the safety of others. 14 months later likewise plays upon people's fears. [The Biopolitical War on Breathing](#)

[Stand and Deliver by Eric Clapton - The state51 Conspiracy](#)

Stand and deliver / You let them put the fear on you / Stand and deliver / But not a word you heard was true
But if there's nothing you can say / There may be nothing you can do
Do you wanna be a free man / Or do you wanna be a slave? / Do you wanna be a free man / Or do you wanna be a slave?
Do you wanna wear these chains / Until you're lying in the grave?

[Eric Clapton - This Has Gotta Stop \(Official Music Video\)](#)

"This has gotta stop, enough is enough/ I can't take this BS any longer/ It's gone far enough, you wanna claim my soul/ You'll have to come and break down this door."

I respectfully suggest that a faith leader can do better by asking the bioethical questions

[COVID-19 Injection Campaign Violates Bioethics Laws. Dr. Robert Malone - Global Research](#)

rather than simply functioning as a state actor to, in effect, justify vaccine apartheid, passports, and mandates pushed by Big Government, Big Pharma, and Big Tech.

Fortunately, some faith leaders have raised ethical questions: [Covid-19: Vaccine passports 'unethical', church leaders warn](#)

[COVID Noncompliance Now Labeled Top 'Terror Threat'](#)

Vaccine apartheid, passports, and mandates can also be questioned in light of the 4th Amendment to the Constitution, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Nuremberg Code.

In an article sent out by the Interim Ministry Network on 8/27/2021 entitled, When Things Fall Apart: How to Respond, author Ron Kraybill states, "Top-down approaches don't work anymore but we use them anyway because it's the only response we really know."

<https://www.riverhouseeexpress.com/en/blog/new-skillset/>

I think at this point the burden of proof needs to be placed on the Office of Bishop in looking at congregation vitality to demonstrate that the risk is so great to justify vaccine apartheid. I think that the Office of Bishop should do their own follow the science and assess where congregations are at as to congregation vitality on the spectrum of, on the one hand, those congregations which returned to in-person services of worship as soon as the [Wisconsin Supreme Court Strikes Down Stay at Home Order](#) to the other end of the spectrum where congregations are still waiting to return to in-person services of worship when the vaccine rate reaches the recommended level. In other words, the Office of Bishop should cite demonstrable outbreaks in those congregations who returned to in-person services of worship before reaching the recommended vaccine rate.

Otherwise, every time a new mutant emerges, there will most likely be increasingly austere measures enacted.

6. Do everything you can to encourage folks to get vaccinated.

I cannot in good conscience abide by the recommendation.

For one thing, I read the following articles in the summer of 2020 and became skeptical of the vaccine agenda.

Gates' Globalist Vaccine Agenda: A Win-Win for Pharma and Mandatory Vaccination

<https://childrenshealthdefense.org/news/government-corruption/gates-globalist-vaccine-agenda-a-win-win-for-pharma-and-mandatory-vaccination/>

https://childrenshealthdefense.salsalabs.org/natestestytest_copy3_copy1?wvpld=495298ed-37e9-4f3a-a288-af9e6d5b98d0

<https://www.transcend.org/tms/2020/04/gates-globalist-vaccine-agenda-a-win-win-for-pharma-and-mandatory-vaccination/>

<https://fromrome.info/2020/04/10/gates-globalist-vaccine-agenda-a-win-win-for-pharma-and-mandatory-vaccination/>

Bill Gates' Globalist Vaccine Agenda: A Win-Win for Pharma and Mandatory Vaccination - YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BM5Q3PWwruY>

Robert F. Kennedy Jr: Bill Gates Is Obsessed With Vaccines And 'Seems Fueled By A Messianic Conviction' That He Is Destined To 'Save The World With Technology And A God-like Willingness To Experiment On The Lives Of Lesser Humans'

<https://cloverchronicle.com/2020/04/08/robert-f-kennedy-jr-bill-gates-obsession-with-vaccines-fueled-by-messianic-conviction-that-he-is-destined-to-save-the-world-with-technology-and-god-like-willingness-to-experiment-on-lives-of>

Then, when the experimental gene therapy program rolled out in this country, I developed a wait-and-see attitude. When I began to hear about the vaccine injuries and deaths from vaccine adverse reactions, I became even more hesitant for myself let alone encouraging others. I arrived at the conclusion that for me who does not suffer from the most common comorbidities of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, the risks outweigh the benefits to get the shot as "The survivability of COVID-19 outside of nursing homes is 99.74%..." [Dr. Joseph Mercola, Natural Immunity vs Covid Vax](#)

The bold promise that the experimental gene therapy is safe and effective seems to be flawed. As for effective, [Biden admin. to advise all Americans to get a Covid booster](#) whereas earlier [Bill Gates says the world would need as many as 14 billion doses of a coronavirus vaccine to stop the virus](#)

I agree that "You were not meant to be alone: The human body contains and is covered in an almost unimaginably large number of microbes. But eradicating them as we do, intentionally and unintentionally, with the prolific use of antibiotics may be harming our health, according to one scientist who studies our minuscule companions."

[Overuse of Antibiotics Is Seen Behind Many Human Ills - LiveScience](#)

and that "The overuse of antibacterial cleaning products, including disinfectants in the home, may be producing strains of bacteria that are resistant to multiple antibiotics. Bacteria that are resistant to many antibiotics are known as multi-resistant organisms (MROs).

[Antibacterial cleaning products - Better Health Channel](#)

[George Carlin - Germs, Immune System](#)

In addition, [America's poor health is jeopardizing its future](#) "All in all, [more than 40% of American adults](#) have a pre-existing health condition that puts them at higher risk of severe COVID-19." Maybe these letters from the Office of the Bishop could be more constructive by encouraging stewardship of body, mind, and spirit. As for me, I have cut weight, improved my diet, raised a garden and stored produce, increased use of supplements (especially vitamins D and C as well as zinc), rested more, and gone to an acupuncture clinic as well as my chiropractor.

[J Infect. 2021 Aug; 83\(2\): 237-279](#)

[ZeroHedge August 25, 2021](#)

[BioSpace January 26, 2021](#)

[BioSpace January 26, 2021](#)

[Xlear.com Website](#)

I am not willing to be complicit in the anticipated rise of adverse reactions injuries and deaths by encouraging the vaccine.

The fastest way to get back to "normal" is for everyone to get vaccinated.

As a rebuttal to the argument for universal vaccination, I commend the following article:

By Dr. Robert Malone and Peter Navarro - - *Thursday, August 5, 2021*

ANALYSIS/OPINION: The Biden administration's strategy to universally vaccinate in the middle of the pandemic is bad science and badly needs a reboot.

<https://www.rwmalonemd.com/news>

A member came up to me after the service of worship at Spencer on 8/15 and said that she works remotely for Marshfield Clinic. I officiated at her wedding when I served here in 2003. She is known as a strong worker in the congregation and the community. She claims to be healthy and does not want to take the shot but says she may be fired if she does not do so by 11/15. She is exploring a religious exemption. She said others are facing the same dilemma. If I had told her If you are NOT vaccinated please do not come for your own safety and for the safety of others. and encouraged her to get vaccinated, I would have lost her. She told how

[Marshfield Clinic employees protest vaccine mandate - WSAW](#)

The president at Riplinger, who also serves on the county board, said on 8/22 that the [Clark County Rehab and Living Center](#) is short on staff by 34 positions already and expects to lose more as some employees refuse to take the shot.

