



BEACON
March 2021
NEWSLETTER OF THE
STURGEON BAY & JACKSONPORT
UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES



WAYS TO CONNECT

The Sturgeon Bay/
 Jacksonport United Methodist Church
 Charge
 836 Michigan Street
 Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235
 920-743-3241

OUR WEBSITE

<https://www.sturgeonbayumc.org/>
 Or on YouTube Search David Leistra
 To Watch Pastor Dave's Sermons
 Online

FACEBOOK

Sturgeon Bay United Methodist
 Church Page For Coffee With The
 Pastor &
 Bible Studies

**ZOOM INTERACTIVE BIBLE
 STUDIES AND MEETINGS**

**For event times and access codes
 contact :**

David Leistra, Pastor
 pastorleistra@gmail.com
 Cell Phone 920-677-8607

WDOR Radio 93.9 FM 910 AM

Worship Service Sunday 9:30 AM

CHURCH OFFICE

Lorna Magliaro , Office Manager
 church.office@sturgeonbayumc.org
 920-743-3241



General Conference Postponed to 2022

Posted by: Commission on the General Conference

Meeting on February 20, the Commission on the General Conference made a decision to further postpone the 2020 General Conference until August 29 – September 6, 2022 in Minneapolis, Minn. as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect the safety of mass gatherings and travel.

It is the Commission's responsibility to select the site and set the dates of General Conference. Further, the *Book of Discipline* requires the Commission on the General Conference to "take necessary measures to assure full participation of all General Conference delegates." The Commission concluded that mandate was not achievable by means of either an in-person meeting in 2021 or a virtual meeting.

In making the decision, the Commission determined that it was not feasible to safely hold an in-person meeting involving all delegates as currently scheduled for August 29 - September 7, 2021 due to a number of barriers. The number of COVID cases continues to rise, with nearly 2.49 million confirmed cases the week of February 15.

Vaccine is not expected to be widely available this year in many countries, and new variants of the virus which may be resistant to vaccines are emerging globally.

MARCH 2021 LETTER FROM PASTOR DAVE



Hello Friends,

Living in Wisconsin I am always glad to see March 1st show-up on the calendar. I know it means that Spring is near. It was the second Sunday in March of 2020 that our church stopped having the building open for public worship and other activities. At the time some of us thought that we ought to be able to reopen for Easter Sunday, that did not happen. While the Jacksonport Church held outdoor services during the Summer months with social distancing and other precautions, here at the Sturgeon Bay Church we thought if we could just hold out till the start of the school year maybe by then we could reopen our doors, however the pandemic raged on. Finally, I said I just do not know how we can stay closed for Christmas Eve, none-the-less we stayed closed. Now I am fairly sure that we will not be able to open our building, even to small numbers of people, until after Easter this year. The reason our church building is closed, while some others are opened, has to do with the nature of our facilities and is not in any-way due to some outside governmental or religious authority telling us we must. We have kept our buildings closed because our church leaders and I decided it was the best way to "Do no Harm," a basic tenant of our faith. Some people have referred to our church as being closed even though it is only the building that is not opened, and that we offer regular worship and programing via electronic means and continue to support the ministries in our community as in the past even if under the limitations imposed by Covid-19. Others have wanted to make our being closed about politics and suggest we must be among those who do not care about people's livelihoods, or worse in our case their spiritual needs. I wonder how many of those people who have mischaracterized our motives are aware of the cost to a church such as ours in keeping the doors locked during a pandemic: the loss of financial support; having some of you going to other churches that have in-person or parking lot worship services; and the possibility that some of you might now prefer the virtual services and don't plan to return to in-person worship, and these are just to name a few of such costs and potential costs. We can and will recover from these and other losses we have experienced as we slowly return to what were those activities that have made our church a great place to be a part of. However, the speed and success of that recovery will depend on all of us supporting the church financially, utilizing what we are able to offer during these days when the buildings are closed, and then with our presence in the life of the church when in-person worship and programing is possible once again.

