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
Faith Leaders Pledge to Keep Wisconsin Healthy and Safe Co-Signers:

Bishop Jim Arends, La Crosse Area Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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. F. Yeyprem 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
Rev. Bruce Nelson, President of the Western District Executive Board, Moravian Church
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

Rabbi Steven Adams, President, WI Council of Rabbis
Rev. Dr. Marcus Allen, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Madison
Rev. Meredith L. Anderson, United Church of Christ, West Allis
Rev. Paula Anderson, United Church of Christ-UC, Campbellsport
Rabbi Benjamin Ahlthauer, Mt. Sinai Congregation, Wausau
Rev. Kris Andrelozy, Community United Methodist Church, Elm Grove
Rev. Jennifer Amos, United Methodist Church, Sun Prairie
Rev. Nathan Athon, Our Shepherd UCC, Howardsville
Rev. John Ashton, Haddons Creek & South Beaver Creek Lutheran Churches Ettrick, WI
Deacon Robert Bagley, Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee, Racine
Rev. Brian Bankert, Trinity Lutheran Church, Appleton
Rev. Joseph Barin Jr., African Methodist Episcopal Church, Madison
Rev. Tammy Barthels, Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rhinelander
Rev. Mary G. Bauer, First English Lutheran Church, Wausau
Rabbi Renee H. Bauer, Jewish Social Services of Madison
Rev. Kelsey Beebe, Union Grove Congregational UCC, Union Grove
Deacon David Rask Behling, Northwest Synod of WI ELCA
The Rev. Martha Blansinger, Wausau
Rev. Dr. Debra Bergerson-Graham, Presbyterian Church (USA), Greendale
Rev. Kristin Berglund, St. Peter Lutheran, Sheboygan
Rev. Charles Berthoud, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Madison
Rabbi Jonathan Arthur Batch, DD, Temple Beth El, Madison
Rev. Winston Boyd, Program Director, Center for Courage and Renewal, Madison
Rev. Ruth Wagner Bradshaw, Olivet Congregational UCC, Columbus
Rev. Susan Bresser, First United Methodist Church, Whitewater
Pr. Harald Bringsjord, ELCA, La Crosse
Rev. John Brink, Cross Lutheran Church, Burlington
Rev. Dr. Laurie Brubaker Davis, First Presbyterian Church, Marshfield
Rev. Susanne Burwell, United Methodist Church (retired), Cudahy
The Rev. Matthew L. Burtenshaw, St. Matthew’s, Kenosha
Fr. Steven Capitelli, St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Sussex
Rev. Mary Carlin, St. Luke’s United Church of Christ, Milwaukee
Pr. Roy Carter, New Life Christian Fellowship, Racine
Rev. Stacy Cavanaugh, United Presbyterian Church, Monroe
Pr. Amy Cellay, Caldwell UMC, Mukwonago
Rev. Lorraine Ciceraros, Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ
Rev. Catherine Christman, Stoughton UMC, Stoughton
Rev. Douglas Clement, Portage UMC, Portage
Rev. Darra Clifford, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Combined Locks
Prof. Charles Cohm, Temple Beth El, Madison
Rev. Sharon Cook, Crossways Campground Ministries, Combined Locks
The Rev. Ruth Costello, Community Church of Fontana, Fontana
Mrs. Stacy Craig, Chequamegon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Rev. Cindy Crane, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Madison
Rev. Laura Crawford, United Church of Christ, Madison
Pr. Kenneth Cutler Sr., Greater Mt Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Milwaukee
Rev. Penny Dahl, North Windsor UMC, DeForest
Rev. Glenn Dano, St. Paul’s UCC, Erie, Colgate
Rev. Christopher Davis, Grace Presbyterian Church, Beaver Dam
Rev. Janice L. Davis, United Church of Christ (retired), Green Bay
Rev. Steve Davis, Congregational UCC, Sparta
The Rev. Timothy Dean, McFarland UCC, McFarland
Rev. Krysta Deede, First United Methodist Church, Tomah
Rev. Dean Desetl, All Saints Lutheran, Oshkosh
Mr. Matt Dieterse, Pilgrim Lutheran ELCA, Superior
Rev. Jeffrey Dodson, First Congregational UCC of Ripon
Rev. M. Colin Douglas, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Janesville
The Rev. Dr. JonPaul Dragseth, Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church, Eleva
Rev. Shaun Drefahl, Congregational UCC, Evansville
Rev. Bill Dunlop, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Watertown
Rev. Tim Ehrhardt, Reformed Church in America, Milwaukee
Rev. Jerry Folk, retired, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Madison
Rev. Amy Engelse, Bishop’s Associate for Rostered Leadership and Congregations in Transition, East Central Synod of WI, ELCA
Vicc Michelle Engh, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Westby
Rev. Douglas Faust, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Baraboo
Rev. Richard Feyen, Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Kewaunee
Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels, Union Congregational United Church of Christ, Green Bay
Rev. Andrea Fleske, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Eagle River
Rev. Sarah Goff, DD, Temple Beth El, Madison
Rev. Amy Fondroy Eich, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Prescott
Rabbi Betty L. Forester, Beth Israel Center, Madison
Rev. Kelly Fowler, United Methodist Church, New Berlin
Rev. Dr. Mark A. Fowler, First United Methodist Church, Madison
Rev. Selena Fox, Circle Sanctuary, Barneveld
Rev. Jeff Fox-Kline, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Madison
Rev. Stacy Gifman-Schroeder, Norway Grove Memorial Lutheran Church, DeForest
Rev. Michael Goodwin, Memorial Presbyterian Church, Appleton
Rev. Julie Goranson, Grace United Church of Christ, Wausau
Rev. Kristin Gorton, Fitchburg Memorial UCC, Fitchburg
Rev. Jaylinn Graham, United Church of Christ, Dodgeville
The Rev. Dr. Kendra Grams, First Presbyterian Church, Hudson
The Very Rev. Michael Greene, Christ Church Cathedral, Eau Claire
The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Grieser, Grace Episcopal Church, Madison
Rev. Reiss Gumbel, Milwaukee Zen Center, Milwaukee
Rev. Karen Hagen, Tippecanoe Presbyterian Church, Milwaukee
Rev. Susan Haller, Deacon, United Methodist Church
Rev. Cathy L. Hamblin, Hayward United Methodist Church, Hayward
Rev. Ruth Hansen, Salem UCC, Wayne
Rev. Doug Holtz, Calvary Lutheran Church, Oshkosh
Rev. Nan Hanson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Washburn
Dr. Masahi Hassan, Former Board Member, Islamic Society of Milwaukee
The Rev. Miranda Haisett-St. Dunstan’s Church, Madison
Rev. Eldonna Hazen, First Congregational UCC, Madison
Rev. Michelle Henrichs, Presbyterian Church (USA), Milwaukee
Rev. Francis Hewitt Jr., United Methodist Church, Tomah
Rev. Michael Hibbs, First Presbyterian Church, Galesville