A family who came early to set up the projection for the Monday, 8/23 service of worship told how they tested positive for the virus last December. The symptoms only lasted a half day for the father. The symptoms lasted 4 days for the mother. They claim that they have not been bothered by the symptoms that have been circulating in the community recently because of having dealt with the virus. They feel no need to take the experimental gene therapy for the virus and expose themselves to possible adverse reactions.

The following video articulates the possible adverse reactions vaccine injuries: [The Awareness Foundation Covid 19 Roundtable](#)

I understand that many of the vaccinated trusted the narrative that the vaccines would be safe and effective. This message was communicated by the POTUS most recently as 8/23 as he urged employers to mandate vaccines for workers. I can understand how some of the vaccinated may be disappointed when they become aware that [COVID vaccine protection wanes within six months - Reuters](#) and that [US COVID-19 Vaccines proven to cause more harm than good based on pivotal clinical trial data analyzed using the proper scientific endpoint, "All Cause Severe Morbidity"](#) but I find it unfortunate that some have now taken to scapegoating those who choose natural immunity rather than vaccine immunity.

Be careful what you ask for. When people began to see that the push for universal vaccination is actually making things worse rather than better, those who chose not to receive the experimental gene therapy for a respiratory virus may become resentful of those who push the Big Pharma arms race. [How the Endless War Became the Endless Pandemic](#)

The question can be asked, "Who is going to be responsible for the cost of adverse reactions?"

'Any Adverse Reaction' if They Mandate COVID Vaccines OSHA: Employers May Be Held Liable for 'Any Adverse Reaction' if They Mandate COVID Vaccines *New OSHA guidance holds employers liable for adverse reactions if they require employees be vaccinated for COVID as a condition of employment, which could negatively impact the employer's safety rating.*

Is the Office of the Bishop setting up a relief fund to meet expenses for rostered ministers who suffer adverse reactions?

At this moment, it is best that children wear masks indoors.

Everyone vaccinated or unvaccinated to MASK UP INDOORS in areas of high transmission.

During the large indoor group gatherings we are asking that you wear masks. The large group meeting room has high ceilings, lots of windows and is well ventilated.

We are requesting that the staff at Heartwood wear masks at all times, but we cannot guarantee that they are vaccinated.

The dominant narrative about masks deserves to be challenged.

[Why Masks Are a Charade - Mercola Articles](#)

[Masks Seriously Harm Children's Linguistic Development](#)

[The Case Against Masks - Simon & Schuster](#)

[Naomi Wolf: We've Reached 'Step Ten' of the 10 Steps to Fascism](#) 6. Forced face coverings.

Currently there are 24 people registered for the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

The ironic point about If you are NOT vaccinated, please do not come to this event for your own safety and for the safety of others. is that, in effect, such a stipulation justifies vaccine apartheid, passports, and mandates. At the same time vaccine hesitancy is highest among the Black community. [Addressing Justified Vaccine Hesitancy in the Black Community](#)
There is historical reason for this as outlined in [Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present](#) by [Harriet A. Washington](#) (Author)

[Dr Mercola on Joe Rogan's podcast discussing Vaccine Passports](#) In this clip, Rogan lets his opinions rip on vaccine passports, COVID "vaccinations" and breakthrough cases. He points out the obvious irony of New York City's new passport rules. While the democratic leadership claims to want to protect people of color and immigrants, these are the very groups that reject the COVID shots the most. Did the WCC think things through as to [Coronavirus lockdowns: the 'elephant in the room' of the riots](#) "The frustration and anger at the lockdowns and the perception that blacks are getting the worst of it' made the rioters a seething mass waiting to explode, says medical sociologist Robert Bartholomew." when the WCC and judiciary leaders signed a letter stating, "This should include the possibility of a "Stay at Home" order, should conditions warrant" [WCC-COVID-Letter-to-legislative-leaders?](#)

If black lives matter as the photo on the synod website seems to suggest, I think the Office of Bishop should offer a public confession to the Black Community for the way in which policies stated in such a supremely confident manner by the Office of Bishop such as lockdowns and lockouts, vaccine passports and vaccine mandates harm the black community in such a disproportionate manner. One dynamic that makes credibility suffer is when leaders posture as progressives and then act in a regressive manner. Could it be that this fall ministry retreat will be remembered in history not as THE NEXT MOST FAITHFUL STEP in social justice but THE NEXT STEP in "us vs. them"? The "us" being those who adhere to a certain social consciousness and the "them" those regarded by the "us" as those who do not adhere to a certain social consciousness. I have been hearing so much about Finding Our Way to Wider Welcome but I am beginning to think what is really meant is Finding Our Way to Wider Welcome with Like-Minded People.

The CDC has now been developed plans for intern camps. [Interim Operational Considerations for Implementing the Shielding Approach to Prevent COVID-19 Infections in Humanitarian Settings | CDC](#)

Will the next letter to come out from the Office of Bishop be sent to justify these intern camps? How about supporting [Fauci asks people to 'put aside' concerns of personal liberty and recognize 'common enemy of covid-19'](#) Instead of the latter's Orwellian DoubleSpeak, I contend that COVID Scare Alarmism and Climate Scare Alarmism are being used to create the fear needed to leverage compliance in order for people to accept the dismantling of present structures to Build Back Better using the World Economic Forum blueprint of the Great Reset. [8 predictions for the world in 2030 | World Economic Forum](#) including "You'll own nothing – and you'll be happy about it." "The U.S. won't be the leading superpower."

[John Kerry reveals Biden's devotion to radical 'Great Reset'](#)

The World Economic Forum (WEF) used to be the European Management Forum and succeeded in enacting European socialism and leveraging European countries to turn over power to the European Union in Brussels. Now the WEF seeks to export European socialism to this country and to leverage this country to turn over power for global governance to the United Nations in New York. This alarmism is the Trojan Horse, which purports to protect society but instead brings about a dystopia with the rise of authoritarianism to enforce a vision of socialist utopia on earth. Divide and conquer is the method of operation. I, for one, am not willing to collaborate with this alarmism.

The open border, inflation spike, and Afghanistan evacuation are making "The U.S. won't be the leading superpower." statement a self-fulfilling prophecy, and the spending bills a generational radical transformation of America will make the people increasingly dependent upon the government so that "You'll own nothing – and you'll be happy about it."

Forecaster Martin Armstrong [Blog | Armstrong Economics](#) who wrote the book, The Great Reset: The Elitist Coalition to Redesign the World, asks [The Great Reset](#) How will we survive this third attempt by Marxists to take over the world? They are calling this takeover the [Great Reset](#) — their words not mine! These are indeed the times that will test the strength of our character and our determination to retain freedom.

In the battle of planned economy versus human ingenuity, I favor the latter and oppose the former. The same with collectivism versus capitalism.

[Globalist Technocrats Poised to Press the Great Reset Button](#)

[Lock Down Or Get Locked Up?](#)

[Epstein, Gates & Mainstream Media's CONSPIRACY Of Silence](#)

"Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety."

— Benjamin Franklin

The POTUS promised to be empathetic and to unite the country. I am reminded of [Edwin H. Friedman Quotes \(Author of A Failure of Nerve\)](#) "It has been my impression that at any gathering, whether it be public or private, those who are quickest to inject words like sensitivity, empathy, consensus, trust, confidentiality, and togetherness into their arguments have perverted these humanitarian words into power tools to get others to adapt to them."

