



In these days of online worship services and social distancing, you may think that your congregation's social ministry outreach is on-hold.

You are doing more good right now than you realize.



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) is the social ministry organization of the three ELCA synods in Illinois.

With your financial and prayer support, we act on your behalf to bring healing, justice, and wholeness to people and communities.





Good Shepherd/LSSI Sunday is held each year in ELCA congregations across Illinois during the season of Easter. This is an opportunity to recognize the powerful ministry we share and celebrate the hope it brings to so many people.





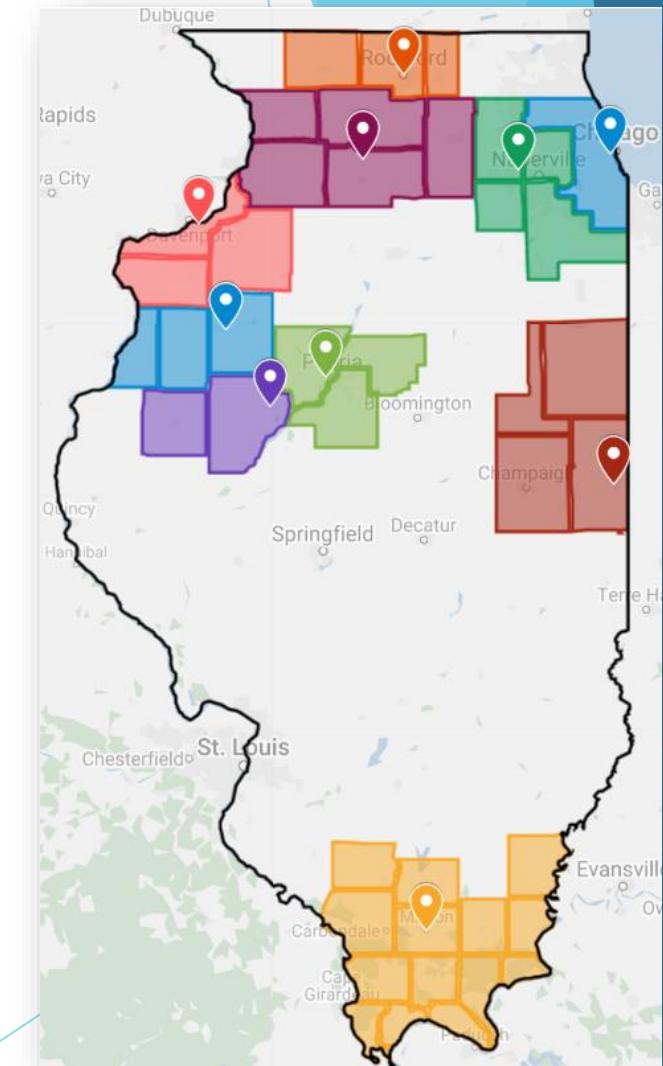
LSSI's programs are essential under the Governor's Stay at Home Executive Order. As such, our work goes on in the midst of this pandemic.

When possible, our staff is working from home, but many of our employees continue direct services to the public.





LSSI has been entrusted by the Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund (ICRF) with funds to provide basic needs assistance to individuals and families across the state, with an emphasis on supporting our Foster Care and Intact Family Services families during this difficult time.





LSSI provides many services, including foster care, mental health and addiction treatment, residential homes for people with developmental disabilities, senior services, and programs that help people and families impacted by incarceration.

Here is a closer look at one program –
Storybook Project.



Since 1981, LSSI has provided **Prisoner and Family Ministry** services in Illinois, with the goal of connecting individuals and families impacted by incarceration to necessary services. Storybook Project is an LSSI facilitated program throughout the state that allows incarcerated parents to record themselves reading a book to their children.





With the help of dedicated, well-trained volunteers and donated children's books, incarcerated moms and dads select a book at the appropriate reading level of their child. When a book is chosen, a volunteer sits with the parent to record the story that is then burned onto a CD. The recording and book are mailed to the children at no cost to the family. Parents are encouraged to share an encouraging message with their child, with most parents adding "I love you, I miss you, I can't wait to see you" at the end of their recordings.





T.J. Easley first learned about the Storybook in his career as a corrections officer. T.J. recently retired and decided to go back into prisons and jails because he saw the impact of the program.

"You have these gangbangers, and guys from the Aryan Brotherhood, and bikers from Hell's Angels – they sit down and read a book to their child and break down in tears," he said. "These are supposed to be hardcore inmates. When you see that and you see God's work there, if you don't walk away with a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye you're not human."





Each of the three ELCA synods has been given a \$5,000 matching gift from individual donors.

**Your donation right now will be matched,
dollar-for-dollar, up to \$5,000.**



Please give today to support
the Storybook Project and
other essential LSSI services.

You can give online at
www.lssi.org or by scanning
this code right now.





Thank YOU!

LSSI is a ministry of the ELCA and we could not do what we do without the support of congregations and individuals like you!

We hope to see you in person again soon.

