



North/ West Lower Michigan Synod

2900 N. Waverly Rd.
Lansing, MI 48906

517-321-5066

In this Issue:

Bishop's Letter

Healthy Boundaries

Upcoming Events

Congregations in Transition

Reflections on our Assembly

Continuing from last month's newsletter, I invite you to read the final two reflections from our Synod Assembly in May.

Eliminate Term Limits: We considered a constitutional amendment that eliminated term limits for synod vice president and secretary. While a majority supported the amendment, it did not receive the two thirds necessary for adoption. Some lay the amendment's defeat at my feet because of the way I structured the assembly; they contend that, if this vote happened after the elections (where in some cases we still needed nominations) and Vice President Schlesinger's very excellent report, it would've passed overwhelmingly.

I heard two "worst case scenarios" as reasons we need term limits. The first is that it would be possible for someone to be elected at 21 and to serve until he or she is 95 and we need a mechanism beyond elections to prevent this from happening. I hear a form of this argument from congregational leaders who determine their pastor—who has neither terms nor limits – stayed too long and they want a mechanism that forces the pastor to move on without them having to tell him so. I learned how powerfully elections serve as term limits in 2013, when a very popular presiding bishop stood for a third term and Bishop Eaton was elected.

The second "worst case scenario" I heard is that, without term limits, we won't seek nominees. Truth be told, under Pastor Timm's leadership, we are working to make nominations more transparent and inclusive. Compared to other synods, our nomination process has room to grow so that it revolves less around personal relationships and connections by giving every congregation an opportunity to lift up gifted leaders.

Our officers play a very strong role in leading our synod. The vice president leads the synod council by setting the tone and agenda, and chairs the executive committee as

the synod's HR team. The secretary holds both the council and staff accountable to the directions set and the tasks undertaken through her keeping of minutes and other records. In synods without such leadership, the bishop and staff has more to do. My worry is losing wise and gifted leadership at a critical time for no reason other than it is term limited.

Both during assembly and in the weeks since, many people have reached out to me to ask if we could reconsider this next year. Some asked if we could increase the number of terms from two terms to four. Knowing that good ideas involving change are rarely received when first suggested, I suspect we will talk about this again in 2018.

Future Assemblies: We work hard to respond to people's hopes and desires for synod assembly. This year included an Opening and Closing Eucharist, two keynote addresses, and opportunities for learning. A few have asked about the possibility of a one-day or biennial assembly. Both are possible; other synods have attempted each. In 2018, we are contracted to be in Lansing and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will be with us. In 2019, we have a bishop's election. While a bishop would be delighted to be reelected on the first ballot, making a one-day assembly possible, planning for such an outcome by scheduling a one-day assembly would be ruled "out of order." So 2020 is our first opportunity to try a one-day assembly or to omit it altogether. This gives us plenty of time to consider and plan.

While he was with us, Bishop Erwin quipped that bishops like to see synod assembly through the rear view mirror. That's true in terms of the planning that goes into them and the chances that the wheels are going to fall off. But in terms of being church together, I've become a real fan. So thanks to everyone who came to assembly and thank you for whatever role you played.

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

Healthy Boundaries

We live everyday with boundaries and rules. When we drive they keep us and others safe. We make promises and set boundaries with our spouse on the day of our marriage. We set boundaries for our children to keep them safe and to teach them to grow into the adults we dream they can be. Boundaries are the way we live. In Martin Luther's three uses of the "law" he said that one use is to "keep order".

For rostered ministers and for leaders in the church, there are boundaries for being safe, for protecting relationships, and for providing examples for living in a Christian Community. At the constituting assembly of the ELCA in the fall of 1987, a resolution was passed to require boundaries training for all rostered ministers in the church. For those of you who remember back to that time, clergy misconduct was being uncovered and there were expensive lawsuits against denominations across the country, and the world.

Those early boundary training were legalistic and shocking for many. For others, who had witness or experienced misconduct by clergy, they were a welcome relief. For some they were even "too little, too late". Over the years we have progressed. There are about thirty of us across the ELCA who have been trained to present boundaries for the church. Now as Pastor Rosanne Anderson and I teach boundaries around the synod and across the ELCA we are interested in the sharing of best practices; how do you keep yourself safe and how do you provide a safe atmosphere in the congregation and community to foster mission and ministry where you serve.

The world is changing. When I went to my first boundary training the internet had not reached congregations yet, there were no online dating sites, and the only mobile phones were installed in cars. Now a major portion of conversations at boundaries training is about social media, the internet, cell phones and emerging technology. We recently had a boundary issue that involved Skype. There is a core group of us across the ELCA that met recently to continue to talk about emerging issues in keep boundaries in church and the rostered minister's personal and professional life. The ELCA now recommends that rostered ministers attend a boundaries training at least every 3 years. We are also seeking to connect with the Episcopal Church for teaching Safeguarding God's Children and Safeguarding God's people. Lay leaders in the church are welcome to attend boundaries training both to assist the rostered minister in keeping safe and in keeping boundaries among the laity in the church.

