



News of the Week September 1, 2021

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

For Pastor Rob Nedbalek's family as they mourn the death of his Sister in law, Lynette Hjorth, on Friday due to complications from Covid-19.

For all effected by the hurricane in the South and the fires in the West.



From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Westby
St. John's Lutheran Church, Westby

Pella Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sidney

The office will be closed Monday, September 6th in observance of Labor Day

Words from the Bishop: Joy in God's Life



From Churchwide: Regarding Individual Religious Objections to Required Vaccination



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Talking points on ELCA social teaching regarding vaccination during a pandemic
Prepared by Dr. Roger A. Wilke, Director for Theological Ethics, Office of the Presiding Bishop

Issue #1 Regarding Individual Religious Objections to Required Vaccination

Summary: ELCA leaders have encouraged participation in vaccination as a primary means to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. There is no ELCA policy resolution dedicated to vaccination, but a basis in Lutheran tradition and ELCA teaching for religious exemption is virtually non-existent. On the contrary both the Lutheran heritage and ELCA teaching encourage participation in public health efforts since health is a shared endeavor. A case can be made for medical exemptions, of course.

The Lutheran tradition: In Lutheran teaching, historically, medicine is considered a gift of God for the good of the community. This is true whether it concerns individual medical treatment or when established by official medical authorities in civil society and government. A little discussed aspect of the Reformation is its abandonment of the church's privilege in the 16th century to be exempted from rules and regulations established by the "community" or the "secular government." The ELCA certainly affirms the 1st amendment in the Bill of Rights but has never drawn upon that line of reasoning around health care issues.

Key points from ELCA Teaching: The primary source is Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor (CH:OSE)

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resources%20Oppositional/Health55.pdf?_ga=2.107516996.73183565.1630504205.130836996.1630504205

1) The central theme in CH:OSE is evident in the title: health is a shared endeavor. Health implications go beyond the domain of "my" personal body and rights. This comes into play because the health of the whole community is connected to each person's health. My health is related to yours; your health is related to mine. This church supports "a comprehensive approach to health care as a shared endeavor among individuals, churches, government, and the wider society." (2)

2) "When we understand health in this larger context, we realize that we cannot be healthy by ourselves." Rather, it is a moral responsibility, grounded in loving the neighbor, to help each other attain good health through our ways of living together and through supporting those who provide all forms of health care services and healing. (4)

3) "Health as a shared endeavor makes public health services, which focus on the population as a whole, the foundation for any health care system." The commitment urges moral and financial support for services undertaken "on behalf of the entire community to prevent epidemics, limit threats to health, promote healthy behavior, reduce injuries, assist in recovery from disasters, and ensure that people have access to needed services. Governments have an obligation to provide or organize many of these services, but all services depend on active collaboration with the entire community." (13)

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[Click Here to download the full document](#)

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The Synod Staff will not be traveling, except in the case of emergencies, in the month of September due to the rising numbers of

Covid cases. We will also not be holding any events in the Synod office during this time.

Also, masks are required in the Synod office and we ask that if you plan to come into the building for longer than a drop off, that you are vaccinated.

The Synod Office will be staffed, so please always feel free to contact us by phone or email.

LPA Class this October!

A new class of LPAs will be starting up this fall in Great Falls. If you have a candidate in mind from your congregation, or would like more information, please call the Synod office or email Candi!

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