



Ecumenical and Inter-Religious NEWS

MAY 2021

May 7, 2021

Dear partners,

It has been two weeks since my second dose of the Pfizer vaccine. I still wear a mask everywhere I go, but I am smiling a lot more. Thank God for science.

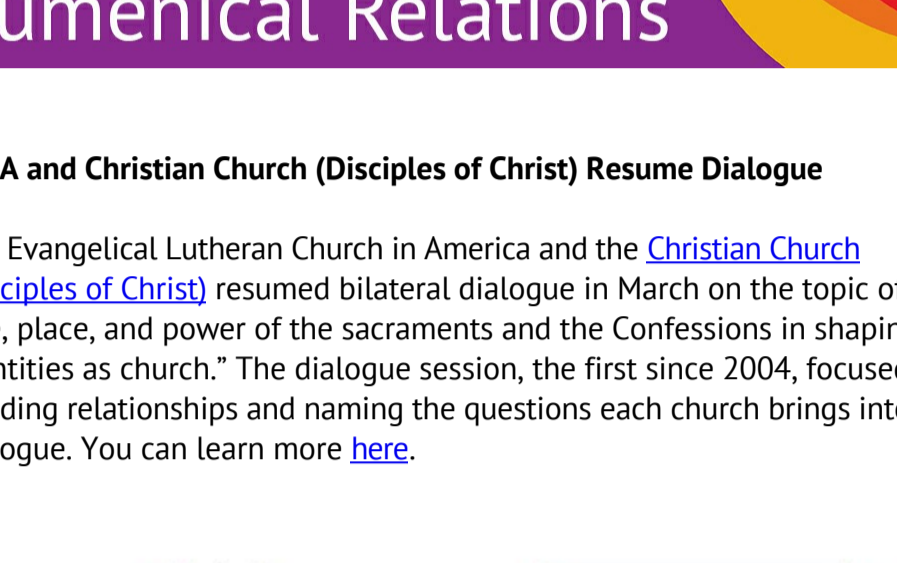
Across the country, religious leaders are joining public health and elected officials to advocate for and advance equitable distribution of these life-saving vaccines in the United States and globally. Through the multifaceted coalition [Faiths4Vaccines](#), the ELCA shares best practices and stories and receives tools to equip local leaders to play a part.

Faiths4Vaccines is effective because it galvanizes the social capital of religious communities while leveraging long-standing ecumenical and inter-religious partnerships. The coalition takes a multipronged approach, recognizing that some faith communities can offer their facilities as vaccine sites while others are able to counter vaccine hesitancy as a result of racialized health disparities and abuses, while still others are equipped to advocate for equitable distribution. What unites the coalition is the shared conviction of people of faith that vaccinations will help us resume the life in community for which we were created.

The vaccine site I visited was at a local community college. After receiving each of my two doses, I was directed to a waiting area. From there, I could see the National Guard efficiently carrying out their mission and nurses acknowledging their patients' hopes and fears while administering the vaccine. Watching this holy work gave me a booster of hope in humanity. As I got up to leave, I noticed the college's mission statement on the wall: "A community with equitable opportunity for growth and success." I felt a swell of emotion. What a fitting vocation for these times.

In hope,

Kathryn M. Lohre
Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations & Theological Discernment



@faiths4vaccines

faiths4vaccines.org

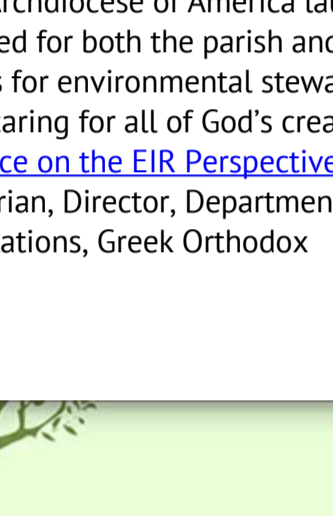
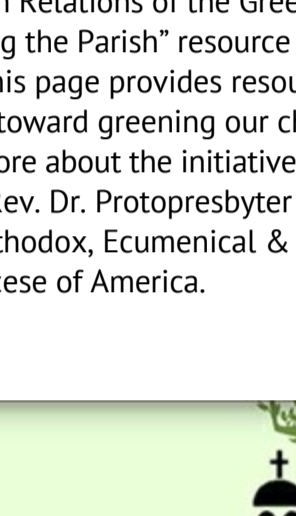
Love thy neighbor. Get vaccinated. | Faiths4Vaccines: A Multifaceted Movement

In this new [PSA video](#), some of our nation's most respected faith leaders, including Presiding Bishop Eaton, call people to love their neighbors by heeding public health guidance and getting vaccinated.

Ecumenical Relations

ELCA and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Resume Dialogue

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the [Christian Church \(Disciples of Christ\)](#) resumed bilateral dialogue in March on the topic of "the role, place, and power of the sacraments and the Confessions in shaping our identities as church." The dialogue session, the first since 2004, focused on building relationships and naming the questions each church brings into the dialogue. You can learn more [here](#).



