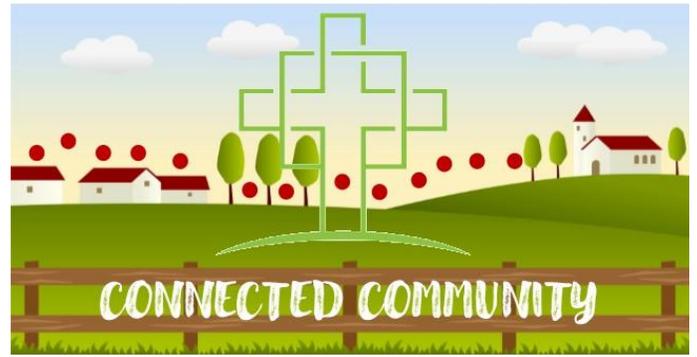


WHAT MATTERS

Connected Community

Special Edition . . . April 9, 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

Please note: The synod's virtual office (staff working from home) will be closed on Good Friday and the Monday after Easter. If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact the Rev. Walter Baires at (608) 270-0201 and your message will be forwarded to him for timely response.

Dear Partners in Ministry,

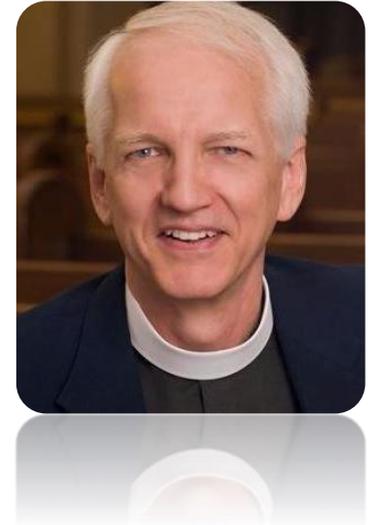
This issue of "Connected Community" is meant to provide assistance that has been sought by some congregational leaders with regard to two issues brought about by the coronavirus circumstances. Recent government legislation has endeavored to provide support for small businesses including churches and non-profit organizations that experience a drop in income due to closed or reduced activity.

I have previously stressed the importance of congregational members being strongly encouraged to seek support for their ministries among their own members, and I'm encouraged by some accounts of strong response to this need.

Some congregations, however, will have many who are unable to provide their usual support, and may turn to the **SBA loan program** offered, which holds the possibility of loan forgiveness. This issue of Connected Community includes some key information to assist in applying for those funds. It is advisable to do that soon, although there is also indication that future allotments will be forthcoming. Congregations should work with the bank with whom they do business. I anticipate that next week we will have identified resource people from our synod that could help you with questions that may arise.

The second question we receive has to do with the ability for church councils or congregations to conduct business and take votes during the time when in-person gatherings are prohibited. Guidance is provided that will allow of most these decisions to go forward.

As always, I am grateful for the faithful and creative ways you seek to nurture the faith communities in your care. May these Holy Days be a blessing, even in the absence of usual gathering patterns.



Bishop Peter Rogness

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION LOAN GUIDANCE FROM THE ELCA



U.S. Small Business Administration

We recommend that if your congregation is going to apply that you apply soon. These funds will likely deplete in a couple days, however, you should still apply as additional funds will be appropriated.

The application can be found on the synod

website:

<https://scsw-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Final-PPP-Application.pdf>

The ELCA has updated the FAQs on the Paycheck Protection Plan loans to include the latest SBA guidance. The updated resource can be found

here: https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/FAQ_on_PPP_Loans.pdf?

The interim SBA guidance can be found here: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/PPP--IFRN%20FINAL.pdf>

The SBA FAQ for faith-based organizations can be found here:

<https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/SBA%20Faith-Based%20FAQ%20Final.pdf>

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4/9/20 Press Release Just Issued - Gov. Evers Reiterates Options Available for Religious Gatherings and Services

Gov. Tony Evers reiterates options for religious gatherings and services. Religious organizations and places of worship have inquired about opportunities to continue offering faith-based services and gatherings while still complying with the governor's "safer at home" order.

Gov. Evers and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm issued a Safer at Home order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, effective at 8 a.m. on Weds., March 25, 2020. This order remains in effect until 8 a.m. on Fri., April 24, 2020, or until a superseding order is issued.

This order applies to the entire state. All Wisconsinites must stay at home as much as possible and non-essential businesses and operations must cease, with limited exceptions for minimum basic operations and working from home. All public and private gatherings of any number of people that are not part of a single household or living unit are prohibited, except for the limited exceptions contained in the order.

Under the governor's order, churches and religious entities are considered essential. Any gathering must include fewer than 10 people at a time if it occurs in a room or confined space. Thus, churches and religious entities wishing to conduct services while still complying with the governor's order may, for example, conduct services via:

- Parking lots with congregants staying in cars, avoiding person-to-person contact;
- Streaming online; and
- Having small gatherings (fewer than 10 people in each room) with multiple services.

