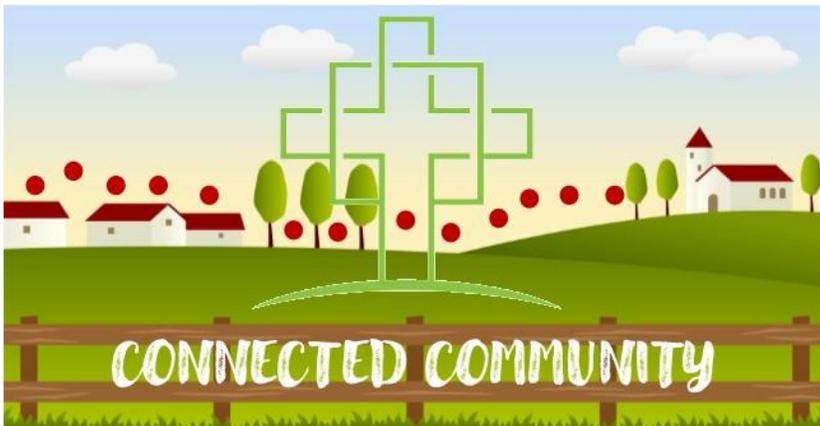


# WHAT MATTERS . . Connected Community

Special Edition . . . . . March 19, 2020

*News from Your Synod and Ministry Partners*

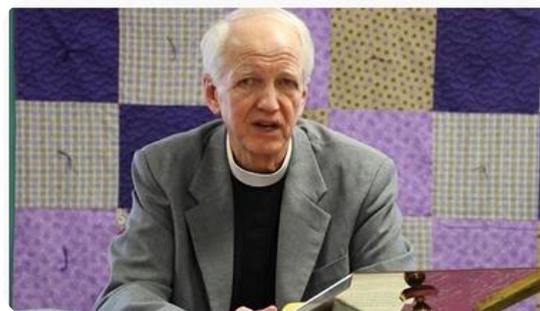
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA/6401 Odana Rd./Suite 20/Madison, WI 53719/(608)270-0201/www.scsw-elca.org



*This special edition of What Matters is dedicated to helping you stay connected to each other in your faith communities. To use the words of Pastor Mike Brown, Bethel (Madison), offered to his congregation, we are like the apostle Paul, outposts in God's kingdom and God will progress his mission through us during these turbulent times. So stay connected and stay tuned to What Matters for answers to your questions. Here we will address those questions that synod staff is receiving from you.*

## **Worship Moments in A Time of Disruption – Video Messages With Scripture Reading, Message and Prayers to Use in Your Settings from Bishop Rogness**

As we have had to stop our weekly Thursday worship in the Synod office, Bishop Rogness has recorded videos for the next three Sundays that follow the lectionary. These will be made available through the synod website on the **"CONNECTED COMMUNITY"** page that we have created. You might use these as your message for your on-line worship. You might also share them with your communities and invite people to stop in their day for a scripture reading, message and prayers. We're posting the first for this Sunday now and in the succeeding weeks, we will post them on Mondays. Whatever way you use them, may God bless your worship ministry and our walk together.



Bishop Rogness Offers Video Messages for Worship

### **LINK TO CONNECTED COMMUNITY PAGE:**

<https://scsw-elca.org/community/>

### **What do you need?**

Staff is comparing conversations that we are all having with the leadership in our synod and here are some of the questions and answers or opinions that we have shared. We thought they might be helpful to all.

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **What should we do about visitations?**

Because visits in homes, nursing homes and hospitals most often serve the sick and the elderly, the most vulnerable of all, we are consistently hearing that in person visits will desist. In some hospitals, only on site chaplains and in some cases end-of-life chaplains are only allowed to visit. In critical care scenarios in hospitals for example, only one person might be allowed in a 24 hour period and that is typically reserved for a spouse/family member. Before visiting a hospital or nursing home, you should call ahead. An alternative to in person visits is to call your people and with those with smart phones, you might also offer to facetime with them or Skype or Zoom via computer.

## What About Communion?

There are many different solutions being discussed, but what is the most faithful solution? It is our understanding that Bishop Eaton is crafting a letter that will be communicated this week. Bishop Rogness will refer to that in a letter he is writing. We will email all rostered leaders when those are available.

## What are other congregations doing for worship?

To our delight, our congregations are finding this to be an opportunity for creativity and to demonstrate agility. We have seen beautiful worship services that have been streamed live for all to tune in and worship together. They are as varied as our churches with music, message, prayers, single-pastor led to multiple leaders. We have posted links to those worship services on our website and will soon have a comprehensive list of future worship services that will be streamed with service times and dates.

