



North/ West Lower Michigan Synod

2900 N. Waverly Rd.
Lansing, MI 48906

517-321-5066

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The Gift of Holy Week

The April newsletter will reach you Monday in Holy Week. When I was in parish pastor, we worked hard to get all church business done by the Friday before Palm Sunday, so that Holy Week was devoted to daily worship. I've not been as successful as a bishop; I have an audit committee meeting on Tuesday. But in the spirit of letting Holy Week be about Holy Week, I am laying aside church business in this newsletter article to reflect on the gift of Holy Week.¹

As we journey through Holy Week, we will see that the Gospel writers used the language and images of Passover to present and interpret Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. It is not surprising, then, that the Passover, the center of the Jewish year as commemoration of deliverance from slavery to freedom, became equally important for Christians. In 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, for example, Paul deliberately takes over the language of the Jewish Feast of Unleavened Bread and calls Christ our paschal lamb, which has been sacrificed for us. Over time, the Church came to understand the Passover themes of slavery and redemption as the release from sin and death through Christ's death and resurrection. Christ's passion, death, and resurrection were all commemorated together at the Easter Vigil with services signifying the making of new Christians through baptism, laying on of hands, and first communion.

In the fourth century, as throngs of pilgrims from all over the world arrived in Jerusalem—the place of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection—the church in Jerusalem determined to divide the celebration of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection into distinct commemorations and hold a special service at the holy place where each event occurred. The Jerusalem church combed the Bible for hints of days and places and Holy Week was born. In addition, the crowds of pilgrims visiting the sacred sites provided a congregation and context for each service. The end of persecution brought the construction of church buildings on the holy places where unique services could be held. All these factors contributed to the Holy Week services that shape the Church's observance of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection today.

Egeria (C.E. 383), a Spanish pilgrim, described the services in detail because they were novel.² Palm Sunday was the beginning of "the Great Week." People gathered at the Mount of Olives and went before the bishop carting palms and branches and singing psalms and antiphons, repeating "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Minor services were then held the next three days, except on Wednesday when the presbyter (priest) read about Judas' plot to betray Jesus and the people groaned and lamented at this reading. Thursday included communion and a trip to Gethsemane.

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Following services throughout Thursday night, the assembly processed from Gethsemane to the Sanctuary of the Cross, where the account of Jesus' trial before Pilate was read. The procession then moved to the column where Jesus was flogged. After going home to rest, the people returned to the Sanctuary of the Cross, where a casket containing a relic holding what was believed to be wood from the cross was placed before the bishop on a linen covered table. The people filed past, touching the cross and kissing the wood. From noon until three o'clock, Scripture about the Passion from the psalms and the prophets, Acts or the epistles, as well as the gospels was read. Prayers appropriate to the day were said between the readings. At three o'clock, John's account of Jesus' death was read and the service ended shortly thereafter. In the evening, the congregation reconvened in the Sanctuary of the Resurrection, where the account of Jesus' burial was read. All who were able maintained a vigil there throughout the night. Pilgrims like Egeria took these experiences home with them. While it was necessary to modify these services as they moved beyond Jerusalem, as complete realism was only possible there, by the end of the fourth century, these days were accepted as required observances throughout the church. Particularly after the Second Vatican Council, the ceremonies held in fourth century Jerusalem became the model of the Church's Holy Week observances.

The history of Holy Week reveals powerful liturgical acts. In addition to responding to the narrative of Christ's final work through sermons, the Church waves palms, washes feet, venerates the cross, lights a new fire, follows the light of the paschal candle, sings, baptizes, and proclaims Christ by eating the bread and drinking the cup.

Holy Week is about Jesus. It is the week when the Church remembers and commemorates Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection. This is not the time to think about being like Jesus because we cannot possibly do what Jesus does for us this week. If we need to place ourselves in this week, be clear that on Sunday we crucify, on Monday we protest with Judas, on Tuesday we wish to see Jesus, on Wednesday we betray, on Thursday we resist having our feet washed and join in stripping Jesus, and on Friday we are anyone at the cross, so that on Saturday we might be raised with Christ.

I wish you a most holy week!

Peace,

The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop

¹Craig Alan Satterlee, "Holy Week," New Proclamation Year A 2011, Advent through Holy Week, ed. David B. Lott, Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN, 2010, pp. 191-248.

²Egeria, Travels, 30-38, trans. John Wilkinson (London: SPCK, 1971), pp. 132-138.

