



North/ West Lower Michigan Synod

2900 N. Waverly Rd.
Lansing, MI 48906

517-321-5066

In this Issue:

Bishop's Letter

There Will Be No More
Evangelism Committee

Upcoming Events

Congregations in
Transition

Learn with the Bishop

We are divided. We are divided as a nation. We are divided as a state. We are divided as a church and, I also suspect, our congregations are divided. All we need do is spend a little time on Facebook to experience the ferocity of our divisions. We are divided politically over the direction of our country and, more than that, we are divided over how we, as Christians and as the church, ought and ought not address and respond to civic, societal, political, and global issues.

So how do we find a way forward together? Do our Lutheran confessions and our Lutheran theological heritage offer anything that can guide us? I decided to find out and have invited Dr. James M. Childs, Jr., Professor Emeritus of Theology and Ethics at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, to teach me—and us. Dr. Childs will be the second (hopefully) annual Learn with the Bishop lecturer and I invite you to join me on Saturday, March 25, from 9:30 AM to 3 PM at Faith Lutheran Church in Okemos.

Dr. Childs earned his B.A. from Concordia Senior College, M.Div. from Concordia Seminary (St. Louis), S.T.M. from Union Theological Seminary, New York, and Ph.D. from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago—he took his exams in what would become my office. After serving as a pastor in Richmond, VA, Childs became Associate Professor of Theology and Chairperson of the Division of Theology at Concordia Senior College, Lecturer in Philosophy at Purdue University, and Associate Professor of Theology at Valparaiso University, before being called as Professor of Ethics at Trinity. I knew him best as

Dean Childs. In 1998, he was named Joseph A. Sittler Professor of Theology and Ethics and in 2011, Edward C. Fendt Professor of Systematic Theology.

Learn with the Bishop is intended for all rostered ministers, congregational leaders, and members and friends of our synod. Please call the Synod Office to register so that we know how many to expect for lunch. A free will offering will be taken.

I'm also excited to invite you to Learn from the Bishop in a workshop focused on John's Lenten texts. This Lent, we will hear beautiful readings from John's Gospel. I am very much looking forward to exploring those texts with preachers on Tuesday, February 21, at Zion Lutheran Church in Comstock Park. Again, please contact the Synod Office to register for this event.

See you in class!

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

There Will Be No More Evangelism Committee

I hope that got your attention! At the recent Synod Council meeting the New and Redeveloping Mission Table (formerly the Outreach Committee) proposed that the Renewing Mission Table (formerly the Witness/Evangelism Team) be combined. The reason is rather straight forward. It's not that we will no longer be doing evangelism, although some congregations have adopted that stance. It's that evangelism is not a stand alone effort or goal. It is really a part of all that we do as a church.



Evangelism begins with talking about Jesus. It is essential that we talk about Jesus when we do outreach, when we do service projects, when we advocate for our community, when we worship, when we teach, and when we talk about our money and resources. Evangelism is not an isolated effort. It's feeling comfortable and practicing talking about Jesus and sharing faith in all aspects of the mission and ministry of the church.

When the rotating homeless shelter is hosted in your church, doing evangelism means welcoming guests in the name of Jesus, telling people why we open our churches to others in the cold of winter, and inviting those who come in out of the cold to not just rest for a while, but to find rest for their souls as well. It means that when people come for the food pantry, we spend time talking to them about their life, and telling them about how faith in Jesus gives us hope.

Evangelism is not just inviting people to have a relationship with Jesus. It often means inviting people to serve. Bishop Satterlee reminds us that the early church did not invite people to learn their way into serving. They invited people to serve their way into learning. People joined the community not by memorizing the catechism as a way to qualify them for service. They first were invited to serve. And then in the serving, more experienced Christians shared the motivation and reason for serving.

Congregations that are in renewal and growing have disbanded Evangelism Committees and have started asking; "How do we share our/your faith in every aspect of mission and ministry?" When every member of the congregation sees themselves as an evangelist, instead of a committee of 5 people, the effect is greatly multiplied.

Rev. David. E, Sprang, Assistant to the Bishop, Director for Evangelical Mission

Lenten Partner Prayers

Would you like to have someone praying for you this Lent? If so, please email your name and email address to assistant@mittensynod.org by February 22, 2017. We will assign an anonymous prayer partner to you by Ash Wednesday—March 1, 2017.

Synod Assembly 2017

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly will convene May 21-23, 2017 at Immanuel Lutheran Church and Comfort Inn and Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Mt. Pleasant.

Our Assembly theme is "Freed by God's Grace," from the verse "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

We will welcome the Reverend Dr. R. Guy Erwin, Bishop of the Southwest California Synod, as our keynote speaker. Bishop Erwin, a member of the Osage Nation, is the first Native American bishop elected to office in the ELCA. He is a noted church historian who has frequently taught courses on Martin Luther and the Lutheran Reformation. Bishop Erwin will address both of these topics during his time with the assembly. Ms. Prairie Rose Seminole will be our Churchwide Representative. She is the ELCA's Program Director for American Indian Alaska Native Ministries.