The extraction from Afghanistan stands in stark contrast to the Battle of Brooklyn 245 years to the day when General Washington retreated to fight another day and defeat the British 8 years later as told in Washington's Immortals: The Untold Story of an Elite Regiment Who Changed the Course of the Revolution by [Patrick K. O'Donnell](#). Evidently, the POTUS is more concerned about vaccine mandates and critical race theory than military preparedness.

THE FATE OF EMPIRES and SEARCH FOR SURVIVAL Sir John Glubb goes through history to show how empires rise and fall about every 240 years. One characteristic of empires in decline is civil dissensions.

XXI Civil dissensions

Another remarkable and unexpected symptom of national decline is the intensification of internal political hatreds. One would have expected that, when the survival of the nation became precarious, political factions would drop their rivalry and stand shoulder-to-shoulder to save their country.

<http://people.uncw.edu/kozloffm/glubb.pdf>

The governor resorted to bribes to convince people in this area to take the jab and used the church to justify the action.

[Governor Evers Holds Press Conference at Nazareth Lutheran](#) 5 days ago — Get vaccinated, get a hundred bucks.

I was actually encouraged by a part of the 2/11/2021 Message from the Bishop, "The ELCA has what is called "congregational polity." I read also that "The recommendations are just that, recommendations based on medical science, not based on politics." Unfortunately, the stipulation If you are NOT vaccinated, please do not come to this event for your own safety and for the safety of others. for a synod event on social justice crosses the line and moves from medical to political, and, in effect, justifies vaccine apartheid, passports, and mandates, and moves toward an "us vs. them" state. I could not be more disappointed. Nowhere, in **†S8.12. As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall:** nor in the

[Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#)

could I find a justification for this action. Such an action may justify rostered ministers to do the same for their congregations and that rostered ministers may be subject to punitive action if they choose not to take the experimental gene therapy for this respiratory virus. In politics, actions like this are called wedge issues. Such a wedge issue to push a partisan perspective will further cause "us vs. them". Calling part of the Body of Christ the "pandemic of the unvaccinated" and stating that If you are NOT vaccinated, please do not come for your own safety and for the safety of others rather than attend the gathered assembly would be unthinkable in this context. When "encourage" only works so far, resorting to shame, blame, and scapegoat is not becoming of a faith leader and becomes a control mechanism. If the Office of the Bishop continues down this slippery slope, such actions will further aggravate and alienate, divide and diminish the Body of Christ, as well as intensify political animosities. Motives and agendas will be questioned. Leaders across the board will be judged by history how they responded to [The Fourth Turning: What the Cycles of History Tell Us About America's Next Rendezvous with Destiny](#) Last comes a Crisis—the Fourth Turning—when society passes through a great and perilous gate in history. Defenders or Accommodators? Defenders of liberty or accommodators to the rise of authoritarianism?

Is this a 1933 moment? [Marking the Unvaccinated As they Marked Jews in the 1930s](#)

A beloved professor of mine by the name of Rev. Clifton Bruland introduced me to The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a freshman at Waldorf College in Forest City, Iowa in 1971. I took an elective course on Bonhoeffer from Dr. James Burtness my first quarter at Luther Seminary in 1975 as well as an elective on Martin Luther from Dr. Warren Quanbeck and then tested out of Intro to Theology. I admit I did not fully appreciate this martyr for the faith at the time. Now, the lessons of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Confessing Church have taken on new meaning for me.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Confessing Church

Two institutions are commonplace and powerful around the globe: the state and the church. In Hitler's Germany, most churches went along with the Nazis. Some did so reluctantly, many were enthusiastic. But there was also dramatic resistance by churches and religious leaders who opposed Hitler at great personal risk. For example, the German Protestant Church became a battleground between the majority who supported the Nazis, either explicitly or implicitly, and a minority who resisted them. At the core of the conflict was the question of how the church should respond to the "Jewish question." No man spoke more eloquently on behalf of the civil liberties of Jews than the Protestant pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He became a prominent voice in 'the Confessing Church' that was founded when approximately 3,000 Protestant pastors broke off from the main religious body in protest. (Konfession is German for denomination.) Bonhoeffer reminds us that there are people of conscience and moral courage in every nation. He is also a window into the institutional dynamics of church and state that both facilitated and hindered Hitler.

<https://fb.org/dietrich-bonhoeffer-and-the-confessing-church/>

First they came ... - Wikipedia

"First they came ..." is the poetic form of a post-war confessional prose by the German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984). It is about the cowardice of German intellectuals and certain clergy—including, by his own admission, Niemöller himself—following the Nazis' rise to power and subsequent incremental purging of their chosen targets, group after group. Many variations and adaptations in the spirit of the original have been published in the English language. It deals with themes of persecution, guilt, repentance, and personal responsibility.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_they_came...

September 2021

Stewardship

The conference dean provided information on support to Afghan Allies:

Afghan Allies write up

First, I use "Afghan Allies" to mirror the refugee resettlement agencies use. Afghan residents have arrived to the U.S. on a variety of immigration statuses to the U.S. and using the term "refugee" denotes a particular immigration status in the U.S. that is not accurate for all of them. Also, using the term "allies" helps people remember that the folks arriving have been supportive of and connected with the U.S. military. They have been vetted.

While many may arrive to Fort McCoy, they do not have to stay there. Many have friends and family already in the U.S. Those on Special Immigrant Visas have a pathway to permanent residency and citizenship, if they want it. Many others arriving directly from Afghanistan on humanitarian parole will have to complete their applications for asylum in the U.S. They, in particular, have a gap in receiving public assistance provided to those with vetted refugee status or Special Immigrant Visas. Those arriving on refugee status are not coming directly from Afghanistan, but from a third country. All will be connected with services from refugee resettlement offices in some way, who help to find housing, employment and other support.

In webinars with Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service (LIRS) and the WI Council of Churches, they said that financial assistance is the primary need right now to help with housing and providing other immediate assistance. LIRS noted that they expect many Afghans to relocate to DC, PA, WA and TX and are focusing their efforts there.

They encouraged any interested volunteers or congregations to register on the LIRS website, because there will be some who stay in other states, like WI. The WI LIRS affiliate is the Lutheran Social Service office in Milwaukee. [LIRS video here](#); [WI Council of Churches & LSS of WI here](#).

I know many of you want to help. If you want to donate financially at this time, I suggest [lsswis.org](#) or [lirs.org](#). Fort McCoy cannot solicit any direct support. Watch Fort McCoy's Facebook page for updates about where they are directing people to donate - <https://www.facebook.com/FtMcCoy>.

Rev. Elizabeth Bier

she/her/hers ([why list my pronouns](#))

I cannot in good conscience ask this parish to contribute to the Afghans. The administration proposes \$6.5 billion for this population when the country is already on the verge of default. Only 3% are S.I.V. When concerns were raised about proper vetting,

[Evers: GOP concerns over Afghan refugees 'dog whistle crap'](#)

Later, [Two Fort McCoy Afghan refugees charged with child sex, spousal abuse crimes at Fort McCoy](#)

The experience of the influx of Afghans into Europe in 2015 should be instructive as sex crimes were committed by Afghan men.