How we have dealt with this pandemic in our own lives may have been outside much of our control. It may be that you had no choice but to be in a workplace where social distancing was not practical, or you, like one of my sons, work in a medical facility wherein those sick with Covid-19 were being treated, or the move to working at home was not possible for the work you do, or maybe you were exposed to and contracted this disease simply trying to buy the groceries your family needs to live. We have been blessed here at SBUMC that we had the technology and capability to move to virtual worship and programing and I am grateful to all of you who made that possible through our capital campaign. I hope the lessons learned during this pandemic are not soon forgotten. Our lives are lived in community which includes God, church, family both nuclear and extended, and other friends and neighbors. It is our own unique community that allows us to make sense of our life and enriches it. It is at such times in life as those we are now living in that we see just how important our community is to us. We are coming out of this pandemic, and at some point, perhaps even this Summer, we will begin to put it behind us by restoring those things that have been lost to us in this past year. Let your relationship with your church be one of the first places that you begin. We have all been given an important lesson over this last year about what really matters in life. I hope what this time has taught us is not lost to us as the doors open once again on our lives and we all seek to return to normalcy.

Blessings, Pastor Dave

Soul FOOD

Journey - By Hee-Soo Jung

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. (Mark 1:12-13)



My beloved Wisconsin siblings in Christ, we enter again into the period of Lent through the archway of Ash Wednesday, a day of repentance, contrition, and *kenosis* (self-emptying and abasement). We follow the footsteps of Jesus, sent by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness for forty days. During this Lenten period leading to Holy Week and Easter, we tend to focus on temptations by Satan and the threat and danger of the wild beasts, but this year I invite us to focus on the angels.

Most people in the United States tend to focus on destinations – places we want to go, things we want to accomplish, people we want to meet, things we want to own. Ends justify means, and we don't give much thought to our processes of movement, preparation, saving, or planning. Process is simply not as important to many of us as outcomes and achievements. The "what" is a greater motivator than the "how".

Thirty-five years ago, Nell Morton wrote a wonderful book called, *The Journey is Home*, sharing stories and reflections on the rise of women's leadership in the Christian faith. The title of this book contains a profound truth of our walk with Jesus – the journey is home, it is exactly where God wants us to be.

Wilderness is scary to us because it is unfamiliar, uncomfortable, and unknown. But the best way to get to know wilderness – to make friends with it – is to enter fully in. A few days is not enough. A couple of weeks is not enough.

The gift of forty days (with all of its rich and great theological meaning) is just long enough – either we will make friends with wilderness or wilderness just might defeat us. It is both a challenge and an opportunity.

SOUL FOOD Cont...

Nature provides many challenges that are neither good nor bad, but they just are – God's creation acting with integrity. Human beings enter wilderness with risk, but also with an incredible capacity to learn, to adapt, to grow, and to improve. Survival skills allow us not only to survive, but to thrive, and it takes time to develop them.

Jesus' forty days in the wilderness is a metaphor for our entire lives of faith – we walk through unknown and unfamiliar territory, learning as we go, hopefully improving and thriving (with God's help). We face limitless temptations and multiple forms of "wild beasts," but in our faith, we never face these alone. We go with God, filled by the Holy Spirit, attended by angelic forces, walking with Jesus, and in the loving grace of a community of Christian friends. This is the journey.

Too often, we seek to leap to Easter, ignoring the wilderness, the work, the sacrifice, the danger, and the challenges we encounter before we get there. But the journey is more important than the destination. God has already taken care of the ending. Our task is to make the journey of life wisely and well. We strive to become more Christ-like, mastering the survival skills to travel our road with integrity and grace. We learn to be more loving, more caring, more giving, more merciful. We become kinder, gentler, patient, and just. We forgive more, share more, and serve more. We are peace-makers, peace-builders, peace-keepers, and peace-lovers. We reject the -isms and phobias that do harm, commit violence, and seek to destroy – sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, xenophobia. We send Satan fleeing by laughing in the devil's face, choosing instead to pursue God with all our heart, mind, soul, and spirit; choosing to love every child of God on earth as we love ourselves.

The journey is our home. This home created for us by a loving and mighty God. This home decorated with all the equipment we need to live faithfully in our world. This home filled to overflowing with the energy and power of the Holy Spirit. My friends, during this Lententide, enter not a wilderness of danger and threat, but a place where you – where we all – belong. I am excited to take this journey with you. Thanks be to God.