Stewardship and Giving in Our Time

Stewardship and Giving in a Changing World

For many people in churches around the country the fear is, "The Sky Is Falling." Their mantra is: "People are not giving like they used to and we do not have people or money to sustain what we have." However, the sky is not falling. While it is true that people don't give like they used to and many churches do not have the people or money to sustain what they have, there is hope. According to GivingUSA, charitable giving passed the \$4 billion mark in 2018 for the first time ever. Giving to religious organizations still tops the list with 31% of all charitable giving.

People Don't Give Like They Use To

Every generation gives differently. Churches have to have a variety of ways that people can give. Less than 25% of church goes surveyed nationally want a box of weekly envelopes. As many as 68% want digital options. Digital donors are not just millennials. There has been a 10% increase in digital giving by those over 50 years of age. As many as 39% of smartphone users payed a bill or donated digitally in the last month. Mobile donations have increased by over 200% in the last year. Giving letters, ways to give, and challenges to give have to be tailored to meet the practices of each generation.

People don't give like they use to because there has been so much corruption and mismanagement of funds that people now want proof that an organization, including a church, actually does what it says it is going to do. People need to hear the stories or experience the church actually touching the lives of real people. One of the best ways to cultivate a donor is to have them help with an outreach where they get to have real face to face contact with another person and accompany them for a while in their walk of life.

Many Churches Do Not Have the People or Money to Sustain What They Have

We have buildings that were built for an era that is past. Now, we often see 60 people worshipping weekly in a sanctuary that seats 500, staffing for 1,000 members that's down to 300, and no new outreach or engagement with neighborhoods that have changed. We have to be open to what God is doing now.

Many churches are inviting the community in, partnering with community organizations, and sharing space with outreach and social service organizations that are touching the lives of people within the sound of the church bell. The church was not called into being to be a club that preserves the past. It gathers to remember the past and be propelled into the future and wherever God calls it to go.

Many have grown up with different values about money. In the US, people over 60 years of age are still paying on student loans, 1/3 of Americans can only afford to pay the interest on their credit card debt, and there is no guarantee that a person graduating from college now will ever climb the salary scale in the same way that their parents or grandparents did.

The world is changing and the way people give is changing, but people are still generous. God is still generous. God gives so much more that we deserve or need. The church is still the primary way that people give. Share the stories, be the church that "has left the building", and model generosity in all things.

The Rev. David E. Sprang, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission

Voices Heard

By Rev. Julie Bailey

"I am hungry to have my voice heard," said Makenna Dawson at the 2018 Great Lakes Youth Gathering. Makenna, a sophomore from Swan Valley High School in Saginaw and a member of Ascension Lutheran Church, has been finding her voice in the church and in the community.

Along with Hanisi Smith, a sophomore at Cadillac High School and a member of Zion Lutheran Church, they are making sure the voice of our young leaders are being heard.

Makenna and Hanisi serve on the ELCA's Youth Core Leadership Team, a partnership between the Synodical Youth Ministry Leadership and the ELCA Churchwide Expression for the purpose of providing intentional leadership development and faith formation for high school youth. Youth who are passionate about their faith, the church and who exhibit leadership gifts in their context are encouraged to apply for one of six two-year terms. Makenna is currently serving her second year, Hanisi is serving her first year. These youth were lifted up by their congregations and synods as leaders, and selected from youth throughout the ELCA. They are required to attend two gatherings each year, one held in Chicago in the spring and the Youth Leadership Summit during the first weekend in November.

Makenna has been a participant in the Multicultural Youth Leadership, and both attended the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event in Houston in 2018 as the only youth representation from our synod. Both attended the synod youth summit and are active in their congregations. Makenna assists in the planning of a new worship service and Hanisi has been elected to serve as secretary of her congregation council.



Makenna Dawson and Hanisi Smith at the Youth Core Leadership Team in Chicago in March 2019.