[CORTES: Mass Migration Was Never Part of America's \\$2 Trillion Afghan Debacle](#)

The attitudes of the president and governor seem to suggest that they care less about the welfare of their people than they do with a larger agenda. As for the larger invasion, 400,000 are expected to enter into this country from the southern border in October. This administration is cynically following the directives of George Soros Open Society to undermine national sovereignty. In addition, the administration is trying to buy future votes at the expense of the nation. These caravans also wreak havoc in Latin America.

Gaining votes seems to be the method of operation [Dems secret booty for left: Billions hidden in \\$3.5 trillion bill to tilt election scale](#)

[The Democrats' \$3.5 trillion social-engineering bill pushed by President Biden and Nancy Pelosi is called Build Back Better. It should be called Building a Political Scam.] as recipients of grants will be community organizing groups with little financial accountability but with the expectation to get out the vote at election time. The question can be asked as to why a president would do this to his own people. While vice president, the now president spoke of the Great Replacement as "an unrelenting stream of immigration, non-stop, non-stop..." [User Clip: Joe Biden Admits Great Replacement is Real - C-Span](#)

In addition, a look behind the scenes at a chief benefactor for the party reveals a reason for the move to the left:

[Soros is at it Again Lobbying for \\$3.5 Trillion Spending Spree](#)

Not all in the party agree with these open borders:

[Obama says open borders are 'unsustainable' and calls for immigration reform](#)

The 42nd president received a standing ovation for his state of the union address on stopping illegal immigration.

[Bill Clinton on Illegal Immigration at 1995 State of the Union](#)

[Immigration - The White House](#) The Clinton Administration has made the strongest commitment to fighting *illegal immigration* in history.

[Identity](#)

This country is seeing a decline in Christianity and an incline in the Cult of coronavirus

[New York Declares State of Emergency as Vaccine Mandate Chaos Looms](#)

[Vision](#)

The task force exploring concerns about the ELCA will be looking at the vision and values of the congregation and seeing whether they align with the vision and values of the ELCA.

Two areas of divergence that I see are as follows:

-Defenders and Accommodators. Defenders of liberty and accomodaters to the rise of authoritarianism

This congregation resumed in-person services of worship on 6/24/2020 following the spirit of the psalmist who said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." (Psalm 122:1) while the Office of the Bishop argued for lockouts, lockdowns, masks, social distancing, and now vaccine apartheid. Then the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering enacted vaccine apartheid.

[Update regarding the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering \(September 2021\)](#)

After much prayer and consideration, Gathering leadership have decided to require full COVID-19 vaccination or proof of a negative test result (likely 72 hours before arrival) to attend the 2022 Gathering, MYLE, and the tAble.

The irony of the theme [ELCA Youth Gathering "BOUNDLESS – God beyond Measure"](#)

Evidently, 1 Corinthians 12 will not be part of the Bible study

I talked with my acupuncturist in Rice Lake, and she related on the one hand older relatives with COPD who survived. She said, "If they can survive, others can as well." On the other hand, she related the stories of young people in the area who suffered serious impairments such as Guillain-Barre syndrome a rare disorder in which your body's immune system attacks your nerves. She said she would not take the job and focuses on making her immune system as strong as possible.

[Why are we vaccinating children against COVID-19?](#) Highlights • Bulk of COVID-19 per capita deaths occur in elderly with high comorbidities. • Per capita COVID-19 deaths are negligible in children.

There is no way I could ask youth to take the job after reading the tragic stories of young people suffering vaccine injuries.

[Athlete Who Recovered From COVID Facing 'Very Different Future' After Second Dose of Pfizer Vaccine Triggers Myocarditis](#)

[Boys more at risk from Pfizer jab side-effect than Covid, suggests study](#)

US researchers say teenagers are more likely to get vaccine-related myocarditis than end up in hospital with Covid

[Investigation: Deaths among Teenage Boys have increased by 63% in the UK since they started getting the Covid-19 Vaccine according to ONS data](#)

[Investigation: Deaths among Teenagers have increased by 47% in the UK since they started getting the Covid-19 Vaccine according to official ONS data](#)

[13 reasons why you should not allow your child to get the Covid-19 Vaccine](#)

The vaccine mandate for children and youth is unnecessary and dangerous, and I am most disappointed to hear churchwide taking this stance. I think the following medical release would have been more beneficial and less draconian: "I also understand and accept any and all responsibility if my child, or members of our family, become ill from Covid-19 due to an exposure at this event."

https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cloversites.com/0a/0a854394-3a19-4d9f-b1ae-f93021508921/documents/2021_health_release.pdf

[Using Herd Immunity Excuse for Gene Therapy Vaccine on Kids](#)

-Non-partisan and partisan

The Congregation Council made it clear they do not wish a pastor to use the office to push a political agenda.

The Conference Dean through the Wisconsin Council of Churches invited the governor to give a press conference at the church to bribe people with \$100 to get the jabs. The Office of the Bishop justified vaccine apartheid with

If you are NOT vaccinated please do not come to this event for your own safety and for the safety of others.

In my mind executive mandates have moved from medical to political,

With 50% of its overall budget and 75% of its drug-testing budget coming from industry, the FDA long ago won its notoriety as the most corrupt and pliable of all federal agencies. Now, the White House has torn away its last shred of integrity by ordering top regulators to put politics before science. ~ Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

as the chief executive once promised he would never impose vaccine mandates and now wants to fine companies \$70,000 for an employee refusing to be vaccinated. Those who push vaccine apartheid can no longer claim the high ground.

My take on the vaccine mandates for the military is that the administration is carrying out an ideological purge of the ranks and the president orders a dishonorable discharge for 46% of the troops who refuse vaccine stripping them of benefits. If the office of bishop is taking its signals from the administration, this arc of decisions may not end well.

For the office of bishop, on the one hand, to justify a vaccine apartheid, and, on the other hand, extol Black Lives Matter demonstrates a disconnect as articulated by a NYC BLM leader:

[Black Lives Matter of Greater New York leader blasts vaccine mandates as racist and disrespectful](#)

Speaking of the WCC, the 9/10/2021 call to action degraded those who object to a certain way of teaching race relations by name calling them "the forces of white supremacy and racism."

Sep 10, 2021, 11:34 AM

Around the country, the forces of white supremacy and racism are confronting school boards, demanding they prevent teaching the true history of racism, slavery, sexism, and violence against marginalized communities that is part of the founding of our country.

At the 9/20 staff meeting, I brought up the ELCA Youth Gathering, the Fall Ministry Retreat, and the Wisconsin Council of Churches actions to see what their responses might be. The Minister of Faith Formation and Parish Secretary were mortified at the thought of forcing children and youth to get the jabs. Also, they felt that the WCC use of "the forces of white supremacy and racism" were demeaning. If and when the Bishop, Synod Minister, and Conference Dean are invited to answer questions, the three will be able to lay out their vision and values for the life of the church and make their case why such measures are in the best interests of congregations. Say no to abortions and eugenics - The Minister of Faith Formation emailed me while I was on vacation to ask about a request for a baptism 10/17. I emailed back saying the date would work. Two days later I read an article about women who had received the jab who were experiencing miscarriages.

[Study Shows That Up To 8 In 10 Women Had A Miscarriage After Getting the Covid Vaccine Before The Third Trimester](#)

When I came back, I related this article to her, and she told of talking to the woman who cooks for the COME meal who told about various women she talked to who experienced changes in their menstrual cycles after getting the jabs. In good conscience, I could not during the announcements both commend the baptismal party and encourage folks to get vaccinated.