MISSIONS - This Month J-Walkers

Hi! My name is Angel and many of you may know me but for those who don't, I am part of a group called J-Walkers. We are the young adult group in this church and we put on many intergeneration events. We also have a mission that we take care of. We sponsor 3 children in all different countries. Rabiul in Bangladesh, Dinknesh in Ethiopia, and Lonia from Zambia. We have been sponsoring for at least 3 years now and hope to be able to keep this as a mission for the young adult group as it gets passed down from those of us that are getting older. Any contributions that you can make towards this mission will be gratefully appreciated. God Bless you.



Monthly Missions 2021	
January - UMCOR Covid 19 Response Fund	\$310.00
February - Backpack Buddies	\$35.00
March - "J" Walkers	
April - Midwest Mission Dist. Center	
May - Restoring Hope Transplant House	
June -	
July -	
August -	
September -	
October -	
November -	
December -	
2021 Monthly Missions Total	\$345.00

PRAYER & PRAISE REPORT



PRAYER LIST FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING & COMFORT	
Doris Kniffin	Jim and Shirley Talmadge
Evelyn Mueller	Jerry Wick
Barb Riederer	Dottie Haviland
Dick & Dottie Shappell	Dorothy Berg
Phyllis Swagel	Vernon Augustine
Michael Olson	Dianne Benishek
Jan Haertel	Marjorie Gambrel
Walter Alvin	Elva Spetz
Edith Wilber	
Prayers for the family of Esther Eshelman who passed away February 11, 2021.	
Prayers for those in our community that they may receive Covid-19 vaccines as soon as possible.	
Prayers for all the children attending school and the staff. May they stay safe and well during the pandemic.	
Prayers for all medical, fire, police, grocers, caregivers, all on the Front Line	
Prayers needed for those who are struggling with financial hardships and illness during this difficult time.	

Churches serve as warming centers, shelters

By Sam Hodges Dallas UM News

United Methodist churches scrambled to open as warming centers and overnight shelters after historic winter storms earlier this month left [nearly 3 million homes in Texas without electricity](#) in sub-freezing temperatures.

As of Feb. 18, more than a half million Texas homes still had no power, and many had either low water pressure or no water due to struggling local water systems. Broken pipes and flooding were making some residences uninhabitable.

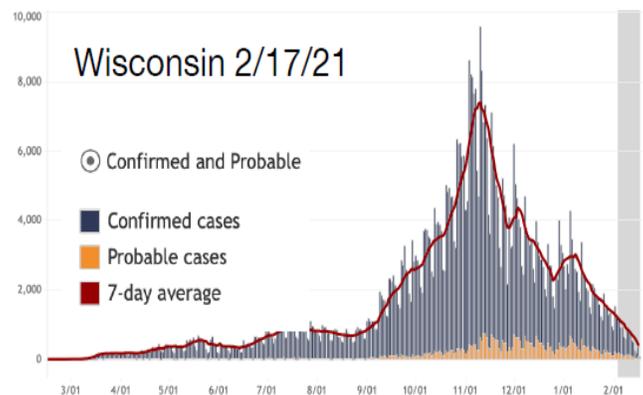
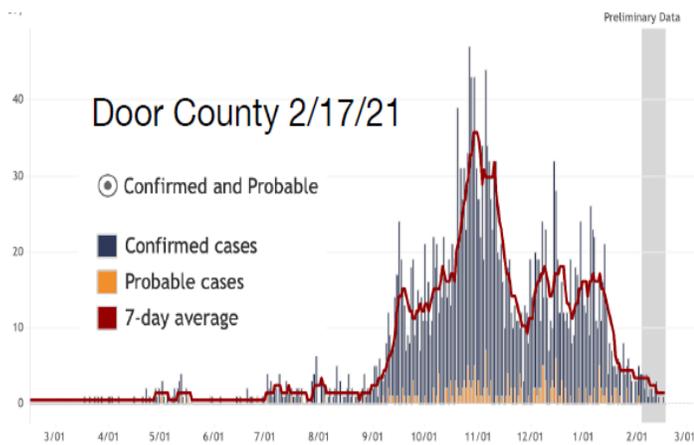
"We've been saying for the last year, during the pandemic, that the church is not the building, yet the building is what people need in terms of having shelter," said the Rev. Clayton Oliphint, pastor of First United Methodist Church in Richardson, Texas.