<https://scsw-elca.org/healthresources/worship/>

Please send an email to Vicki Hanrahan @ [vickih@scsw-elca.org](mailto:vickih@scsw-elca.org) with your online worship dates and times for this purpose.

Do You Need



Training?

Our next Zoom Training to show you how to set up a Zoom Account and initiate a Zoom meeting will take place tomorrow, Friday at 1:30 pm.

To participate, click on the link to the meeting below.

Anyone may participate!

Synod staff member, Robyn Zimmerman will be your host.

LINK:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/269685547>

## How do I make use of Zoom and how can I teach our council members how to Zoom?

Robyn Zimmerman on our staff has been assisting Conference Deans on setting up meetings via Zoom. She is happy to help walk you through how to set those up and as a participant, how to get connected. The Synod has ordered additional Zoom accounts for this purpose.

To participate in a demonstration of how to set up a Zoom meeting,

Zoom offers video tutorials that are very helpful too:

<https://zoom.us/resources>

## What about the challenges we have in rural settings?

If you or for example one of your council members are in a rural setting with intermittent internet, you can also just dial into a conference call. There are many free services available to do that. Just Google Free Audio Conferencing. **On Zoom calls**, know that you can have some people connected via computer audio and some connected just with their phones.

## ASSIST SERVICE AND APPOINTMENTS ARE OFFERED THROUGH TELEHEALTH COUNSELING

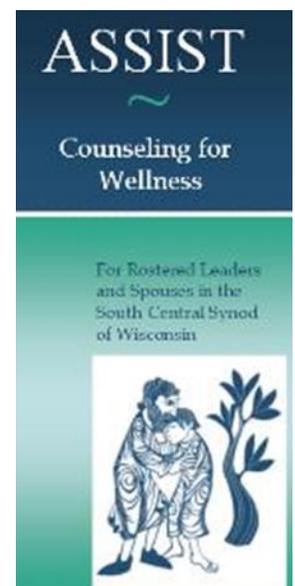
ASSIST Counseling for Wellness Services, offered as a service to all rostered in our synod, is now offering telehealth video

counseling appointments. Both phone and video appointments are available. These can be anxious times. Please take care of yourselves!

Contact:

Dr. Dan Feaster, MSW, L.C.S.W., S.A.C.  
Executive Director and Psychotherapist  
Samaritan Counseling Center  
5900 Monona Dr. Suite 100  
Monona, WI 53716  
Phone: 608-663-0763 ext 200  
Fax: 608-663-0765

[www.samaritancounselingcenterwi.org](http://www.samaritancounselingcenterwi.org)





Benefit Services | A Ministry of the ELCA

### **What About Our Portico Benefits Payments? Do We Still Need to Make Those During This Time?**

President of Portico, Jeff Thiemen, communicated this today:

*I appreciate what I see as your contingency planning to explore every possible way to continue ministry and preserve financial viability. We hear and understand your concerns and we are simultaneously praying for relief. We are all in this together.*

*Our top priority is to support the well-being of our plan members. Our ELCA community needs your resilient leadership now more than ever, and Portico is committed to supporting you as best we can. That means ensuring uninterrupted access to medical care, prescription drugs, health support programs, and emotional health resources.*

*Portico administers a bundled benefit program on behalf of this church. Our self-insured health plan is funded entirely by contributions from sponsoring organizations. As a nonprofit ministry, we negotiate contracts with vendors to ensure we get the best pricing for our community. The money we collect from sponsoring organizations and members covers our costs – we have no unnecessary reserves or extra income streams we can tap into to cover the health claims that we, as a community, continue to incur every day. We are relying on sponsoring organizations to continue to pay for your benefits so that we can continue to pay claims and to invest in your retirement accounts.*

*Our hearts go out to the congregation leaders struggling to pay bills when their doors are temporarily closed. Like you, we are adapting to this new reality so that our ministry continues, so that your ministry continues.*

*Not paying for benefits is NOT a viable path to preserving financial stability. In the short run, Portico will work with congregations to develop a plan for payment over time.*

### **NEW RESOURCES RELATED TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ARE BEING ADDED DAILY**

Can be found on our synod website: <https://scsw-elca.org/healthresources/>

**If you have the resources to make a donation to synod ministries to help us continue the good work of supporting our congregations and carry out God's mission through our work, individual donations may be made through the synod's Tithe.ly app.**

**Text GIVE to: (608) 571-1576**

**Thank you for your prayerful consideration. Every offering helps!**