[People Injured by COVID-19 Jab Share Their Horror Stories](#)

Leadership

Leaders can look at the present precarious situation with a sense of perspective.

[Historian Ken Burns: US is in a crisis at the level of Civil War, the Depression, and World War II](#)

One crisis after another seems to verify the prediction of

[The Fourth Turning: What the Cycles of History Tell Us About America's Next Rendezvous with Destiny](#)

Last comes a Crisis—the Fourth Turning—when society passes through a great and perilous gate in history. and the prediction of

[Fate of Empires and the Search for Survival](#)

The impression that it will always be automatically rich causes the declining empire to spend lavishly on its own benevolence, until such time as the economy collapses, the universities are closed and the hospitals fall into ruin. It may perhaps be incorrect to picture the welfare state as the high-water mark of human attainment. It may merely prove to be one more regular milestone in the life story of an ageing and decrepit empire. (Page 18)

(d) The stages of the rise and fall of great nations seem to be: The Age of Pioneers (outburst) The Age of Conquests The Age of Commerce The Age of Affluence The Age of Intellect The Age of Decadence. (e) Decadence is marked by: Defensiveness Pessimism Materialism Frivolity An influx of foreigners The Welfare State A weakening of religion. (f) Decadence is due to: Too long a period of wealth and power Selfishness Love of money The loss of a sense of duty. (Page 24)

<http://people.uncw.edu/kozloffm/glubb.pdf>

The president campaigned on being the great unifier who would bring people together but has acted as the great divider in being the designated standard bear for a hostile takeover according to the global agenda Build Back Better of the World Economic Forum.

[Fauci Has no Answer why to Force People Who Had Covid to Vaccinate](#)

[This is How Tyranny is Created – Little by Little](#)

The legacy of leaders is often determined during times of crises. I want to be on the right side of history. Resistance is not futile.

Other

A husband and wife and their adult son, all who had received the jabs, came down with the respiratory virus. According to the wife and mother, her husband suffered a "widow maker" heart attack after his arteries clogged to 99%. He was placed on a ventilator but died after a week. The son, who was at one time a career military suffered a stroke a few years back and then received a heart transplant. He was placed in a hospital with a ventilator to help his breathing.

A member related that a medical staff related to her that blood clots may result from the jabs, although this member refused to believe that the jabs were responsible for the heart attack.

[Visual Display of How mRNA Vaccine Affects Cells](#)

We need to continue to tell the truth and witness to the value of vaccinations. Get vaccinated. It is the right thing to do.

Message from Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson 9/14/2021

To use the weight of the office of the bishop to advance one's ideological position and to use faith terms such as "truth" "witness" and "right" is in my mind an overreach of the office. Such a statement becomes polarizing in suggesting that those with an alternative narrative are not telling the truth. Science at its best encourages curiosity and debate. Such a statement perpetuates the cult of the coronavirus and the dogmatism of scientism and indirectly contributes to the decline of the credibility of Christianity.

I am relieved that I did not encourage folks to get vaccinated as I would not want to be indirectly influential in a possible vaccine injury or death. The following article offers an alternative narrative to the "pandemic of the unvaccinated." and suggests that encouraging folks to get vaccinated at this point is counter-productive

[Joe Biden You Are Forcing People To Take A Vaccine Against A Virus That Is Extinct](#)

and may only make matters worse. If folks are to be encouraged to get the vaccine, I suggest that there be a qualifier that people should consult with a medical professional. Getting vaccinated may not be the right thing to do. The vaccine mandates go against science [Who Should not Get Vaccinated | CDC](#) and become draconian based on an ideological position.

A regular attendee at Riplinger did not come one Sunday because it was said she came down with COVID-19 even though she received the jabs. Getting shots neither prevents infection nor prevents spreading the infection. Evidently, the effectiveness wanes and boosters are needed. [Waning immunity of the BNT162b2 vaccine - medRxiv](#)

In my mind, those faith leaders who encourage folks to get vaccinated would do well to consider the ethical complications.

[Is COVID-19 a Bioweapon?: A Scientific and Forensic Investigation](#) by [Dr. Richard M. Fleming](#) (Author)

Tragic stories like the following can happen to those pressured to take the jab: [Jessica Wilson Obituary\(1983 - 2021\) - Seattle, WA](#)

The numbers of people injured are getting too big to ignore

[People Injured by COVID-19 Jab Share Their Horror Stories](#)

[Sen. Ron Johnson with families on adverse reactions to COVID vaccine | FOX6 News Milwaukee](#)

[PART 1: Federal Govt HHS Whistleblower Goes Public With Secret Recordings "Vaccine is Full of Sh*t"](#)

[Johnson & Johnson: Children Don't Need the 'F*cking' COVID Vaccine Because There Are 'Unknown Repercussions Down the Road'](#)

[... Want to 'Punish' Unvaccinated Adults and Turn Them Into 'Second-Grade Citizens' for Not Complying with Mandates](#)

In my mind, faith leaders would do well to look at both the past and the future rather than simply the immediate present.

[Vaccine Awareness Week 2021 Discussion Between Barbara Loe Fisher and Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

[Barbara Loe Fisher - President and Co-founder - LinkedIn](#)

Faith leaders who function as state actors could take a lesson from history to hear how a previous empire turned on Christians.

[Is Biden Acting Like a Tyrant? | Armstrong Economics](#)

This country could gain some sanity by looking at the Scandinavian countries

[Kim Iversen: Norway DROPS All Restrictions and Chooses to Live with COVID - YouTube](#)

Kim Iversen makes the case that the U.S. should learn to live with COVID-19 as an ever-present endemic disease.

[Sweden becomes third Nordic country to lift COVID restrictions](#)

and abandon the present insanity of restrictions and mandates.

October 2021

[Vision](#) – The flash point for **A task force**—is being formed to research the current policies and practices of the ELCA and how it aligns with our principles. People on the task force will need internet access. If you are interested in serving, contact Pam Hardrath

[715-507-0549](#) came from a member who attended the Lay School of Ministry but dropped out because she objected to what she perceived as the politicization by the presenters no matter the subject. My perspective is that I remember my first quarter at Luther Seminary in 1975 when I took an elective on Martin Luther from Dr. Warren Quanbeck. I learned about how Luther objected to the abuses of the church, how he emphasized being saved by grace, and how he spoke of concern for the neighbor as faith active in love. Quanbeck was at that time a dialogue partner with the Roman Catholic Church. I came to realize that the Lutheran church at its best lives in creative tension and can dialogue with others on various places on the spectrum. I am concerned that the ELCA is losing the center by adopting the perspective of the cultural left and the blue party. It used to be that the religious right was known for its love-it-or-leave-it litmus test on certain subjects. Now it seems that the religious left is becoming known for its own list. This move seems to be a reincarnation of Walter Rauschenbusch an American theologian and key figure in the Social Gospel movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. [Wokeness: old religion in a new bottle](#) – "One person who has long been exploring the religious fervour of today's increasingly moralistic politics is the essayist and author Joseph Bottum. Indeed, his 2014 book, *An Anxious Age: The Post-Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of America*, seems almost prophetic. There he argued that the demise of traditional Protestantism in the US has led liberals to transfer their religious beliefs, habits and passions into the political realm, moralising it in the process. Our age of 'post-Protestantism', he concludes, has eroded the boundary between the religious and the political, infusing politics with a religious mindset and discourse." In the Great Awakening, original sin and salvation are redefined in anthropocentric terms. When the love-or-leave-it undertone of woke moralizing becomes increasingly strident, people are driven away.