His church and others — across Texas as well as Arkansas, Oklahoma and Missouri — offered people a place to warm up, charge devices and get something to eat.



UPDATE COVID 19 By Dr. Rod Krueger

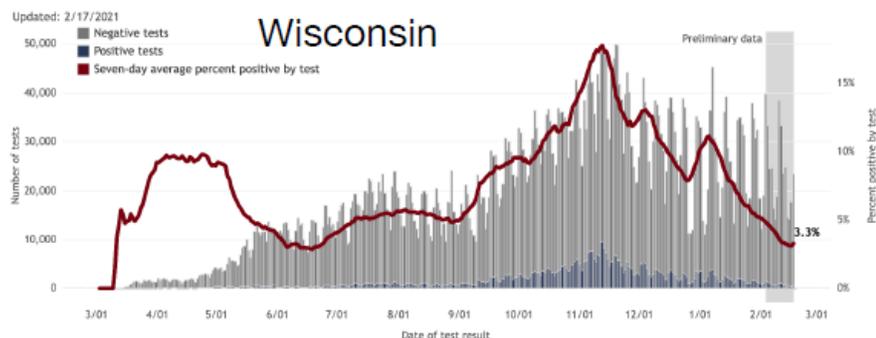
We are living in unprecedented times as we deal with the COVID19 Pandemic. Our church has been closed for services for over a year now. We are so ready for this to be over. We long for any semblance of normality. The question is whether it is possible? I would like to share with you my perspective. Although I have a medical background, I certainly don't have all the answers or even the questions needed, but will try to give a personal perspective on the issue. The following two graphs show Confirmed and Probable Cases of COVID over the last year in Wisconsin and Door County. They show that during the first half of last year, we were doing fairly well, and far better than some other states. Then the fall hit bringing colder weather and lots of tourists to view the Door County Color. Cases started to rise at an exponential rate. Cases in the state and Door County peaked around mid November with number of new cases being over 7,000 for our state on a given day. There was a brief respite, and then came the Christmas holidays during which we had another surge. Finally by mid January of 2021 we started to see a decrease. That trend has continued and we are now at levels similar to August. We have weathered the storm, but paid a high price in terms of death and stress on our healthcare system as well as other front-line jobs.



Why have the numbers improved since mid January? I firmly believe most important, we took this pandemic more serious. We had accumulated data which proved that public health measures (wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, traveling only when absolutely necessary, practicing good hand washing and strict cleaning measures made a big difference. We could protect ourselves and others by caring for each other, and doing the right things. We also realized that if we don't follow these public health measures we will see a significant increase in the spread of the virus. At the present time this is our best method to control viral spread. How do we know when it is safe to reopen? This is the big question and as we learn more about the Sars Cov 2 virus, we have some answers but also more questions. First of all we need to know about the **virus activity in our area**. There are a number of things that we can follow. The first is following the number of new cases as described in the above graphs. We can also follow testing. In particular we can follow the Percent Positivity. This is the number of positive tests divided by the total number of tests over a set period of time. The following graph shows the Percent Positivity of Tests for Wisconsin. Early on the Percent Positivity was high mainly because not enough tests were being done. Later the increase in Positivity was more related to the activity of the virus in the state. Testing is crucial in managing the virus. It allows us to identify areas of high activity. We can then do "Contact Tracing" to identify who were in contact with those infected. Isolation and quarantine can then be used to control spread. The World Health Organization feels that the Percent Positivity by Tests has to be less than 5% to allow for adequate Contact Tracing to occur. In addition many feel that testing only symptomatic people will miss as many as 40% of people who are infected but not symptomatic. The Percent Positivity for Wisconsin in the last 7 days was 3.2%. It was 1.6% for Door County.