The Orthodox Church Launches "Greening the Parish" Resource Page

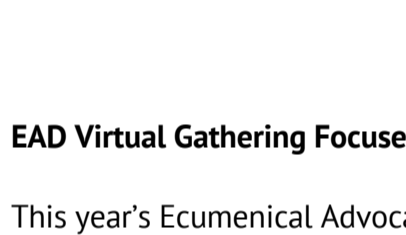
To mark Earth Day 2021, the Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Relations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America launched a "Greening the Parish" resource page. Designed for both the parish and the home, this page provides resource materials for environmental stewardship to work toward greening our churches and caring for all of God's creation. Learn more about the initiative from this [piece on the EIR Perspectives blog](#) by The Rev. Dr. Protopresbyter Nicolas Kazarian, Director, Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

New Emanuel Nine Worship Resources Available

In preparation for commemorating the martyrdom of the Emanuel Nine on June 17, the ELCA is sharing updated worship resources, now available for download at [ELCA.org/EmanuelNine](#). This includes several litanies by AME Senior Bishop Adam Richardson, Jr. There will be no national commemoration service in 2021; however, synods and congregations are encouraged to mark this day locally. Please email [worship@elca.org](#) if your synod or congregation is planning an online commemoration service that you wish to share with others.

NWCU Gathers Digitally, Abiding in the Love of Christ

The National Workshop on Christian Unity gathered digitally April 12-15 under the theme "Abide in My Love ... You Shall Bear Much Fruit," an echo of the 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity theme. The all-digital platform provided an opportunity for reimagining and expanding the workshop in new ways. Sessions centered on a variety of themes including Christian hospitality, creation care, confronting racism and responding to human migration. You can read a full overview of the workshop in [Kristen Opalinski's recent blog](#) on the EIR Perspectives blog.



"Bishops at the Border" Panel Discussion From the NWCU

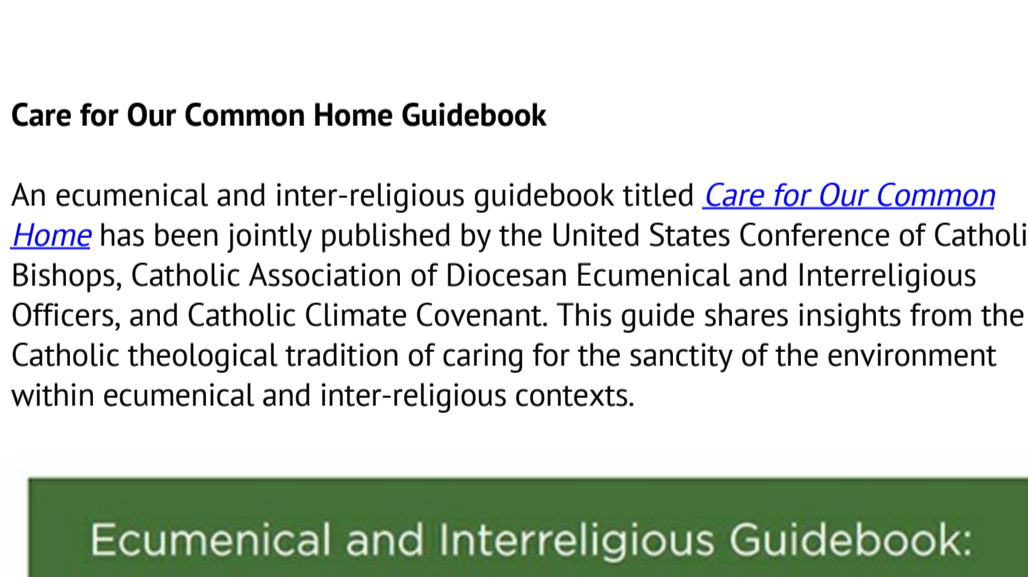
Bishop Sue Briner, ELCA Southwestern Texas Synod, and three other ecumenical partner bishops serving geographical areas along the southern border of the United States share insights into how churches are responding to the needs of immigrant communities.

EAD Virtual Gathering Focuses on Climate Justice

This year's Ecumenical Advocacy Days also made the transition to a fully digital experience. Participants gathered April 18-23 under the theme "Imagine! God's Earth and People Restored." Workshops tied together climate justice, racial inequity, migration, militarism and economic sustainability. This year's events concluded with a virtual lobby day to provide participants with the opportunity to advocate for climate justice with their state representatives. Learn more about EAD by [reading the Rev. Paul Benz's post](#) on the ELCA Advocacy blog.



Inter-Religious Relations



Intersections of Spirituality, Social Justice and Climate Change

Bishop Eaton joined a panel discussion on how and where spirituality, social justice and climate change intersect and overlap within and across various faith traditions. The conversation was hosted by Harvard Divinity School.

