

WHAT MATTERS

Connected Community

Special Edition. . . July 2, 2020



*Curated resources for this time of the pandemic
and protests and beyond*

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

Note: The synod office will be closed Friday, July 3 in observance of the 4th of July Holiday. Please call the synod office for pastor-on-call information for pastoral emergencies.

Some Reflections on Our Journey

An Occasional (pretty much monthly) Letter from Bishop Peter Rogness

Dear Partners in Ministry,

The not-so-merry Merry Go Round continues, Assembly edition...

I first sat down to write this month's letter intending to observe that the next time I write, presumably early August, we'd be celebrating the election of our next bishop at the completion of a carefully planned and executed 12-site assembly on August 1!

Then this morning the Dane County Health Department issued its latest policy revision, taking back many of the opening-up steps of recent weeks in the light of rapidly rising case numbers for the virus. Though it points out the rapid rise coming primarily from people in their 20's who are gathering with little regard to masks, distancing, and crowd size, the restrictions cover all gatherings. "Religious entities" are to conform to business guidelines calling for less than half capacity, but "meeting...and conferences" are only "permitted with ten (10) individuals or less..." The Order is in effect until further notice.

Obviously, this casts doubt on our ability to hold the events planned for August 1. In the next few days the Executive Committee will convene to consider these developments. After announcing the cancellation of the originally planned June 20 assembly we had determined August 1 as the new date and set August 29 as an alternate date. In these past few week's plans were moving along well . . . until now. August 29 may yet be possible, and while we haven't yet made an official decision about August 1, as I've said, that now looks problematic. We will also explore other meeting models. Stay tuned.

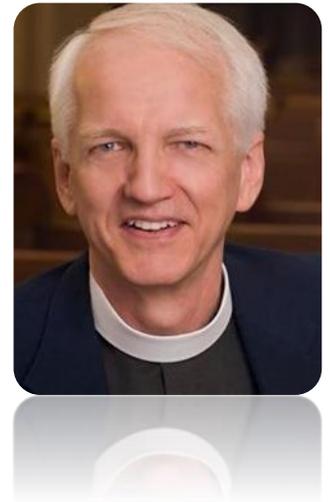
The only thing one can rely on these days is the unpredictability of the times we're in. (That, and the fact that our God can always find ways for the people of God to live as faithful disciples... which you are doing in so many marvelous ways, taxing as it is!)

Bishop Election process is proceeding

On June 29 the second of the recorded forums with the four nominees for bishop was released. I hope all who will be involved in this election are investing the time to watch and discuss with others. This second forum involved each nominee answering each question, and by the end I think it is becoming more possible to have a sense of who each one of these people is and what she might bring to the office.

Link to the forums: <https://scsw-elca.org/2020bishopelection/nominees/#forum1>

Bishop Peter Rogness



You have much to reflect on, and it takes some time to go back and review it all. A 10-12-page biographical information, 5-minute introductory video, now two Q&A forums, and some written responses to follow. Then there will be further speaking and questions at the assembly. All this on top of the thorough work of the Call Committee who set these nominees before the synod. In short, there is much information gathered, and a decision this significant warrants your spending time going deeply into the discernment process.

Weekly Zoom meetings

I had little idea when we first launched the weekly zoom meetings on Tuesday afternoons that there would be this level of interest. Weekly participation has hovered around 50-70 people. This week we moved to Wednesday to accommodate Pastor Everett Mitchell of Madison, pastor of Christ the Solid Rock Baptist Church (Baptists, I've learned, are often more imaginative in naming their churches than we staid Lutherans) and a Dane County judge. Pastor Mitchell knows Wisconsin and knows Lutherans well, and I had asked him to join us for conversation about how we respond to this moment of opportunity to talk about being a Christian body in the midst of heightened conversations about race, justice, and society. If you didn't see it, it was recorded, and you can find it here. <https://scsw-elca.org/healthresources/webinars/>. He challenged and inspired us, not as an outsider but as a partner in the holy walk of guiding God's people into a deeper discussion of the impact issues of race have on us all. He complimented Lutherans on our willingness to read and study, gathering the tools we need to enter into sometimes uncomfortable conversations... as Jesus did with great regularity! I encourage the continued conversations in our churches.

Our next meeting, next Tuesday, will provide time to reflect on today's conversation, as well as continue to share insights and questions in guiding the life of our congregations in the midst of the pandemic.

It is, after all, summer...