Second we can look at **“Case Activity”**. This level is based on the number of cases per 100,000 residents and the current trajectory (increasing, same, or decreasing). The most recent Case Activity for Door County is “High” at 131.9 per 100,000 residents and showing no significant change. Of note the case activity for Door County the end of January was “Very High” at 438 per 100,000. We can also look at Emergency Department visits and monitor the

7-day percent positive by test, total tests by day

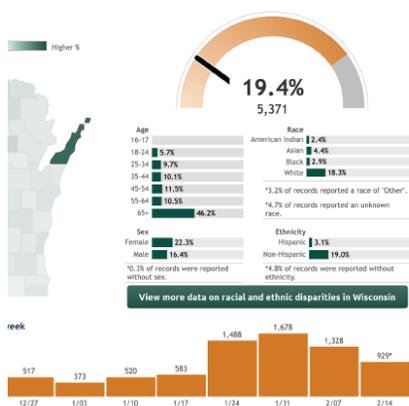


number of people with COVID-like symptoms as well as those who have Influenza-like symptoms. Of note we are seeing less people with Influenza-like symptoms. This might be another indication that public health measures like wearing masks, and social distancing, etc. are having a positive effect. We can also look at Emergency Department visits and monitor the number of people with COVID-like symptoms as well as those who have Influenza-like symptoms. Of note we are seeing less people with Influenza-like symptoms. This

might be another indication that public health measures like wearing masks, and social distancing, etc. are having a positive effect.

A third consideration is the presence **variants** in the virus. When Sars Cov 2 virus multiplies there is always a possibility of producing a new variant. The more virus available to replicate the greater the chance of seeing new variants. One of those variants is B.1.1.7 is a strain first discovered in England. There it has become the dominant strain. It could become dominant in the US by mid March. It appears to be more infective than the wild strain, and it may also be more lethal. There are several other variants also present in the US. Vaccines currently in use appear to offer significant protection against getting a severe illness with these variants. Present public health measures such as wearing masks, social distancing, hand washing etc. are our best means of containing the spread of them.

A fourth consideration is available **vaccines**. Currently there are 2 vaccines available, the Pfizer vaccine and the Moderna vaccine. Both require two injections with the Pfizer vaccine given 3 weeks apart and the Moderna vaccine given 4 weeks apart. In Door County vaccine is being administered to nursing homes and assisted living places. Currently, eligibility for vaccination in Wisconsin are people in Skilled Nursing & Assisted Living Facilities, front line health care workers, police, fire, correctional staff, and people >65 years of age. At the present time 1,070,199 doses have been administered. In Door County there are 3 options for receiving vaccine; Public Health, Door County Medical Center, and Walgreens. Sign up can be done through their respective websites. It has been frustrating since demand is far greater than current availability. At the time of this writing only, Door County Medical Center dcmedical.org is taking names for registration. As more vaccine becomes available, Walgreens and Public Health will resume scheduling. Pres-



ently 5,371 or 19.4% of Door County residents have received at least 1 dose of the vaccine. This represents 46.2% of residents >65 years of age. Other vaccines are about to be approved which will increase the supply to meet the demand. So what does this mean as far as reopening. My personal feeling is we need to be patient. We need to follow vaccinations being given and the role that variants are playing for the next few weeks. Our virus activity is decreasing, but still remains high. If we can continue to decrease activity levels and increase the number of vaccinations, we will be in better shape to consider starting a phased-in opening. If on the other hand the variants become more of an issue and cause a spike in cases, it would be too risky to open up. In either case public health measures such as wearing masks, social distancing, and good hand washing will remain the most important step to open up safely. Even after we receive the vaccine we have to continue follow these practices. We have come too far at too great a cost to risk becoming the start of a new surge. I believe that what we do in the next few weeks will be a major factor in our success or failure to deal with this pandemic. Finally if you are having difficulty getting registered for the vaccine, please contact our church office. We will help you get it done. We can get through this together. God Bless! Rod Krueger



Stewardship / Giving in Generosity – 2021

Do you consider yourself a generous person? Do you consider your congregation as one that is generous in its giving?

This year, we enter the final year of our 3-year stewardship program, “**First We Give of Ourselves**”. The basis of our theme is the Bible passage from **2 Corinthians 8:5** where the Apostle Paul describes the generosity of the Macedonian Christians as “giving of themselves”. As we contemplate what it means to give of ourselves and our gifts to God, grace, gratitude and generosity become very important parts of the conversation about what it means to be a disciple and steward of God’s gifts. In the first year, our emphasis was on “Giving in Grace”. Last year, we explored what it means to “Give in Gratitude”. Now in 2021, the third year of emphasis focuses our attention to the topic of generosity and what it means to “**Give in Generosity**” as God’s people in Christ. What does God’s generosity look like? How do we live each day in God’s generosity?