The party in power wants to change the geopolitical landscape to buy votes by being the benefactor to make newcomers beholden. This party in turn has become beholden to their benefactor George Soros and his push for open borders. Corporations want cheap labor and elimination of labor unions. The cultural left wants to assuage their white guilt and atone for the original sin of racism while at the same time to act in a self-righteous manner and vilify those who disagree as white supremacists and racists. The party in power is attempting a hostile takeover to embrace European socialism and centralized power. Part of the core ideology is open borders similar to what Germany did in 2015. According to the presiding bishop, these open borders evidently are not open enough, as in [Presiding Bishop Eaton urges humane treatment of Haitian migrants and others](#), she states, "This rapid expulsion of Haitians, back to Haiti and to other countries, is not a responsible or humane migration-management strategy." when the reality is [War News Updates: U.S. Border Crisis Worsens. Most Haitian Migrants Are Being Freed Rather Than Flown Back To Haiti As Claimed By The White House](#) [Daily Mail: Catch and release: Biden makes mockery of his pledge to send home Haitian migrants by RELEASING thousands into America with just 1,000 deported since Sunday. So why should they stop coming?: Planeloads of underage migrants are being flown secretly into suburban New York in an effort by President Biden's administration to quietly resettle them across the region. The Post has learned. and there is no acknowledgement of the](#) magnitude of the national security and humanitarian crisis [from these massive](#)

[caravans](#). Panama's foreign minister, Erika Mouynes, warned that there are more than 65,000 mostly Haitian illegal aliens ready to head north through Latin America.

<https://www.contrareplica.mx/nota-Advierten-de-otra-caravana-migrante-de-mas-de-65-mil-personas-hacia-EEUU-202129919>

[At the same time](#) precautions are made for the president [DHS pays over \\$455K to build 'security fencing' around Biden's beach home](#) Citizens may favor generosity but also want sustainability. Citizens do not stand for hypocrisy. What is bothersome is the marked difference by churchwide leadership in response to the dangers posed by the virus and those posed by open borders. Danger/Safety of the virus is used to justify lockouts, lockdowns, social distancing, masks, vaccine apartheid, vaccine mandates. Churchwide leadership seemingly is unwilling to use the same Danger/Safety formula for the dangers posed by the willful violation of the administration to allow 1.7 million to enter through the end of September <https://www.justice.gov/archives/jm/criminal-resource-manual-1907-title-8-usc-1324a-offenses>. No mention is raised of unvetted and unfettered invasions that invariably include such social ills as crime, gangs, drugs, sex trafficking, human trafficking, slave trade. Such unwillingness by churchwide leadership seems to me to be a case of an attempt to deal with white guilt by trying to atone for the original sin of racism. I have traveled to Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cuba (2X), Peru, Bolivia, Columbia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Philippines on a combination of travel seminars with Augsburg Center for Global Education and LWR as well as personal travel, so I have some idea of why people may want to enter this country, and I appreciate the work of LWR to accompany people in other countries to improve their way of life to remain in place, but I think any healthy system needs to establish good boundaries. The border patrol has been reduced to hotel clerks. I would like to see a sustainable system of vetting admissions to this country instead of caravan invasions, but I do not see that happening with such a self-serving party in power buttressed by the cultural and religious left. For those who feel an obligation to receive Afghans, Europe may experience a mass migration: ['Just give us our money': Taliban push to unlock Afghan billions abroad](#) As for this country, Newsletters | Representative Tom Tiffany October 29, 2021 states, "According to one recent report, [only around 1,000](#) of the more than 116,000 Afghans airlifted out of Afghanistan held "Special Immigrant Visas" – the documents given to those who assisted the American war effort as translators and linguists. I have been warning about the danger of unvetted Afghans slipping passed overwhelmed immigration officials, and the need to require *all* screening to be *fully completed* in safe third countries before any evacuee is admitted to the United States. Unfortunately, that hasn't happened, and we've seen the consequences – including the admission of a [previously convicted rapist](#) to the U.S., reports of [domestic violence and sexual assaults](#) on young boys by Afghan men at Fort McCoy, a brutal [attack on a female U.S. service member](#) at Fort Bliss by a group of evacuees, and the [alleged rape of a woman](#) by an Afghan national in Montana. We've also seen [outbreaks of communicable diseases](#) at facilities housing Afghan nationals in Montana."

[Will the ELCA be Gone in 30 Years? - Faith+Lead](#) "Sep 5, 2019 — According to projections from the (ELCA), the church will basically cease to exist within the next generation by the year 2050." I cannot see the life cycle extending beyond 2040. My intent is to act in such a way that I will end up on the right side of history with Luther and Bonhoeffer being my inspiration for the present.

[Mission](#) – Community meal was changed from carry-out to in-person. I was not consulted. Food items being collected for food pantry. [Leadership](#) – Leadership became at odds with the former pastor over the recommended restrictions in the summer of 2020, and she left hurriedly to take another call where she agreed to lead in-person services of worship but insisted on a mask mandate. The son of the Minister of Faith Formation postponed his wedding until after she left. I officiated at the wedding on the 15th and, when the grandmother was asked how the wedding went, the organist not given to hyperbole, said, "Super!" If I had insisted on taking the recommendation of sheltering in place starting 11/16/2020, I believe the process to seek to terminate the relationship with the ELCA would have started much sooner. If I had pushed the plan by the DEM for her to speak by Zoom as she sheltered in place to a combined council of Spencer, Ripplinger, and Unity gathered at Spencer in the youth room in February, I do not think it would have gone well. The Spencer council decided to meet as Executive Committees without the benefit of pastors. As it turns out, it is fortunate Unity did not join the parish as there may have been a risk of 3 congregations choosing to terminate their relationship. If I had insisted in September of 2021 on convening in the parking lot, social distancing, and wearing masks, I believe such a move would have accelerated the process to terminate. The Unity pastor got caught in a hard place between the recommendations and the congregation. She wanted out of the congregation and enlisted the DEM to try to make that happen. From what I can gather, the pastors at Ogema and Medford left under duress after short tenures. I went to a Fall Party on the 9th at my neighbor next door who is a nurse at the hospital. She invited her nurse friends. I ended up talking to a husband (retired airline pilot and former Air Force service member) of one of the nurses who related that they attended Trinity in Spooner. He objected strenuously to the mask mandate but to no avail. The assembly convened outdoors as long as possible. He asked me, and I responded matter-of-factly so as to not undermine the pastor. I did not tell him I served there briefly for a bridge interim. It is hard enough to involve men in the life of the church the way it is, and such mandates do not help especially with men. The chair of the call committee at Spencer and a leader of a men's Bible study talks about the difficulty of getting men involved in a church that is becoming increasingly feminized. Many men in the fight/flight choice simply choose to walk away. Any new ELCA pastor would find themselves in a difficult bind between the two opposite visions.

-The former mayor of Chicago Rahm Emanuel stated, "Never let a crisis go to waste." My intents are to protect individual freedoms rather than frighten people with an invisible enemy such as a virus, and then capitalize on that fear, saying that this new system is necessary because the pandemic destroyed the old system and then depend on authorities for protection from the virus and use fear to keep people from living what was once considered a normal life. An opinion piece from Newsweek [How Fauci Fooled America | Opinion \(msn.com\)](#) written by doctors from Harvard and Stanford shows how many were fooled. 2 Timothy 1:7ff God has not given us the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power, of courage and resolution, to meet difficulties and dangers; the spirit of love to him, which will carry us through opposition.

