



Pastoral Message - Recent Covid Activity

July 19, 2022

Dear East Central Synod of Wisconsin,

I am writing today because of an increase in the number of pastors and leaders who have either been close contacts or have Covid-19 infections themselves. Perhaps you know someone who is sick, too. The BA.5 sub variant of Covid is spreading rapidly and making up 80% of all Covid-19 infections across the country. Common symptoms of this variant are runny nose, sore throat, headache, persistent cough and fatigue.

As you navigate through this wave of the virus as the Body of Christ, here are a few resources and encouragements I would like to share with you.

Prepare yourselves to be without a pastor or a key worship leader on short notice.

The best time to make a plan for someone key to be out sick is before sickness occurs. Who is the contact person in the event plans for worship needs to change last minute? Visit www.ecsw.org/preaching-resources to find suggestions for alternate worship materials. Prepare a plug and play hymn sing with readings. Reexamine the best ways for your community to be in touch quickly when plans change.

Care for your pastors, staff, leaders, members and neighbors in need.

Those who work in ministry are front line workers. Pastors, deacons, parish nurses and other staff and leaders in the church are in and out of hospitals and frequently meeting with people in close proximity and in large groups. As such, they are more susceptible to getting sick. Now is the time to do what congregations do best: care for those in need. Clergy, church staff, members of the congregation, and neighbors in your community who are sick or dealing with quarantine need help and care. Meal trains, grocery runs, and care packages are a blessing! Share grace and generosity of spirit if plans change due to illness. Invite rescheduling in order to accommodate recovery and rest.

Be generous in hospitality and reassess mitigation strategies.

There are many reasons a person may be wearing a mask, including a compromised immune system. When you see someone in a mask, the most generous and hospitable response is to put on your mask, too. We encourage frequent testing, vaccines/booster shots, and re-upping on mitigation techniques that have been with us since the beginning but have relaxed in recent months: high quality masks, healthy air flow and low contact/physical distancing, hand washing, and (especially) staying home when sick.

Share generously.

In times where everything in the world seems to say “scarcity,” the abundance and generosity of God and God’s people is a blessing for the whole world. If your congregation is considering benevolent support distributions, partners in ministry such as Crossways Camps will greatly benefit from your gifts right now. This is a good time to share an extra gift with your congregation, too.

Thank you for all of the ways you are already caring for God’s people in community. May Christ, our healer, continue to bring us peace in these lingering days of pandemic. We are grateful to be in ministry with you and supporting you along the way.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Edison-Albright". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Bishop Anne Edison-Albright