Churches and religious entities are encouraged to review and comply with all DHS guidelines, including guidelines for community and faith-based organizations available here. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/community.htm>

The governor's Safer at Home order is enforceable by any local law enforcement official, including county sheriffs; however, the governor's office has not asked law enforcement to supervise or take enforcement steps against religious gatherings. We continue to ask local law enforcement to assist local communities and congregations understand the governor's Safer at Home order and help folks take precautions to keep themselves, our neighbors, and our communities safe.

Considerations for Conducting Remote Council and Congregation Meetings

During this time of social distancing because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many congregation leaders are asking how they can take advantage of technology to continue to hold necessary meetings to conduct the business of the congregation. Please bear in mind that some matters may best be postponed until the restrictions on gatherings have been lifted. Others, though, are pressing, or are mandatory by your constitution and bylaws, and need to be dealt with. Bishop Rogness or Rev. Steve Kottke can help you determine what matters might better be left for another time.

If after consultation it is determined that you need to hold a meeting to make necessary decisions, there are some important factors to take into consideration before proceeding to call a meeting. Below is an FAQ of the questions being asked most often. **In every case, however, it is vital that you consult with your bishop or synod staff before proceeding to schedule a meeting.** Even in the current crisis, the rules have not all gone out the window, and state law, as well as your constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions, must still be respected.

Q: What does Wisconsin state law say?

A: Wisconsin state law authorizes nonstock corporations to conduct meetings remotely unless the corporation's bylaws say otherwise. Specifically, the text of WI Stat § 181.0820(3) reads:

(a) Unless the articles of incorporation or bylaws provide otherwise, the board may permit any or all directors to participate in a regular or special meeting or in a committee meeting of the board by, or to conduct the meeting through the use of, any means of communication by which any of the following occurs:

1. All participating directors may simultaneously hear or read each other's communications during the meeting.

2. All communication during the meeting is immediately transmitted to each participating director, and each participating director is able to immediately send messages to all other participating directors.

(b) If a meeting will be conducted through the use of any means described in par. (a), all participating directors shall be informed that a meeting is taking place at which official business may be transacted. A director participating in a meeting by any means described in par. (a) is considered to be present in person at the meeting. If requested by a director, minutes of the meeting shall be prepared and distributed to each director.

In this case, you can have a remote meeting unless your constitution and bylaws prohibit remote meetings. This is unlikely, as we do not have Model provisions prohibiting remote meetings.

Q: If needed, where do we look in our congregation constitution to see if remote meetings are authorized?

A: For congregational meetings, look to see if your congregation has included this provision from the *Model Constitution for Congregations* (or a similar one):

C10.08. *This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.*

For council meetings, look to see if your congregation has included this provision from the *Model Constitution for Congregations* (or a similar one):

C12.13. *The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.*

Q: We never updated our constitution to include these provisions. Does this mean we can't hold a remote meeting?

A: If your constitution does not have C10.08, it is possible to adopt emergency bylaws that would permit a remote congregational meeting. An emergency bylaw template for the congregational council to adopt can be found on the synod website:

<https://scsw-elca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Resolution-adopting-emergency-bylaws.docx>

Q: We have confirmed that we are legally authorized to hold remote meetings. Now what?

A: Next you must determine how your meeting will be carried out. Typically, provisions for remote meetings require that there be simultaneous aural communication: that is, every participant must be able to hear and to speak, with two-way communication possible. A platform that only allows people to listen, for example, would not be appropriate.

You must also consider those members who do not have online access. In choosing a technological platform, you should select one that allows for both online and dial-in participation so that as many members can participate as reasonably possible.

Q: What notification do we have to give for a remote meeting?

A: You must give the same notification normally required by your constitution and bylaws for that type of meeting. For example, if your constitution requires that notice be given by mail or electronically a certain number of days before a meeting, and that it be announced at two consecutive Sunday worship services, you would still need to comply with those requirements. If you are streaming worship services, you would need to announce the meeting in those services, just as you would normally do.

Q: How do we establish quorum?

A: The same quorum requirements that your constitution establishes for face-to-face meetings apply to remote ones. The most effective means of assessing whether you have quorum might be by taking an oral roll call of voting members who are participating in the meeting. Some electronic platforms will list all the participants in a meeting. You may be able to take a screenshot or print out the list of participants and save it for your records. One challenge would be to verify the identity of persons who are dialing in and are not visible, but in many congregations it should be possible to verify by voice if members are known to one another. You also need to allow for situations where more than one person is participating from a single post (e.g., couples or families with teens who are voting members).

Q: How do we take a vote?

A: Some congregations are having members drive in written ballots to drop off at a designated location between a set number of hours. If you choose that option, you need to draw up a list of those participating in the meeting so that only those who have been in the meeting are allowed to drop off ballots.