And the spirit of a sound mind, quietness of mind. The Holy Spirit is not the author of a timid or cowardly disposition, or of slavish fears.

-Learnings from serving a two-point parish in 2009 when one congregation chose to terminate its relationship with the ELCA.

[Listen](#) It was important to me to listen not only to the presenting matters but to the issues below and behind. Some of the members felt betrayed that the Churchwide Assembly would go against deeply held beliefs. [Calm](#) It was important for me to remain calm and to remember that anger directed against me reflected a broader anger at a churchwide many members felt to be in moral decline. [Civil](#) Going along with the above two, it was important for me to urge people to speak and act in a civil manner. [Boundaries](#) It was important for me to confront the patriarch of the congregation determined to disaffiliate when he called up people from the other congregation urging them to consider disaffiliating. I told him that it was one thing to urge people in his congregation to disaffiliate but it was another thing to urge people in the other congregation to disaffiliate as well. In the end, I took comfort in that at least one of the congregations chose to continue its affiliation with the synod and churchwide. [Promote](#) It was important for me to make the argument that congregations can do more together than alone, rather than advancing an argument defending the decisions of the churchwide

assembly. I did so in announcements and sermons, bulletins and newsletters, as well as bringing in special speakers on Companion Synod, Lutheran Social Services, and the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, as well as a son of the other congregation studying at one of the ELCA seminaries. In the end, I thought the congregation may choose to continue its affiliation with the Bible Camp, Lutheran Social Services, and Lutheran World Relief even if it chose to disaffiliate from the synod and the churchwide. *Process* It was important for me to insist that due process be followed. So, when a member of the Congregation Council sent an email to the church secretary asking that an announcement be included in the bulletin that there would be a meeting at her home to discuss disaffiliating, I said that such a meeting was inappropriate and that everything should be out in the open. In consultation with the synod staff, it was finally determined that the best that could be done was to allow the congregation to disaffiliate with a minimum of acrimony as long as the congregation followed the constitutional provisions. *Constitution* The 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly made changes in the model constitution for congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America based on lessons learned from the disaffiliations.

November 2021

Preaching

-On the 14th I preached from 2nd reading on Hebrews 10:11-25 on 3 exhortations to approach, hold fast, and consider. I called attention to exhortation "not neglecting to meet together" and thanked them taking part in the gathered assembly in this age when some are hesitant to do so.

-I gave the history of Christ the King Sunday on the 21st: "Pope Pius XI established Christ the King Sunday in 1925 to counter what he regarded as the destructive forces of the modern world: secularism in the west and the rise of communism in Russia and fascism in Italy and Spain, harbingers of the Nazism soon to seize Germany. Pope Pius intended to oppose the rule of Christ to the totalitarian claims of these ideologies." <https://www.lutheranforum.com/blog/2017/11/11/the-not-so-ancient-origins-of-christ-the-king-sunday> and then suggested such a Sunday is important today with the increase of secularism and rise of authoritarianism.

Governance

-The chair of the Congregation Council at Spencer and the Minister of Faith Formation gave a presentation after the service of worship at Riplinger on the 7th. They told how they believe that certain churchwide and synod values are no longer in line with their own. The chair gave two reasons for seeking to terminate: She did not like the message from churchwide that, if a person does not take the jobs, they do not love their neighbors. She objected to the sanctuary movement where she said congregations are encouraged to help people escape deportation. She said, "Pastor Bolstad is doing a good job, but we need our own pastor to grow." The Minister of Faith Formation said that after the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly she argued for staying with the ELCA when others wanted to terminate. She even served 2 terms on the synod council and spoke at a synod assembly. She said that, if she knew then what she knows now, she would have argued for terminating at that point. In her report, she specifically objects to the actions of the ELCA Pastor for Public Witness from Denver who headlines the national youth gatherings. [See attachment.]

-At the Spencer council meeting on the 9th, the Scoutmasters (who also serve as council chair and call committee chair) requested that the congregation sponsor the Boy Scout troop again for 2022. I brought up an article for consideration [BOY SCOUTS ANNOUNCE NEW CRITICAL RACE THEORY REQUIREMENT](#). "Scouting's latest required merit badge is chock-full of critical race theory concepts that will push the BSA further to the left." They said they were aware of these changes and just wanted to get a handful of boys through the next year with one completing requirements for Eagle Scout and then anticipated the troop would not continue beyond next year.

Stewardship

I put an article on Lutheran World Relief in the December newsletter: [We are investing in the recovery and future of Central America](#) "Over the long run, we believe these investments in the people and communities of Central America and beyond are the best measures for addressing the root causes of migration." Personally, I sent \$250 in a Christmas gift matching challenge to LWR.

Leadership

Particularly as more accounts come out, I am relieved that I refrained from encouraging members to get the jobs and telling them it was the right thing to do.

VACCINE TRIAL PARTICIPANT SPEAKS OUT <https://thehighwire.com/videos/vaccine-trial-participant-speaks-out/>
What MSM Will NOT Report - It's A Pandemic Of The Vaccinated, Numbers Of Deaths & Horrific Injuries Keep Increasing <https://odysee.com/@neverlosetruth:0/What-MSM-Will-NOT-Report---Pandemic-Of-The-Vaccinated,-Numbers-Of-Deaths---Horrific-Injuries-Keep-Increasing:e>

Connections

-I sent the following letters to the Wisconsin Council of Churches and received computer generated confirmations:
Fair and honest elections are crucial to representative democracy and, when there are irregularities, confidence in the election process is undermined. In order to restore trust in the election process, I urge you to promote the Legislative Audit Bureau Elections Administration Report <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/lab/media/3288/21-19full.pdf> "Appendix 7 Report Recommendations, by Chapter. We recommend staff of the Wisconsin Elections Commission report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by March 31, 2022, on their efforts to implement our report recommendations."

I applaud the action of

[Madison Catholic Diocese tells parishes not to hold COVID-19 vaccine clinics](#) Diocese spokesperson Brent King said the Diocese wants to maintain its "neutrality" on whether to get one of the vaccines approved for children and adults.

"The Diocese has not and will not wade into the polarizing and political environment surrounding this issue, especially as it could potentially pressure individuals to act against their consciences," King said in a statement.

and believe the WCC should adopt the same stance.

-I returned an unsolicited mail request for funds from the Salvation Army of Wausau by stating, "Please remove address. This church is not interested in your CRT agenda."

-After reading the tweet from a Milwaukee BLM activist, I am relieved that the BLM photo was taken down from the synod website. Nobody@TheNobody

Black Lives Matter activist Vaun L Mayes @YungLz at the scene of the Waukesha parade attack: "It sounds like the revolution has <http://ruamupr.com/wc/3212/13306/14204/14186,14204,14162.html> started," mentions hearing from a source who believes Darrell Brooks may have been motivated by the Kyle Rittenhouse verdict.

December 2021

Identity

My big picture frame of reference is influenced by [Socrates | Armstrong Economics](#) and [Blog | Armstrong Economics](#) [What is the Motive](#) Posted Dec 17, 2021 by Martin Armstrong While everyone argues over vaccines and who created COVID, all of these debates and questions dominate 99% of the online agenda. There is something SERIOUSLY missing and that simply the end goal and what is the motive... The **MOTIVE** is to default on all government debts and to hide their failure, Schwab is presenting this as you will own nothing and be happy because governments will erase all debt. Pension will be replaced by Guaranteed Basic Income.

