



September Updates

**Wednesday Noon Live -
Vance Blackfox, ELCA Director
for American Indian Alaska
Native Tribal Nations**

Hunger - SNAP and the Child Tax Credit

Commemorating 9/11

Afghan Refugees in Tomah

Care for God's Creation



[Wednesday Noon Live](#) with Vance Blackfox

From Wednesday Noon Live Co-Host Pastor Andy Twiton: “I want to encourage you to check out this interview (link above) with Vance Blackfox, the new ELCA Desk Director for American Indian Alaska Native Tribal Nations.

Among the many topics covered, Vance shared his personal and professional experience of working for truth and healing regarding the lasting impacts of boarding schools in the U.S. In previous years, Vance served as Director of Communications and before that as President of the Board for the [National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition](#).

We talked about the request from the [ELCA American Indian/Alaska Native Lutheran Association](#) to remember the children by hanging an orange banner in our sanctuaries for 225 days. Vance encouraged us to go a step further by placing one outside too. The

text of that letter and background on the significance of the color orange can be found [HERE](#).

Vance also lifted up [Orange Shirt Day](#) and encouraged participation on September 30th.

Lastly, I wanted to share a link to this documentary that came up in the conversation. "[Native Nations - Standing Together for Civil Rights](#)" tells the story of Lutheran involvement with the American Indian Movement in the 60s and 70s."

Join us in discerning how best to integrate and respond to everything we learned from the interview.

Hunger



Federal unemployment benefits recently ended, impacting nine million Americans. The good news is that beginning in October, the government will use an updated formula to reflect rising costs for purchasing healthy groceries in SNAP benefits. This will be the largest single increase in SNAP's history.

Child Tax Credit: A new census report showed that just the first Child Tax Credit installment on July 15 slashed hunger rates in families with children by 25%. As part of the American Rescue Plan, the credit is predicted to reduce child poverty by 50% in the United States! By extending this credit beyond 2021, we could create a program that diminishes hunger for children the way Social Security has done for seniors. We are advocating for an extension of the tax credit (stay tuned for action alerts).

We also continue to make our handouts and posters available to help build awareness about the Child Tax Credit among those who are qualified but have not received their refundable credit and have not applied yet. We have documents on our website to use as handouts at locations such as food pantries, homeless shelters, or other locations: [Handouts and Posters](#)

We want to highlight that applying for the child tax credit will not impact a person's immigration status. Included on our website is a Spanish resource: *Crédito Tributario para Hijos de Padres No Contribuyentes*. You may want to print the one-page English handout on the back of the Spanish one for a handout.



Commemorating 9/11

We are approaching the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attack on 9/11/2001, which resulted in mass murder and mass trauma. In programs and articles, we may read of how those who survived are still haunted by the day; some also refer to the shared experience bringing them together.

Former bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod and DEM director for the ELCA, Rev. Stephen Bouman wrote, "At Ground Zero when the remains of a child of God would be found something remarkable would happen. All activity would cease. The pile would gentle down to silence. With bowed, uncovered heads everyone at Ground Zero would show their consummate respect for life as the remains would be lovingly brought out from the rubble. Let us remember, with bowed heads and respectful silence, the heroes, the servants, the extended act of giving which surrounded all of us."

All of us witnessed leaders from both sides of the political aisle grieving and consoling the nation together. However, in the weeks and months that followed 9/11, we witnessed Americans turning on one another. The need for unity in our country and world seemed urgent. Years later, divisions, conspiracy theories, and domestic terrorism have grown.

Knowing our need for compassion and unity, let us delve into our own spiritual traditions while reflecting on beautiful words from our neighbors' religions. The below passages were shared at an Interfaith Service of Remembrance at the Washington Cathedral on the 15th anniversary of 9/11:

The Buddhist Tradition: Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish: Buddha

Abandon evil doing. Practice virtue well. Master your own mind. This is the Buddha's teaching. Do not take lightly small misdeeds. Believing they can do no harm: Even a tiny spark of fire can set alight a mountain of hay. Do not take lightly small good deeds, believing they can hardly help: For drops of water one by one in time can fill a giant pot.

The Hindu Tradition Shrimad Bhagavatam: Canto 5, Chapter 18, Verse 9

May the entire universe be blessed with peace and hope. May everyone driven by envy and enmity become pacified and reconciled. May all living beings develop abiding

concern for the welfare of others. May our own hearts and minds be filled with purity and serenity. May all these blessings flow naturally from this supreme benediction: may our attention become spontaneously absorbed in the rapture of pure love unto the transcendent Lord.

The Sikh Tradition Jagat Jalanda Rakh Lai, Apni Kirpa Dhar

The world is on fire (due to avariciousness, ego, self-righteousness and possessiveness). O God, please save it with Your benevolence. Through whichever door one comes to you! Embrace them. The true Guru has revealed that those who meditate, and reflect on the Name of God are imbued with bliss. Without the Supreme Lord, says Nanak, There is no one to bless us with forgiveness. One who longs for all comforts and rewards should practice Truth...Do not cause any being to suffer, and you shall go to your true home with honor. Nanak speaks of the Purifier of sinners, the Creator, the Primal Being.