It's usually vacation season. Things are different. But as I've said before, what isn't different is the need for the self-care and renewal that comes from time away. We're now aware that this extended pandemic period takes a toll – pastors are weary, our people are weary, we need to recognize the value of and need for a break. Take it. Pre-record, or direct to a neighbor church for a week or two, use someone else's sermon (I still post a weekly one for that purpose, or swap with a neighbor, familiarizing neighboring congregations with each other's pastor.) Lots of creative possibilities.

You are a marvelous gathering of faithful leaders in this synod. Care for yourselves, and for one another.

Grace and Peace,



Peter Rogness
Interim Bishop



Our goal is to have every one of our 86,911 members signed up for What Matters & Connected Community. There is an easy way to sign up for synod news, so all congregational newsletter editors, please help us reach the people in your pews by including this link in your newsletters: Thanks!



**Don't Miss Out! Get Connected! Sign up to receive the
SCSW synod e-newsletter today!**

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

A Conversation About Race with Bishop Rogness and Rev. Everett D. Mitchell

If you missed it, you can listen to the recording. We commend it to you as something you might even watch with your congregations and have a zoom discussion afterwards. We were joined by special guest, the Honorable Rev. Everett D. Mitchell who in the bishop's words, "is a gift to this church."

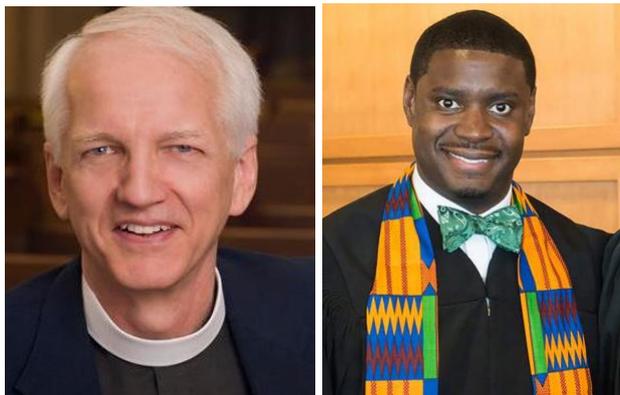
Others on the webinar said:

"You give me hope!"

"Amen"

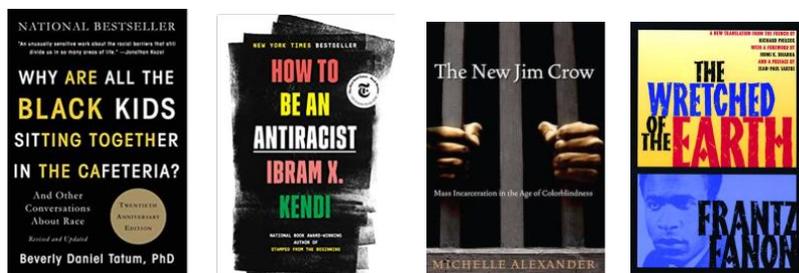
"Thank you for this important Conversation!"

"Thank you Rev. Mitchell!"



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

Resources Commended to Us by Rev. Mitchell:



- "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" by Beverly Daniel Tatum
- "How to Be An Anti-Racist" by Ibram X Kendi
- "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander
- "The Wretched of the Earth" by Frantz Fanon
- "Race: The Power of An Illusion" PBS Documentary

<https://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/>

Resources Mentioned by others on the call:

SCSW Racial Equity Ministry team offers a complete bibliography of resources on the synod website:

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



"Stand Your Ground" by Kelly Brown Douglas

"Between the World and Me" – Ta NaHesi Coates

"White Rage" – Carol Anderson

"Dear White Christians" – Jennifer Harvey

<https://debbyirving.com/21-day-challenge/>

"I understand that people are uncomfortable talking about race because the minute you say you are talking about race, they hear you calling them a racist. But there is a difference between being influenced by ideas of white supremacy and being a racist. Many of my white allies and friends who grow up not knowing or having black people in their spheres are so far away from being racist."

~ Rev. Dr. Everett Mitchell

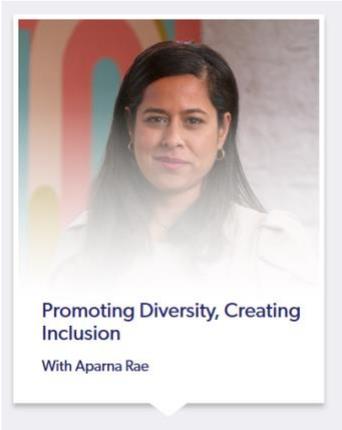
So what does it mean to be racist? Watch our webinar recording and you will find the answer to this and many other questions! And as important, this conversation will inspire you to ask questions for your own journey of understanding.