The opening Eucharist and first plenary session will be hosted at Immanuel Lutheran Church at 320 S. Bradley Street, in Mt. Pleasant. Check-in and packet pick-up will take place at the Comfort Inn and Suites Conference Center from 3:00-6:00pm. No check-in will be available at Immanuel, so assembly voting members are urged to arrive in Mt. Pleasant early enough to check-in prior to the 6:30pm start of the Assembly at Immanuel.

Additional highlights of the Assembly include Monday Lunch Table Discussions for interest groups as well as opportunities to visit the Ziibiwing Cultural Center and view the newly-released movie "Martin Luther: The Idea That Changed the World."

Registration information is now available on the Assembly page of the Synod Website. The final day to register is May 11, 2017.

Learn More: <http://mittensynod.server303.com/events/assembly/>

The Synod Audit Has Begun!

We are in the beginning process of our yearly audit. Each congregation will soon be receiving a letter from our auditor, Maner Costerisan, with a copy of the Cash Receipts Journal showing all funds that the congregation has sent to the Synod this fiscal year—February 1, 2016 through January 31, 2017. **It is essential that each congregation lets them know whether this is correct or not. They must hear from every congregation either way.** If they do not receive confirmation from your congregation of the amount shown on this report, every receipt has to be looked up and physically found by them, which adds to the cost of our audit. So, once you receive their letter, please check the amounts and send it back to them!

John's Lenten Texts Workshop

Bishop Satterlee will lead preachers through the magnificent Lenten texts from John's Gospel on Tuesday, February 21 from 10:00am to 3:00pm at Zion in Comstock Park. Contact the Synod Office to register.

"Why Are Lutherans Political?"

A Day of Conversation with Dr. James M. Childs, Jr.

In our Nation today, the relationship between faith and politics is a highly-charged topic of discussion. Dr. James Childs, Jr., Professor Emeritus of Theology and Ethics at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, will guide us in exploration of this topic through presentations and conversation. This event will be held Saturday, March 25, 2017 from 9:30am to 3:00pm at Faith Lutheran Church in Okemos. All are welcome!

Contact the Synod Office to Register. Lunch will be provided with a free will offering.

Save the Date: You Matter Event

Rostered Leaders "You Matter Day": Join us Tuesday, July 18, 2017 at Faith Lutheran Church in Saginaw. Our special guest, the Rev. Bishop Michael Rinehart of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod will share some of this work and wisdom on the gift and challenge of prayer.

Upcoming Events

February

February 21	John's Lenten Texts with Bishop Satterlee	Zion Comstock Park
-------------	---	--------------------

March

March 16-17	Wisdom of Enneagram Spiritual Journey	Christ United Church, Dewitt
March 25	A Day of Conversation with Dr. James M. Childs, Jr.	Faith Lutheran, Okemos

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. Dan Stoneback, Dean	Kalamazoo Conference	Rev. Kari Fast, Dean
Faith/Saginaw	Nancy Steele (ECUSA), Interim/Awaiting Candidate	St. Peter/Battle Creek	Cheryl Johnson, Stated Supply/Awaiting Candidate
Our Savior/Saginaw	Ann Grady (ECUSA), Intentional Interim	Immanuel/Allegan	Paul Kehnle, Stated Supply. Dean Beckwith, Pastoral Care
Resurrection/Saginaw	Barbara and Tim Bender, Interim/Discerning Future	Prince of Peace/Portage	Jim Morgan (UMC), Stated Supply/Interviewing
St. John/Saginaw	Kathleen Basner, stated supply/Discerning Future	St. John's/Baroda	Preparing MSP
Capital Area Conference	Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean	Stony Lake Conference	Rev. Doug Ogden, Dean
University/East Lansing	John Schleicher, Interim/ Awaiting Candidate	Immanuel/Muskegon	Jack Ferra, Interim
		St. Luke/Muskegon	Jack Ferra, Interim
		Edgewood/Fruitport	Len Dalgren, contract pastor. Installed 2/5
		Samuel/Muskegon	Marcy Miller to St. Luke's/ Grand Rapids
Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Rev. Julie Schneider- Thomas, Dean	Sunrise Conference	Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean
Faith/Sidney	Betsy Kamphuis, Administrative Pastor/Call Extended		
Trinity/Grand Rapids	Part-time assistant/CALL ACCEPTED: Karen Niemeyer. Ordination/ Installation 2/26	Traverse Conference	Rev. Rosanne Anderson, Dean
St. Luke's/Grand Rapids	Associate Pastor/CALL ACCEPTED: Marcy Miller. Installation 4/30	Calvary/Elk Rapids	Supply Pastors/Discerning Future
Grace/Hastings	Paul Kuhlman, Intentional Interim	Advent/Lake Ann	Chrysanne Timm, Interim Pastor/Preparing MSP
Mamrelund/Kent City	Matt Deames, Intentional Interim	Bethany/Northport	Supply Pastors/ Interviewing
Zion/Woodland	Polly Standley, Intentional Interim/MSP Received	Immanuel/Suttons Bay	Supply Pastors/MSP Received