Others are going by spoken yeas or nays or polling each individual voting member participating in the meeting in a voice vote. Some are choosing to take votes using the poll feature of their electronic platform, though a challenge with that option is allowing for votes of members who do not have online access, as well as dealing with the problem of multiple voting members participating from one location.

If any member calls for a secret ballot or for division of the house, or if your constitution and bylaws require a written ballot for certain kinds of votes (such as calling a pastor), you might have a sign-in list of those present at the meeting, then allow a certain period of time for people to come to the church to drop off their ballot. If you are in an area where travel is being restricted, or if there are voting members who are on lockdown, you may have to look at other options, however.

Whatever you choose to do, you must comply with state laws, and you must allow for all voting members to be able to cast their vote.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE
PAYROLL PROTECTION PROGRAM FROM
TOM CUNNIFF, ELCA GENERAL COUNSEL**

LINK: <http://bit.ly/PPPFAQs>



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Paycheck Protection Program FAQ

Stress on the Shepherd

By Clif Christopher



SHORT BUT THOUGHTFUL ARTICLE FOR PASTORS AND DEACONS - "STRESS ON THE SHEPHERD"

Many of you know Clif Christopher, author of the popular stewardship book, "Not Your Parent's Offering Plate." You may also remember him as one of our keynote speakers at a synod stewardship event. What you may not know is that he is the founder of Horizons Stewardship.

Following is an invitation to their next webinar., "A Pastor's View of the Changing Landscape." These are free. You can sign up to receive their communications as well so that you don't miss future opportunities.

In the meantime, we share here a link to a short but thoughtful article especially for our pastors and deacons during this time: "Stress on the Shepherd."

<https://horizons.net/stress-on-the-shepherd/>

Webinar from Horizons Stewardship

April 14, 10:00 am CT

"A Pastor's View of the Changing Landscape During Social Distancing"



Joe Park, CEO of Horizons Stewardship, sits down with Ron Edmondson, former CEO of Leadership Network and nationally recognized church strategist, author, and pastor, to discuss:

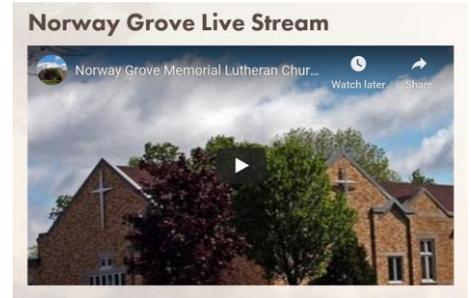
1. What has changed for you since the COVID-19 outbreak and social distancing?
2. What does pastoring an online community look like in comparison to a traditional congregational setting?
3. How are you communicating with your church—and your staff—during this time?
4. What do your next four to eight weeks look like strategically?
5. How are you practicing self-care during this season of intense leadership

To register: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_f9trDt6MSI6StWeEYmCgQ

SEND US YOUR LINKS! Please send us your links to your weekend services and especially your Holy week services. We are seeing great interest in these as evidenced by activity on our website. Clearly, it's a way for people to stay connected to the larger church!

Here is a link to an online form that should take you no longer than 30 seconds to fill out so that we can get your services posted to the synod website!

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



Links to Congregation Streamed Services and More: <https://scsw-elca.org/healthresources/worship/>

Growing list of synod congregations who are live streaming worship services both on Sundays and Lent Midweek on Wednesdays. Links to these are provided. Recordings of worship can also be found here.

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Next Webinar Hosted by United Church of Christ & Insurance Board on CARES Act

April 15 – 1:00 pm CT

Many participants had questions about HR concerns for their churches in light of the new legislation and challenges as a result of COVID-19. The UCC is holding regular webinars on this topic that we find helpful. COVID-19 related [webcast](#) on April 15 @ 1:00 Central Time. Churches across the country are faced with a multitude of concerns, including maintaining staff, reducing staff, and re-employment. This discussion will address the primary HR matters facing your ministry during these challenging times.

LINK: <https://www.insuranceboard.org/hr-issues-your-ministry-during-covid-19/>

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SYNOD WEBSITE IS UPDATED DAILY

Our resource lists continue to grow each day (sometimes multiple times a day) during this crisis.

Communication and Health Resources: <https://scsw-elca.org/healthresources/>

Official ELCA and synod related communications can be found here.

Ideas for Ways to Stay Connected With Your Community: <https://scsw-elca.org/community/>

Curated resources for being in community during this time of physical distancing. Bishop Rogness' weekly video can be found here.

Links to Congregation Streamed Services and More: <https://scsw-elca.org/healthresources/worship/>

Growing list of synod congregations who are live streaming worship services both on Sundays and Lent Midweek on Wednesdays. Links to these are provided. Recordings of worship can also be found here.

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If you would like to join in the good work that our congregations are doing through synod ministries, individual donations may be made through the synod's Tithe.ly app.

We are doing What Matters in Jesus' name!

Text GIVE to: (608) 571-1576 - Thank you for your prayerful consideration. Every offering matters!