



October 14, 2020

Faith Leaders Pledge to Keep Wisconsin Healthy and Safe

We the undersigned clergy, representing diverse faith communities across Wisconsin, pledge to do all in our power to keep our congregations and communities healthy and safe in the midst of this pandemic. While we have varying practices and theologies, all our traditions hold life as sacred and believe the imperative to protect and preserve life outweighs all other considerations.

Our state is facing a crisis and we must meet this challenge together. Wisconsin is one of three states with the highest number of COVID-19 cases. Only Texas and California, with much greater populations than Wisconsin, have higher numbers.¹

As people of faith, we trust in a higher power to help us through crises. But we must also trust science and what the medical experts are telling us. The best way to slow the spread of COVID-19 is to keep contacts outside our household to an absolute minimum. Wearing masks, washing hands, and staying physically distanced are all important and vital measures we all must take. But reducing our contacts with anyone beyond the people we live with is the best way to keep us all safe.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has issued an order to keep public gatherings to under 25% of capacity. Houses of worship have been exempted from this requirement. However, as faith leaders, we pledge to steward the health of all by prioritizing remote worship and other activities until this crisis has passed.

It is crucial that we stay home as much as possible to protect ourselves, our families, our communities, and especially first responders and health care workers who risk their lives to care for us. As the Rev. Kerri Parker, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, has said, "Being a faithful people is not abstract; it is about applying our faith when it matters. This virus is not going to get itself under control. We have a responsibility to each other. We are able to worship, pray, provide faith formation and pastoral care, and address other community needs in ways that limit the risk of spreading COVID, to save lives and relieve the strain on the health system. We have a moral imperative to do so."

Embracing that moral imperative, we pledge to stay safe, for all our sakes!

Rabbi Bonnie Margulis
Executive Director
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice

Reverend Kerri Parker
Executive Director
Wisconsin Council of Churches

And the undersigned faith leaders (congregations/organizations for identification purposes only):

¹ As of Oct. 7, the CDC reported that in the last seven days Texas had 30,151 cases; California – 21,036; Wisconsin – 17,066. Florida and Illinois are next highest, with 15,187 and 14,260 respectively - https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#cases_casesinlast7days



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Pastor Adam Clausen, Life Center Madison
Rev. Dr. Christian Boyd, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Milwaukee, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Bishop Paul Erickson, Greater Milwaukee Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Katherine Finegan, Northern Great Lakes Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Bishop Hee Soo Jung, Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Church
Rev. Fr. Yeprem Kelegian, Armenian Church, Eastern Diocese of N. America
Ms. Linda J. Ketcham, Executive Director, JustDane
Bishop Gerald Mansholt, East Central Synod of WI, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
The Rt. Rev. Steven A. Miller, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee
The Rev. Sarah Moore-Nokes, General Presbyter, Winnebago Presbytery, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe, South Central Synod of WI, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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The Rev. Franz Rigert, Conference Minister, WI Conference United Church of Christ
Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson, Northwest Synod of WI, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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