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/international-news/politics/what-is-the-motive/>

The entire COVID Crisis has been created because governments are failing and they are using COVID to lockdown societies because their central banks are trapped.

[PRIVATE BLOG – The Economic Future From Here](#) Posted Nov 20, 2021 by Martin Armstrong

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/international-news/disease/the-who-whistler-blower-its-all-fake/>

This is the systematic decline and fall of Western Civilization and we will not be able to reverse this trend. We will simply have to crash and burn and the fight will be what kind of government we end up with post-2032.

<https://www.armstrongeconomics.com/world-news/sovereign-debt-crisis/pending-black-swan/>

In addition, I find Naomi Wolf, who wrote *The End of America: Letter of Warning to a Young Patriot*. [“Recent history has profound lessons for us in the U.S. today about how fascist, totalitarian, and other repressive leaders seize and maintain power, especially in what were once democracies. The secret is that these leaders all tend to take very similar, parallel steps. The Founders of this nation were so deeply familiar with tyranny and the habits and practices of tyrants that they set up our checks and balances precisely out of fear of what is unfolding today. We are seeing these same kinds of tactics now closing down freedoms in America, turning our nation into something that in the near future could be quite other than the open society in which we grew up and learned to love liberty,” states Wolf.], to be prescient in her warning that this country is entering a dangerous time eerily similar to 1933 Germany.

The following excerpt helps me to understand the psychology behind the COVID pandemic:

Desmet analyses how large-scale mass formation emerges in society when specific conditions are met—social isolation, the lack of meaning in life, free-floating anxiety, and frustration and aggression—all interacting to create a situation whereby society is extremely vulnerable to the rise of a totalitarian state.

<https://savageminds.substack.com/p/mattias-desmet>

I believe the church can provide social bonding, a sense of meaning and purpose, as well as alternatives to anxiety, frustration/aggression.

Call Process

-I brought the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) resolution to the Congregation Council at Spencer early on especially considering that their constitution includes clauses not to call a same sex pastor and for the installed pastor not to officiate at a same sex marriage. The council thought such a RIC resolution would be too controversial to bring forward to the congregation. I suggested that it might be more difficult to call a pastor with this stance and, if so committed, this stance should be included in the MSP. As it turns out, with rostered ministers being prodded to become socially conscious, those congregations that hold on to cultural traditionalism may be left behind and driven to affiliate with like-minded associations and networks, while those congregations who are open to such socially conscious pastors may stand a chance of calling a pastor. Evangelical, Osseo DAIRYLAND Call Accepted: Rev. David Hoadley. [David Hoadley - Associate Pastor - LinkedIn](#) I believe that God created us and gave us the command to love one another. As it is impossible for humans to know the mind of God, I choose to offer acceptance to all groups of people and support all kinds of love between two conscientious adult humans. I find it hard to picture God being upset at me for being too accepting.

I am sure there would have been an emergency meeting of the Spencer council to ask for my resignation if I had done the following:

[Chicago Lutheran Church hosts ‘Drag Queen Story Hour’ for Young Children](#)

A possible canary in a coal mine is the story of a Finnish Lutheran pastor, [In Case With Global Implications, Finland Puts Christians On Trial For Their Faith](#) Finnish Authorities: The Bible Is Hate Speech. Rasanen and Pohjola are being charged with “hate speech” for respectively writing and publishing a 24-page 2004 booklet that explains basic Christian theology about sex and marriage, which reserves sex exclusively for within marriage, which can only consist of one man and one woman, for life. The Finnish prosecutor claims centuries-old Christian teachings about sex “incite hatred” and violate legal preferences for government-privileged identity groups.

Other Matters

-Whereas, the WCC dismisses efforts for election integrity as voter suppression, I sent a letter to Wisconsin state representatives. The articles, [5 Takeaways From A New Review Of Wisconsin's Rigged 2020 Election](#) and *The Wisconsin Purchase: How Mark Zuckerberg’s millions and the Center for Technology and Civic Life turned Wisconsin blue in 2020*, provide background.

I urge you to support the resolution calling for the decertification of the results of Wisconsin’s 2020 presidential election and the resolution calling for members of the state elections commission and the nonpartisan state administrator of elections to resign, or else face efforts to remove them from office and criminally investigate their activities.

January 2021

Collegiality

I was prepared to register for the Winter Theological Event on Martin Luther King Jr. day only to find out

**All participants are required to be fully vaccinated and wear a mask to attend this event.*

I UNDERSTAND THAT I MUST BE FULLY VACCINATED AND MASKED TO ATTEND THIS EVENT:

The good thing for this parish is that the parish saved the reimbursement of the \$30 registration fee and \$120 in mileage.

At least the statement from the announcement for the fall ministry retreat **This is now a “pandemic of the unvaccinated.** was not included for this event to shame those who declined to accept the job. I wonder if it is only a matter of time before these attendees implement vaccine apartheid and mask mandates in their settings. I can only imagine the termination of individual memberships from their congregations that would occur as a result. If I had announced to these congregations on 1/16 that I would not be able to attend the 1/17 synod event because of vaccine apartheid, the case for termination would have become even stronger at the special Congregation Meetings at Riplinger on the 16th and at Spencer on the 23rd to terminate their relationship with the ELCA.

I would like to know from the Presiding Bishop how vaccine apartheid and mask mandates will help meet the [Goal](#) Share the story of Jesus and the ELCA by engaging with 1 million new people as we grow the church together.

I do not understand why this event did not abide by the WCC guidelines: [Churches Urged to Return to Physically Distanced Ministry](#) and use the same criteria as for WALKING TOGETHER & EPIC [UPDATE](#): This event will be changing from an in-person event to an online platform.

I believe I made the right decision by declining to get the jab but find it unfortunate that I have been othered for my personal choice. [Dr. Peter McCullough: The COVID shot is a form of 'bioterrorism,' its spike protein is 'pathogenic.'](#) 'You are about five times as likely to die of the vaccine than you are to take your risks with COVID-19,' McCullough said. Therefore, those who 'chose not to get the vaccine,' in fact 'made a smarter choice.'

[Over 1,000 studies published in peer-reviewed medical journals say the vaccines are dangerous](#) But the CDC says the *vaccines* are safe and effective and there is nothing to worry about. Seriously?

From my perspective, vaccine apartheid and mask mandates are not about health [Early indicators suggest omicron symptoms are mild, flu-like](#) but about the ideology to shun and leave behind those who do not agree to accept the experimental gene therapy as a part of the biggest human medical experiment in the history of the world. In light of the SCOTUS decision [Supreme Court Blocks Biden's Vaccine Mandate for Large Employers](#) I hope that there will be a pause for further consideration before expanding the vaccine mandate from synod ministers to rostered ministers. As for the mask mandate, the following articles are instructive

[Masks Don't Work](#) Instead, it can be said [Masks, the righteous flags of virtue signaling](#)

In light of MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY - January 17, 2022 and the Intercultural Development Inventory training at the event, as well as the CIVIL RIGHTS PILGRIMAGE January 22-26, 2022 the elephant in the room is that blacks are one of the most vaccine resistant of all ethnic groups and for good reason [History of abuses behind Black Americans' COVID-19 vaccine. No wonder many are wary of Covid-19 vaccines.](#)