In addition to our main focus of raising funds for the 2021 church year, we will look at how, as a congregation of Christians, we can expand our **Giving in Generosity** and grow in our understanding of stewardship of our time and talents, in our church and community.

We ask you to focus on the following three components we feel are important to incorporating what “Giving in Generosity” is all about:

Bringing the Spirit of Christ to Our Community

Serving God’s People in Our Community

Learning and Working Together in Generosity

You will be soon be hearing about ways you can expand your knowledge of **Giving in Generosity**, both spiritually and in practice.

Please prayerfully consider how you can give of yourself in generosity. In your prayerful contemplation, you are invited to consider sharing a tithe (10% of one’s income) as your grateful response to God’s giving. **Pledge information will be mailed out soon. Pledge cards are also available in the church office.**

Please also consider sharing your God given time and talents in the many areas our church has need. Together, we can grow in and share the delight of generosity of all that God has blessed us with.

On Behalf of your Stewardship team,
Sheila Klansky

PROGRAMS AVAILABLE For Door County Residents

RENTAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

To help keep struggling Door County residents from being evicted from their homes during the pandemic and resulting recession, the Door County Community Foundation and the United Way of Door County have partnered with Lakeshore CAP to offer an expanded Rental Assistance Program. Support for this program is coming from the Door County Emergency Response Fund.

You might be eligible for assistance if all the following criteria apply to you:

- Lease an apartment, duplex, single family home, or trailer in Door County as your sole residence.
- You've lost your job or seen your hours reduced at anytime since March 25, 2020 because of COVID-19 or the current economic recession.
- Exhausted your savings and are now unable to meet your financial obligations.

You will be asked to provide documentation to Lakeshore CAP, including proof of a change in income, bank statements, and your lease. Lakeshore CAP will keep that information highly confidential.

HEALTH CARE FOR THE UNINSURED - HEALTH CARE.GOV

We are reaching about the new COVID-19 Special Enrollment Period (SEP) for those who need to purchase their own health insurance, either for themselves or their families. This SEP was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its purpose is to reach those who are still without health coverage in this challenging time. This Special Enrollment Period is for insurance that is offered on the ACA Marketplace (Healthcare.gov) and is available for purchase with no health restrictions between February 15 and May 15, 2021.

We are Common Ground Healthcare Cooperative (CGHC), a Wisconsin, not-for-profit and member-governed organization. We are committed to offer "Honest Health Insurance" and live by our mission of Putting Members First and Pursuing Better Healthcare.

Please send an email to: kgresk@commongroundhealthcare.org or contact CGHC sales team at 855.494.2667

Sincerely,
Common Ground Healthcare Cooperative

WOMAN'S FUND ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

The Women's Fund of Door County is pleased to announce that it is accepting applications from local charities for its Spring 2021 Grant Cycle.

The Women's Fund seeks to utilize the ideas and expertise of non-profit groups and community agencies to confront and solve issues of relevance to Door County women and girls. Through its grants to charitable agencies, the Women's Fund seeks to enable women and girls to reach their full potential. Every year roughly \$35,000 is distributed into the community in Sustainability Grants. These grants provide critical operational support for charities that improve the quality of life for women and girls of Door County.

Grant applications are due Monday, March 15th. Please contact the Community Foundation for more information at:

info@womensfunddoorcounty.org

GRANTS AWARDED TO LEGAL AID SOCIETY & DOOR COUNTY FOOD PANTRY

The Emergency Response Fund has recently awarded a grant to the Legal Aid Society of Door County. The grant dollars will be used to provide information and access to the legal system for low-income Door County residents during the pandemic.

The health and economic crisis is causing an increase in domestic violence, bankruptcies, evictions, and several other issues that necessitate the need for an attorney. This assistance will allow Legal Aid to serve more clients who are struggling during this difficult time.

The Door County Food Pantry Coalition recently received a grant from the Emergency Response Fund. This grant will support local food pantries.

Our 8 local food pantries, working in partnership with United Way and the Community Foundation, have created the Door County Food Pantry Coalition. It's our community's coordinated, sustainable response to providing food to people who are struggling during the global pandemic and economic recession.

Individual people who need help during this crisis should visit www.Get211.org or dial 211.