Called to Be Living Stones in a Changing World

North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly 2019

May 16-18, 2019

Comfort Inn & Suites, Mt. Pleasant



The North/West Lower Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will meet in Assembly May 16-18, 2019 at the Comfort Inn and Suites and Conference Center in Mt. Pleasant, MI. The theme for this year's Assembly is "Called to be Living Stones in a Changing World", deriving from the Apostle Peter's words to Christians in 1 Peter 2:5: "You yourselves like living stones are being built as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Registration is now open! Early Bird registration will conclude on April 24th. The final day to register for the Assembly is May 1st. Register Now: <https://bit.ly/2tmZCAH>

For more information about Synod Assembly, visit the Assembly page of the Synod website:

<https://bit.ly/2If29Ho>

Synod Finances

as of March 31, 2019

March Revenue and Support		Year to Date Revenue and Support	
Mission Support	\$ 120,413	Mission Support	\$ 236,013
Other	\$ 17,675	Other	\$ 21,922
Total	\$ 138,089	Total	\$ 257,935
February Expenses		Year to Date Expenses	
Support to ELCA	\$ 60,207	Support to ELCA	\$ 118,006
Other	\$ 90,666	Other	\$ 145,975
Total	\$ 150,872	Total	\$ 263,982
Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$ 0	Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$ 0
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (12,784)	Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (6,047)

Fall Theological Event

Clergy and their spouses are invited to a theological retreat this fall at Mackinac Island. Centered on the theme "Engaging Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Discipleship, Life Together, and His Theology of the Cross", the keynote speaker will be Rev. Matthew L. Becker, Ph.D., Professor of Theology at Valparaiso University.

This event will be held Sunday-Thursday, October 6-8, 2019 at the Mission Point Resort on Mackinac Island. All registrations must be mailed to the Northern Great Lakes Synod by August 31, 2019.

Learn More: <https://bit.ly/2Z7ae5B>

ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants

In 2019, ELCA World Hunger is proud to be partnering with 77 ministries across 63 synods and 33 states (plus Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C.) through its Domestic Hunger Grants program. ELCA World Hunger Domestic Hunger Grants accompany congregations and their partners as they draw on the strengths of communities to address the local issues such as food security, clean water, housing, job readiness, human rights, policy change, leadership development, and more. Thank you for your role in supporting this incredible group of partners!

The application window for the 2020 ELCA World Hunger Domestic Hunger Grants is now open! Learn more about applying: <https://bit.ly/2UR92nA>

Organizations applying for an ELCA grant for the first time must set up an account in the ELCA GrantMaker in advance in order to access the application form immediately once the window opens. If your organization has already registered in ELCA Grantmaker, be sure to log in and confirm the contact information is up to date. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/2IsEodF>

ELCA World Hunger will be hosting two webinars to review granting priorities and cover the basics of applying.

April 24, 8pm Eastern Time
April 30, 1pm Eastern Time

Learn more about the webinars: <https://bit.ly/2KDBBke>

Learning from the Bishop

May 3

Christ the King, Gladwin

Join Bishop Satterlee for a day of sermon preparation and conversation that will equip you to preach through the summer and fall. This workshop will focus on the Gospel texts for the season after Pentecost (June 23-November 24). Anyone preaching in the coming months is welcome!

Register: <https://bit.ly/2BzUQo8>

Honduras Team Meeting

All are welcome to attend the Honduras Team Meeting to hear more about the March Mission Trip.

The meeting will be held on May 1, 2019 at 5:00pm at Peace Lutheran Church in Sparta, MI.

To learn more about the March Mission Trip, visit the trip blog: <https://bit.ly/2DaGeMJ>

Congregations in Transition

Note: We include congregations on the public list when the called pastor or rostered leader completes her or his ministry in the congregation. Thus, congregations in which the pastor has resigned but is still serving are not listed here. We also do not post calls that are accepted until Bishop Satterlee signs the Letter of Call.

Bay Conference	Rev. Emily Olsen, Dean	Kalamazoo Conference	Rev. Kjersten Priddy, Dean
Hope/Marlette (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Discerning Future	Stony Lake Conference	Rev. Doug Ogden, Dean
Prince of Peace/Rose City	Jeff Bonn, Intentional Interim/Interviewing	Samuel/Muskegon	Chris Anderson, Interim/Discerning Future
Grace/Vassar (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Interviewing	Sunrise Conference	Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean
Faith/Saginaw	Supply Pastors/Discerning Future	Peace/Gaylord	Gary Grieger, Interim/Interviewing
St. Peter/Unionville (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	St. Paul/Alpena	CALL ACCEPTED: John Shipman. Installation 4/14
Capital Area Conference	Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean	Traverse Conference	Rev. Rosanne Anderson, Dean
St. Stephen/Lansing (part-time)	Erick Johnson, Interim/Discerning Future		
Calvary/Lansing (part-time)	David Augenstein, Stated Supply through Easter/Discerning Future		
Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean		
Peace/Holland	Clay Bates, Contracted through December/Discerning Future		
Immanuel/Big Rapids (part-time)	Dennis Smith, contracted through June/Discerning Future		