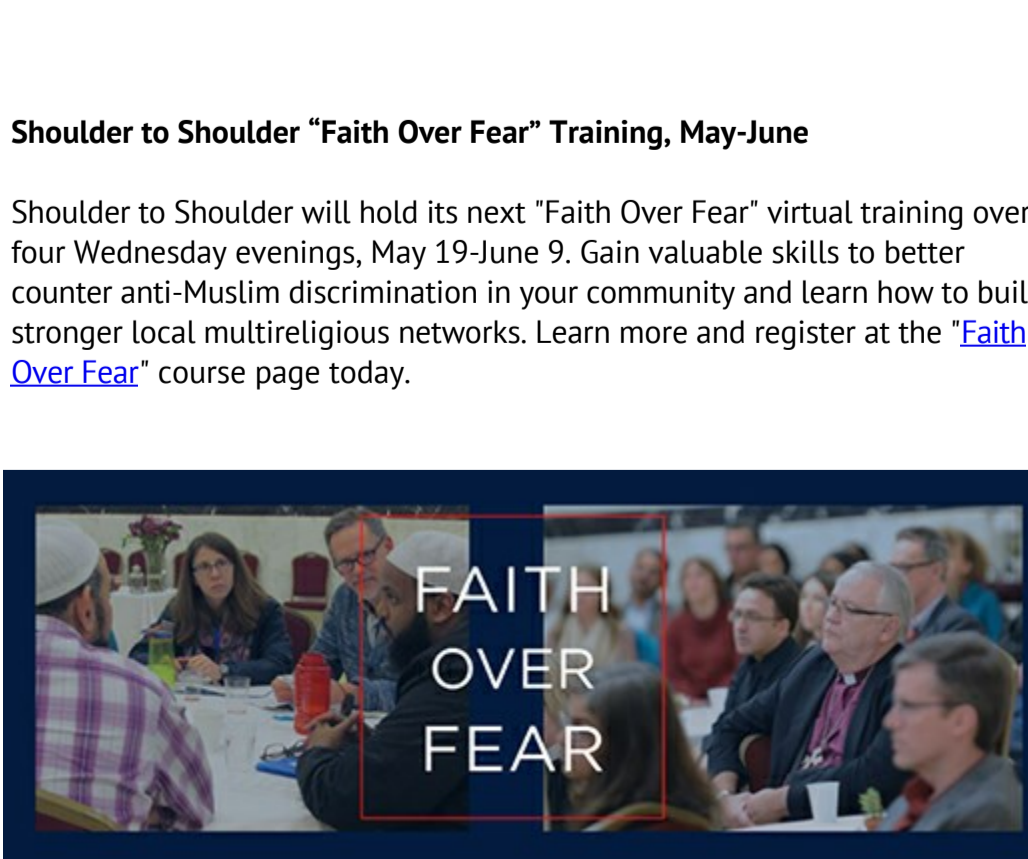
Care for Our Common Home Guidebook

An ecumenical and inter-religious guidebook titled [Care for Our Common Home](#) has been jointly published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Offices, and Catholic Climate Movement. This guide shares insights from the Catholic theological tradition of caring for the sanctity of the environment within ecumenical and inter-religious contexts.



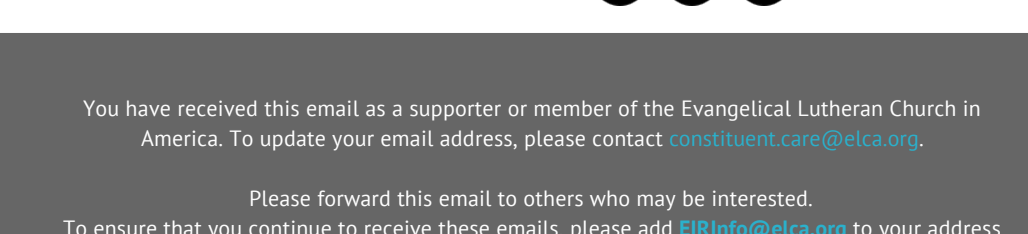
The Eighth Parliament of the World's Religions Will Go Virtual In 2021

Registration is now open for the [Eighth Parliament of the World's Religions](#), Oct. 17-18. This year's parliament will gather the world's global interfaith movement online to celebrate the enduring work of religious and spiritual communities striving toward a more just, peaceful and sustainable world. Early registration rates are available, along with student rates.



Shoulder to Shoulder "Faith Over Fear" Training, May-June

Shoulder to Shoulder will hold its next "Faith Over Fear" virtual training over four Wednesday evenings, May 19-June 9. Gain valuable skills to better counter anti-Muslim discrimination in your community and learn how to build stronger local-multireligious networks. Learn more and register at the ["Faith Over Fear"](#) course page today.



Download your copy of the [2021 LEIRN Annual Staff Report](#) today to learn more about ELCA ecumenical and inter-religious relations.

Subscribe to the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Perspectives blog today and let us know if there are events, projects or ministries that would make for a good story to share — email [EIRinfo@elca.org](#).

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