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

Synod Boundaries Training

October 19, 9am-3pm

Cost: \$10 for lunch

Edgewood Lutheran Church
2525 Pontaluna Rd.
Fruitport, MI

Call the Synod Office to Register

Synod Finances
as of June 30, 2017

June Income		Year to Date Income	
Mission Support	\$ 105,368	Mission Support	\$ 585,546
<u>All Other Income</u>	<u>\$ 2,314</u>	<u>All Other Income</u>	<u>\$ 75,661</u>
Total Income	\$ 107,682	Total Income	\$ 661,207
Expenses			
Support to ELCA	\$ 52,684	Support to ELCA	\$ 292,773
<u>All Other Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 69,451</u>	<u>All Other Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 359,969</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 122,135	Total Expenses	\$ 652,742
Plus Net Assets Released	\$ 583		\$ 2,629
From Restricted Funds			
Balance +/-	- \$ 13,870	Balance +/-	+ \$ 11,094

500th Anniversary of the Reformation Events

The Grand Rapids Conference of Catholics and Lutherans are offering several programs this fall that explore common beliefs and shared heritage as Christians.

Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2uDHGAQ>

Discernment Retreat

Are you curious where the Holy Spirit might be leading you? Are you feeling a sense of call to serve the church in a new way? Consider attending this Discernment Retreat to explore your calling and future ministry leadership.

Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2w3nCLQ>

Autumn Leadership Event

Rostered leaders, Synodically Authorized Ministers, and Lay Ministry Training Program Graduates are welcome to join us for the Autumn Leadership Event this fall! This year's theme is Ever Reforming—Our Ministries, Our Word and will feature a presentation from Beth Lewis, CEO of 1517 Media.

The event will be held Sunday, October 22, to Tuesday, October 24 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Traverse City.

Learn more and Register: <http://bit.ly/2tkgkys>

Honduran Lutheran Visit

Four visitors from the Honduran Lutheran Church will visit the Mitten Synod August 13-20! We will share information about our churches and faith experiences and they will share what it means to be Lutheran in Honduras and talk about their many successes and challenges. Please join us for any of the activities!

Learn More: <http://bit.ly/2sVM7pT>

Upcoming Events

August

August 13-20	Honduran Visitors	Around the Mitten Synod
--------------	-------------------	-------------------------

September

September 29-30	WELCA Retreat and Convention	White Cloud, MI
-----------------	------------------------------	-----------------

For information on these events and more, be sure to read our weekly update emails and visit the events section on our website.

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	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	St. Peter/Battle Creek	CALL ACCEPTED: Jennifer Michael (WTS). Installation 8/27
St. Matthew/Bridgeport	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	Immanuel/Allegan	Contract Accepted: Dan Ward, contracted pastor
Prince of Peace/Rose City	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	Messiah/Constantine	Dennis Smith retiring January 2018/Preparing MSP
Our Savior/Saginaw	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	St. John's/Baroda	Supply Pastors/Awaiting a candidate
Resurrection/Saginaw	Barbara and Tim Bender, Interim/Interviewing		
St. John/Saginaw	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	Stony Lake Conference	Rev. Doug Ogden, Dean
Grace/Vassar	Supply Pastors/Awaiting Candidate	Immanuel/Muskegon	Jack Ferra, Interim
St. Peter/Unionville	CALL ACCEPTED: Renee MacLeod	St. Luke/Muskegon	Jack Ferra, Interim
St. Paul's/Au Gres	Rhianna Goodrich/Discerning Future	Samuel/Muskegon	Jonathan Reid, Stated Supply/Interviewing
Capital Area Conference	Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean	Sunrise Conference	Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean
University/East Lansing	John Schleicher, Interim lead pastor; Haley Van Beaman, Interim associate pastor/Interviewing	Trinity/Barton City	F. Laraine Sundin retiring January 2018/Discerning Future
		St. James/Millersburg (part-time)	Jeff Bonn contract ends January 2018
		Trinity/Ocqueoc (part-time)	Jeff Bonn contract ends January 2018
Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean	Traverse Conference	Rev. Rosanne Anderson, Dean
Grace/Hastings	Paul Kuhlman, Intentional Interim/Interviewing	Calvary/Elk Rapids	Contract Accepted: Zack Nelson, contracted pastor. Installation 8/19.
Mamrelund/Kent City	Matt Deames, Intentional Interim	Advent/Lake Ann	CALL ACCEPTED: Tim Jahn (DE/MD). Installation 8/20
Zion/Woodland	Polly Standley, Intentional Interim/CALL ACCEPTED: Rebecca Ebb-Spees	Bethany/Northport	Supply Pastors/Interviewing
Christ/Wyoming	David Dockweiler to Metro New York Synod	Immanuel/Suttons Bay	Supply Pastors/Congregational Vote 8/20
		St. Paul's/Reed City	Dawn Pooley retiring June 2018
		Messiah/Roscommon	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP