



## Illinois South Conference COVID-19 Response UPDATE #2, March 21, 2020

To Illinois South Conference pastors, church leaders and congregations:

As of 5 pm today on Saturday, March 21, 2020, the state of Illinois will move to a statewide shelter-in-place. This means people may leave their homes to get gas or food, seek medical care or medicine, and go to work. It also means that in-person worship must be suspended for the duration of the Governor's executive order, which is currently expected to last through April 8. Churches are not exempt from this order.

This has been done to protect us and our neighbors, and lower the number of people who could get sick. As death tolls rise around the world, this is truly an act of love that your congregation can participate in by adhering to shelter-in-place as much as possible. As of Friday, March 20, there were confirmed cases in six of twelve counties where ISC churches are located.

### *What you can do*

Neither pastors nor staff should spend time in the church building. The governing board of your church needs decide who will be handling minimum basic operations, as per the executive order, for your congregation.

- Do you need someone to bring in the mail, or go to the church office to retrieve voice mail? This would be an essential function, but that person should not linger in the building.
- Do you need to pay bills? Can you scan and email bills to your treasurer? Can your treasurer pay bills from home during this health crisis? If you require two signatures, can one person leave them on another's porch, and still practice social distancing?
- Continue paying your hourly workers. Churches are not exempt from family leave of medical leave requirements, and during a public health emergency, your hourly employees qualify.

If you have not yet tried online worship before, there are many easy and inexpensive venues to do this. Two simple ways are:

- Facebook through Facebook live, or by filming and uploading a video from your phone or tablet.
- Zoom, where you can create an online worship space. This live session can be joined by any congregant with a phone, and is accessible by audio or video.

The sessions can also be recorded and shared on social media. Please contact Rev. Shana Johnson if you would like to learn more about Zoom.

This may be messy, and that's ok. Give yourself grace.

*Some things to keep in mind right now*

- Physical distancing is not the same as mental distancing, and people need contact in many ways. Phone calls may be more important than emails or texts in this moment.
- Many pastors and chaplains are being turned away from hospitals and long-term care facilities right now, simply because scarce personal protective equipment has to go to medical staff. If you are struggling with how to minister in this situation, remember you can support doctors and nurses in this moment. They are at the beginning of a marathon, and could use your comforting words and prayers.
- If you have healthy congregants who are looking for something to do, ask them to be helpers for a family or two in your congregation who must stay in self-quarantine due to health issues. They can be the ones who bring food, medicine, and mail to those who can't leave their homes.
- Illinois is working on a small business loans package to help people get through the pandemic. Non-profits and churches will also be eligible for these loans, so watch the news for more information as this relief effort develops.
- Take time now to look up the number(s) of your local health department, or local major medical provider. Many are setting up COVID-19 testing hotlines to help potentially sick people know what to do and where to go. When someone calls you asking for assistance, you'll have the numbers ready.

Also, your Conference Minister, Rev. Shana Johnson, will be holding **online open office hours** this coming week for anyone who wants to pop in and ask questions, share information, or needs support. Please see attached tip sheet about how to enter a Zoom meeting.

Monday, March 23, 2020 at 10 am to noon

Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 10 am to noon

To join by video:

<https://zoom.us/j/7088890946> Meeting ID: 708 889 0946

To join by phone:

Dial 1 (312) 626- 6799

*Worship Resource*

Prayer for opening worship in stressful times, written by Rev. Ivan Horn

Time for reflection: As Christians, we must take responsibility for the well-being of others. We can be united in the spirit even as we are apart in the body. In fact, protecting the health of those around us is a powerful witness to our faith. As Jesus Christ always placed himself for the good of others above his own, so we too this morning, as we worship and as we live our daily lives cautiously, in our homes, any of us self-quarantining are placing the welfare of our human family in Christian order. With our faith in God, we can overcome these present difficulties, using the rational, scientific knowledge that we possess through our God-given intelligence. May God's comfort, guidance keep us all in the best of health and safety during these challenging times.

**O God, our help in all times of need, we give you thanks that you are present, just, merciful, loving and caring. We know and feel the strength of your presence as we humbly pray during these uncertain troubled times. Come to us with your divine helping grace helping us to have patience and strength to endure our tribulations of doubts, anxieties and especially the mammoth uncertainties of this crisis. You are our ultimate hope and refuge, "our mighty fortress, always ready to help in times of trouble." Our most urgent prayers are for those who have suffered from this virus and that you will comfort the many families where death has overcome them. We pray your infinite love and compassion will help turn all of these worries into comfort and bring to everyone your peace that passes all human understandings, praying in the name of Jesus, the risen Christ of our faith. Amen.**

Together in Christ's ministry with you,

Dr. Jill Baker, Conference Moderator  
Rev. Christy Eckert, Conference Vice-Moderator  
Mr. Dwight Asselmeier, Conference Treasurer  
Rev. Ivan Horn, Conference Secretary  
Rev. Shana Johnson, IL South Conference Minister

Rev. Rosemary Captain  
Ms. Virginia Ilch  
Rev. R.J. Morgan  
Rev. Mike Southcombe  
Ms. Barbara VanAusdall

## HOW TO ENTER AND PARTICIPATE IN A ZOOM SESSION

### **Before the video meeting:**

You will need a computer, tablet, or smartphone with speaker or headphones. You will have the opportunity to check your audio immediately upon joining a meeting. You will receive notice for a meeting from your meeting host.

This notification will include a link to “Join via computer” as well as a phone numbers for a conference call option. It will also include the 9-digit (usually) Meeting ID.

### **To join the video meeting:** <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-Meeting>

A few minutes before the start time of your meeting, click on the link in your invitation to join. You may be instructed to download the Zoom application.

### **Can't find the link:**

You may also join a meeting without clicking on the invitation link by going to [join.zoom.us](https://join.zoom.us) on any internet browser and entering the **Meeting ID** provided by your host.

### **Trouble hearing the meeting, join via telephone while remaining on the video conference:**

On your phone, dial the teleconferencing number provided in your meeting invitation.

Enter the Meeting ID number (also provided in your invitation) when prompted, using your dialpad

### **Participant controls via the icons in the lower-left corner of the Zoom screen, you can:**

Mute/Unmute your microphone (far left)

Turn on/off camera (“Start/Stop Video”)

Invite other participants

View Participant list – opens a pop-out screen that includes a “Raise Hand” icon that you may use to raise a virtual hand

Change your screen name that is seen in the participant list and video window

Share your screen

Somewhere on your Zoom screen, you will also see a choice to toggle between “speaker” and “gallery” view. “Speaker view” shows the active speaker.

“Gallery view” tiles all of the meeting participants.