



June 2020 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

I know I have said it before, but it bears repeating: I have experienced in these past weeks so many signs of hope, and of faithfulness, trust, courage, and encouragement:

- congregational leaders, lay and rostered who, under extraordinary stress, pressure and restraints have poured themselves into the work of leadership;
- congregational leaders, lay and rostered who, tired and weary and wondering, have reached out to one another, and to those in their midst, providing pastoral care, connection, compassion and care;
- congregational leaders, lay and rostered who, in the midst of an unprecedented time, exercised great skill (and energy and time) in preparing and/or searching for worship resources;
- rostered ministers who gather each Wednesday via ZOOM with Synod Staff for prayer, affirmation and encouragement, updates, and connecting;
- Area Deans who gather with rostered ministers via ZOOM for check-in with each other, study and/or prayer;
- and, creativity, ingenuity, openness, support, encouragement, trust, community.

At this time, I am inviting you – encouraging you – to pray for rostered ministers in varied ministry contexts, because I am hearing, seeing and recognizing that many of our rostered ministers are tired, weary, exhausted from:

- the emotional toll of being a leader in a time of uncertainty, crisis, liminality;
- leading sudden adaptive changes with technical challenges;
- disruption and change to regular patterns of spiritual and self-care practices;
- constant remote availability;
- worship preparation, pastoral care ministry, connecting with the congregation and community;
- and all, without any specific training or experience. This means that the skills, experience, training, networking, resourcing, and best practices, for many, have all needed to be created and learned in real time.

Pray for rostered ministers. Encourage them. Affirm their ministry. Give thanks. And know that God is with you and even now is planning and nourishing seeds of resurrection life.

In Christ Jesus – Shalom,
+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

“The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)