Bishop Rogness' Video Recorded Sermon Is Available for Use in Your Settings.

Bishop Rogness – Bishop Rogness prepares a weekly message that follows the lectionary. These are posted to the synod website on a weekly basis. Use them as you wish. Some pastors are using them when they need a break and we wholeheartedly encourage this! They can be downloaded with ease from the Connected Community page of our website. You may wish to use them for a meditation pause in your day as well.



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



Portico Offers New Being Academy: "Promoting Diversity, Creating Inclusion"

Interested in creating a community of equity and justice? Whether you're looking to understand your own blind spots, foster conversation in your congregation, or build a culture where all can belong, a new Being Academy course *Promoting Diversity, Creating Inclusion*, featuring educator Aparna Rae, offers practical exercises and thought-provoking questions that can help. Though some of the course is directed at developing a diverse workplace, Portico believes the tools and topics are of value for church leaders in this important time.

Portico members with ELCA-Primary health coverage can [access the course here](#) or via myPortico. If you waive health coverage or have ELCA Medicare-Primary coverage, The Big Know (Portico's partner and Being content developer) has made the course available at no charge to everyone for a limited time to support learning and promote equity. Click [here](#) and scroll to the bottom of the page – you will be asked to sign up before you can begin the courses.



To find your local health department's Covid-19 Health Updates, visit:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/counties.htm>

Synod Prayer Team Devoted to Supporting Rostered Ministers

If you would like the prayer team to pray for you, fill out the prayer request form and submit. The prayer request will reach the team without delay! **Prayer requests remain confidential and are not shared outside of the prayer team, unless you desire that and give us permission. The prayer request form will ask for this information.**

You may submit your prayer request using our online form:

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

These are especially challenging and trying times. Please do not hesitate to ask for our prayers. It is our privilege to pray for you.



Visit our website and stay a while!

The Connected Community page on our website is chock full of helpful resources for this time. We share everything from digital worship to leveraging Facebook to talking to children about Covid-19. It's all on the Connected Community page!

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

Resources for Staying Connected Community

There are so many health resources being shared that we also wanted to share resources for how we can stay socially connected while being physically distanced. Resources are organized in color-coded categories:

 Digital Worship

 Communication

 Youth & Family

 Making Connections

Worship Resource

Worship in Times of Public Health Concerns

 [ELCA.org/PublicHealth](https://elca.org/PublicHealth)

Holy Communion

Guidance from Bishop Rogness on Holy Communion

 [Communion During Crisis](https://elca.org/PublicHealth)

"Worship in the Home"

Weekly Resource from the ELCA for Engaging in Worship at Home

 [Worship in the Home](https://elca.org/PublicHealth)

ELCA Technology Resources

Information on Tech Resources Including Discounts

 [ELCA Technology](https://elca.org/Technology)

Livestreaming Worship

How to Stream Your Worship — A Starter Guide

 [ELCA.org/PublicHealth](https://elca.org/PublicHealth)

Facebook for Worship

Leveraging Facebook for Online Connections

 [Leveraging Facebook](https://elca.org/PublicHealth)

ELCA Communication Resources

Tools for Congregation Communication

 [ELCA.org/Resources](https://elca.org/Resources)

Planning Checklist

Congregational Planning Checklist for Health Crisis

 [ELCA.org/Resources](https://elca.org/Resources)

Facebook for Business

Facebook COVID-19 Resources for Business Pages

 [Facebook for Business](https://facebook.com/business)

Celebrating at Home

Blog from Rev. Rebecca Ninke on Holy Week & Easter

 [Sparkhouse Blog](https://sparkhouse.org)

Faith at Home

Tons of Resources for Engaging Faith at Home for All Ages

 [Ministrylinks.online](https://ministrylinks.online)

Talking With Families

Navigating COVID-19 Anxiety in Families

 [from Rachel Brown](https://rachelbrown.com)

Pandemic Hope

Family Daily Devotional for During the Pandemic

 [Pandemic Hope](https://pandemichope.com)

Weather Fun

Weather Activities from the National Weather Service

 [Weather.gov](https://weather.gov)

Science @ Home

Fun Science Experiments Kids Can do at Home

 [ScienceBob.com](https://sciencebob.com)

Anxiety & Youth

Helping Youth Cope During This Crisis

Talking to Children

Resource for Talking to Youth About COVID-19

Cultivating Online Community

Tools & Tips for Bringing Worship (and More) Online