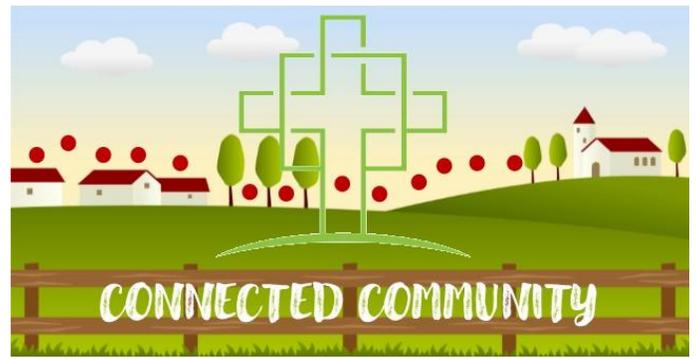


WHAT MATTERS

Connected Community

Special Edition . . . April 14, 2020



Helpful resources for this time of the pandemic

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



Message from Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton

Sin and captivity, manifest in threats to the environment, are not the last word. God addresses our predicament with gifts of 'forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation' (Luther, Small Catechism). By the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God frees us from our sin and captivity, and empowers us to be loving servants to creation.

—ELCA social statement *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice*, p. 5

As I work from home at our dining room table, I look out the front window and see the wildlife at my husband's feeders. God created such beautiful creatures. As Christians we are guided by the promise expressed in our social statement that we are empowered "to be loving servants to creation." It is our duty to care for God's earth.

Established in 1970, Earth Day launched the modern environmental movement, spurring development of landmark policies for a creation in crisis and defining a path toward a more sustainable planet. In this 50th anniversary year, under the theme "Climate Action," the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in America is joining the Earth Day Network as a featured faith partner. This partnership expresses our deep love for God's creation and a Lutheran understanding of our profound responsibility for it. The social statement describes our commitment this way:

Humans, in service to God, have special roles on behalf of the whole of creation. Made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth. God's command to have dominion and subdue the earth is not a license to dominate and exploit. ... [It] should reflect God's way of ruling as a shepherd king who takes the form of a servant (Philippians 2:7), wearing a crown of thorns (*Caring for Creation*, pp. 2-3).

We accept that caring for and protecting creation is central to our holy calling, yet we acknowledge our shortcomings in this regard. Our action and inaction are exposed by the despoiling and degrading of the environment. Affected by human activity, our changing climate has brought more severe weather patterns and ensuing destruction. Our waters, land and air are being polluted, and we are alarmed by the devastation. Ecological systems are strained to the point where some species cannot adapt, and face extinction.

Globally, we are dealing with two interconnected crises, the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing climate change. Both demonstrate the profound consequences of our disrupted, broken relationship with the natural world. According to scientists, species disruption caused by global warming has combined with human encroachment on the natural world to drive wildlife into greater and deadlier contact with people. The COVID-19 outbreak is an urgent warning that our behavior opens the door to transmission of new diseases, with devastating consequences.

Our distorted relationship with the earth is borne most heavily by the most vulnerable and marginalized among us, who are ill-equipped to withstand the impact of climate change or implement remedies. COVID-19 and the climate crisis heighten existing racial inequity, economic disparity and social injustices. Our call to care for creation is also a call to right these wrongs.

As Earth Day partners and stewards of creation, we have many ways to lovingly serve the earth:

- Explore and use ELCA [Care for Creation](#) resources, including video, study and action guides with information about the Creation Care Ambassadors initiative.
- Read the Lutherans Restoring Creation story "[5 Ways to Celebrate Earth Day as Church Together but Apart](#)."
- Learn about the [Creation Care Ambassadors](#) program that equips Lutherans to be leaders in settings across the church and in our communities.
- Accept the ELCA Young Adults [No Plastics for Lent](#) challenge this Easter season.
- Participate in a local clean-up (with appropriate distancing) if permitted by local authorities, or participate in the [Earth Challenge](#) 2020 citizen scientist initiative, focused on plastic pollution and clean air.
- On April 21, take part in the Parliament of World Religions' [50th Earth Day Observance With Global Religious and Indigenous Leaders](#).
- Join with the ELCA's ecumenical partner [Creation Justice Ministries](#) in advocacy, education and prayer.

Looking past this anniversary, we gladly accept the monumental assignment of refocusing, renewing and raising our efforts as we embrace our role as stewards of creation and look with hope and promise toward years to come.

A Prayer From Lutheran Disaster Response:

Prepare us, Lord, for what lies ahead. Give us the strength and dedication that we will need in order to serve others unselfishly. Give us the energy we will need to follow through with the task. Give us strength to face our assignment, and put before us people who will support us. Open our ears and eyes and heart, so that we can sustain others and [help creation to recover from this crisis]. Bless those who are suffering and give them hope, in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton



Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

<https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/8034>

Synod Leadership Has Assembled an Information Resource Team to Assist You with SBA Loan

Over the past couple of weeks, we have stressed the importance of congregational members being strongly encouraged to seek support for their ministries among their own members, and we are encouraged by some accounts of strong response to this need. We know, however, that some congregations will have many who are unable to provide their usual support and may need to turn to the **SBA loan program** offered which holds the possibility of loan forgiveness.