The Jewish Tradition: Avot DeRabbi Natan 4:5

Once Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was walking with Rabbi Yehoshua in Jerusalem and they saw the ruins of the Holy Temple that was destroyed by the Romans. Said Rabbi Yehoshua: "Alas for us that the Temple is destroyed - the only place in the world where we can find atonement with God!" Said Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai to him: "My son, do not be distressed. There is another way back to God that is just like the Temple. And what is that way? It is in Acts of Loving kindness, as it is written (Hosea 6:6) 'It is Love that I desire, not sacrifices.'"

The Muslim Tradition Holy Qu'ran Fatir 35:10 and Fussilat 41:34-35

In the Name of God, most gracious, most merciful. Lord, you said and your words are true: If any do seek for glory and power, to God belongs all glory and power. To him mount up all words of purity. He exalts all righteous deeds. But those that lay the plots of evil, for them is a terrible penalty; and the plotting of such will he not abide. Goodness and evil are not equal. Repel the evil with the good. Then will he between whom and you was hatred become as it were your friend and intimate. But no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune.

The Christian Tradition: Matthew 5:2-12a

Jesus began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven."

[Pastoral Guidelines for Inter-Religious Observances of 9/11](#) (ELCA 2021)

May our reflections on 9/11 and the history that followed lead us to deeper prayer and holy work.



Refugees

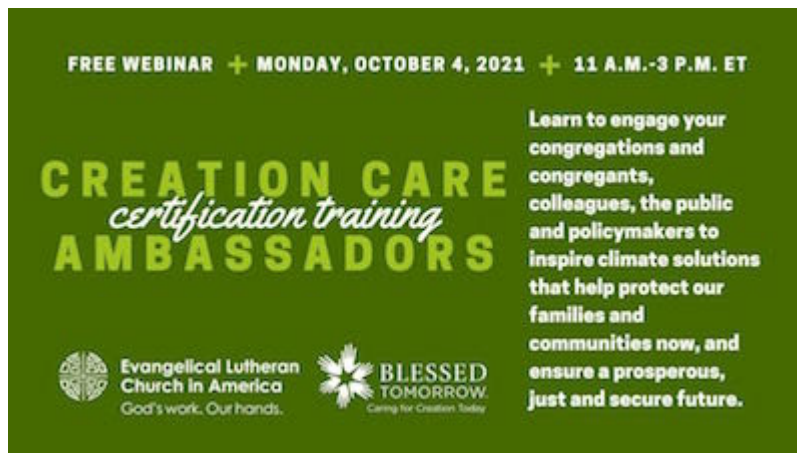
Just as we commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11, we have 1,000's of refugees from Afghanistan arriving in the U.S., many in our own backyard at Fort McCoy in Tomah. Too many have been tragically left behind. The state and social agencies are at the beginning stages of resettling the individuals and families. These are agencies you can contact to donate to and possibly volunteer for later:

- [Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service](#)
- and Upper MI (LSS) - partners with LIRS to do the hands-on work of resettlement. LSS anticipates resettling several hundred in Milwaukee in the days ahead. [Lutheran Social Services of WI](#)
- is directly helping Afghanis at Fort McCoy. They have need of various specific donations support refugees who arrived here with little or nothing. [Catholic Charities of LaCrosse](#)

[ELCA World Hunger Blog](#) (2020): Five Ways to Support Refugees and Migrants - Lutheran Disaster Relief

Care for God's Creation

If you are interested in future efforts to support DNR regulations that protect Wisconsin's water and land, please contact cindyc@loppw.org



With this training, join a cohort of certified Creation Care Ambassadors with the ELCA - able to engage your congregations and congregants, colleagues, the public and policymakers to inspire climate solutions that help protect our families and communities now, and ensure a prosperous, just and secure future - all rooted in our calling and unique voice as Lutherans.

Register today: <https://bit.ly/CreationCareAmbassadors211004>

As we witness and experience impacts from a changing climate on our health, livelihoods and communities, we are increasingly looking for guidance on solutions from people in our daily lives - including people of faith like you.

This training will equip you with the knowledge, hands-on experience and resources to speak and act confidently on climate change and solutions.

Learn more about Creation Care Ambassadors in the ELCA from <https://download.elca.org/ELC.../creationcareambassadors.pdf>

Read "Why Lutherans Care for Creation: Building on our foundations in the ongoing reformation of the church"

from https://download.elca.org/.../Why_Lutherans_Care_For...

Locate other Creation Care Ambassadors on the map from Lutherans Restoring Creation: <https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/map-of-lrc-care.../>

Thank you for taking time with us!