

Written by Rev. Peder Johanson, Brodhead, WI

PSA for anyone connected to a church:

This has been a hard year for pastors, especially in denominations where care and concern for public health has led to building closures. I have noticed in recent weeks an increase in the frequency and severity of heartbreaking stories from colleagues: Pastors being threatened with their job if they don't hold in-person worship, against the better judgment of national/state/local health officials and advice of their bishops. Secret meetings taking place to intimidate and bully pastors and those who support them. Unsolicited (and frankly, unhelpful) critique of the digital content they are doing their very best to create every week. Complaints or suggestions that raise expectations without offering any help to make it happen. And remember, most of us never even tried creating such content and are doing it for an audience that wasn't even familiar with accessing or consuming it to begin with. And while I haven't been recording a tally, I am all but certain the majority of pastors taking the biggest hits are women. No surprise there. [Read full text here.](#)

I get it. I know we are all exhausted and our patience is running low. We're sad. We miss the familiar. We miss our families. We miss our sanctuaries and liturgy. As pastors, we all expect anxieties to run higher as we approach Christmas. But bear in mind that your pastors are also exhausted, sad, lonely, and anxious. Let's give each other grace for Christmas. Please.

And if your pastor is a woman, thank God that your church was brave and bold enough to recognize the gifts of women in ministry after all these centuries of institutionalized discrimination, and that your congregation has a pastor with enough passion for the gospel to work against all the bullshit that comes with being a woman in a collar. Seriously, patriarchy and sexism are sins that still have a hold on the most "progressive" of denominations. Check your bias and check in on your leaders. That is all.

Disclaimer: I have been consistently and lovingly supported by my council and congregation throughout this year. It has been hard, to be sure, but not from the issues highlighted above. My experience, it seems, is the exception at this point.