If you are applying, we encourage you to do it now as the funds are awarded on a first come, first-served basis and the pool of money is limited. To assist you with applying for the Paycheck Protection Program, **we have assembled a team of resource people from our synod that can help you** with questions that may arise.

The team consists of an attorney, two business bankers, a certified public accountant and a business advisor. We are grateful to these folks who are volunteering their time to help you.

Rev. Steve Kottke on synod staff will be the first point of contact who will serve as the Information and Referral Source and will direct you to the appropriate person/s on the team depending on the nature of your question/s and situation. If you need assistance, please contact Steve at the synod office: (608) 270-0201.

Before calling, we do recommend that you are very familiar with how the SBA loan program works. Here is a link to the **FAQs** provided by ELCA General Counsel.

<http://bit.ly/PPPFAQs>

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>

“A Pastor’s View of the Changing Landscape During Social Distancing”

Note’s from Today’s
Webinar from Horizons
Stewardship - April 14



Notes by Deacon Vicki Hanrahan, Assistant to the Bishop for Synodical Life, Synod Staff

Joe Park, CEO of Horizons Stewardship, sits down with **Rev. 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?

- We are overwhelmed with information. Pastors need trusted and reliable sources of information and may just want to home in on a few sources they trust.
- I am noticing the wide range of emotions we are feeling. It’s a roller coaster! We can move from disappointment, fear, frustration, perhaps anger, to also feeling excited about trying new things and new ways to reach our communities.
- We’re seeing a sense of urgency we haven’t seen before. Desperation causes innovation.
- We are seeing an enhanced sense of unity among churches.
- To follow Jesus is cool again. It’s okay to be holding on to our faith and that is a good thing!

2. What does pastoring an online community look like in comparison to a traditional congregational setting?

- Some of our audiences have grown to beyond our own “members.” We’ve seen 12 times the audience size and it’s sometimes hard to know what people’s needs are behind a computer screen.
- We have broader audiences, so I am recognizing that the more we can localize our message the more we will be able to really focus on ministering and helping people we can truly help.
- We are creating more content than ever before. Our staffs are busier now with content creation. We need to tell more stories about the impact on our community and the impact our ministries are having on our community.
- We have onboarded the volunteers that typically serve as “greeters,” to engage people on line.
- We have a greater sense of community engagement online as there are more instances of people making comments while listening online.

3. How are you communicating with your church—and your staff—during this time?

- Our teams are meeting individually once per week via technology and I meet with them weekly to support them. While the church is not a business, some the basic principles of business leadership do apply well.
- Good leaders trust their teams, support them, and then hold their people accountable.
- Invite them to take risks and not wait for the pastor. They can take initiative. If they want to reach out to members, go for it...minister...be the church. Give them permission.



Ron Edmondson
Former CEO of Leadership Network,
Church Strategist, Author, and
Pastor

4. What do your next four to eight weeks look like strategically?

- In the spirit of Romans 13, we are staying in touch with our local community leaders. In the next 4-8 weeks we'll be looking for a balance in the shut-down to re-opening strategies. Of course, this is contextual, so we will be looking at the next steps carefully within our context.
- Every week that we are in this, emotions will run deeper; we will be more tired, more anxious, more fearful, more frustrated, more bored. So every week we need to re-evaluate what our people need and figure out how to address those needs. We can copy principles, but not practices unless they resonate with our own community. For example, if you have 50 members, you could break them into 5 teams to take care of each other. Don't think you can't do something because you're small...instead think, "We can do this BECAUSE we are small."
- We will be meeting with our church's leadership to have conversation, "What does the next season look like for us?" We will ask three questions:
 - What do we keep after this is all over?
 - What are we going to tweak and get better at in the future?
 - What should we stop doing?
- What did we notice about our governing structures? Maybe there needs to be a second look at our constitutions so we are better able to react in the moment. Look at it locally and at the churchwide level. Does your constitution allow you to be nimble or did you need emergency bylaws in order to accomplish meetings and ministry?
- The way you lead through this crisis will determine how you look to people on the other side of this time. If you lead well, it will help you greatly. **Now is the time to put your best vision casting into your sermons and then lean into that time.** This will make you stronger as church on the other side.
- We will be listening to our local leadership first, then state, then national and cooperate as things gradually re-open.

5. How are you practicing self-care during this season of intense leadership?

- This may be the most important question that we ask ourselves. You have to take care of your soul in order to take care of the souls of others. You put on your oxygen mask before putting it on the person sitting next to you because you can't help if you can't breath.

Rev. Ron Edmonson shares more of his thoughts in a blog on leadership, church and culture

Visit: <http://ronedmondson.com/>

To register: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_f9trDt6MSI6StWeEEYmCgQ

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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/>

Resources with Links that Were Recently Added to Synod Website:

Considerations for Conducting Remote Council and Congregation Meetings

<https://scsw-elca.org/resources/congregation-council-leadership-resources/>

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.



If you would like to join in the good work that our synod is 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!