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Dear friends,

It seems the word for me this week is Connected. It is one of those words that keep popping up in various places.

Last week I was in an online training. One of the speakers talked about being connected to local growers; much like we talk about fair trade farming. The one example given was that the company could produce everything they needed in about 3000 acres with five workers if they grew the crop commercially in the United States. But, in accordance with their operating principles, they chose to work with 1000 small farms in Bulgaria and France; each receiving fair wages at the time of harvest. One person listening questioned the fact that if they could grow it cheaper commercially, the company could lower the price and make it more affordable for more people. The answer was the connection to the local farmer and helping individuals takes priority.

This past week, in Ohio, we have had at least two law enforcement officers die by suicide – during suicide awareness month! I asked an officer how, as a Chaplain, I might help prevent this from happening in our agency. His answer was to build connections.

Connection was also the take-away from an article about moving from streaming worship online to interacting online as a way of connecting and keep our communities from trickling off never to be seen again due to the passivity of streaming worship.

As we move into the fall season, while looking ahead to Advent and Christmas, how are you maintaining the connections? What is working well in your setting? What might you need help figuring out?

One of the ways to be connected with others is the Christian Education Network of the ELCA Facebook group. It is a great collection of wisdom and experience. During this time of pivoting into new ways of doing ministry, we do not need to struggle on our own because, wherever you are, you are not alone.

So, please take care of yourselves. Reach out and stay connected. And remember, you are not alone.

Blessings on our journey,

The Rev. Juli Lejman-Guy, President

<https://churchleaders.com/worship/worship-articles/381722-streaming-video-is-not-the-same-as-church-online.html>

“...that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love...”
Colossians 2.2 (NIV)