



## North/ West Lower Michigan Synod

2900 N. Waverly Rd.  
Lansing, MI 48906

517-321-5066

## In this Issue:

Bishop's Letter

Change is a Given

Upcoming Events

Congregations in Transition

## Reflections on our Assembly

In bishop school, they teach us that the bishop's job at assembly is to help the assembly do its business. And so we are to be a "non-anxious presence" and a "self-differentiated leader." This means we are more focused on process than outcome. After the assembly, bishops reflect on the outcomes, implications, and implementation of decisions the assembly made. In this month's article and spilling over into next month's article, I'd like to share my reflections on four topics: Resolution A, fundraising, term limits, and future assemblies.

**Resolution A:** The assembly adopted a resolution expressing support for the "Johnson Amendment" to the IRS Code and directing the bishop to communicate this support to the ELCA churchwide office through the presiding bishop, and to our United States Senators and Representatives. This amendment has been part of the Code since 1954 and allows churches to engage in political discussion as long as no endorsement or monetary support is given to a candidate or issue. I intend to have this work complete by the time synod council meets in September. For those in our company convinced the church has absolutely no place in public policy and politics, this resolution is troubling.

**Fundraising:** For the second year in a row, someone asked if the Synod has a plan to raise the money needed for the budget. The plan inherent in our church structure is that synods receive 10% of the money congregations receive and pass 50% of that money along to the churchwide expression. While our synod continues to share 50 cents of every dollar we receive in mission support with the churchwide organization, we are not receiving 10% of our congregations' income. So the plan isn't working as well as it could.

In the past, our synod cut expenses—including staff—to the bone with the result that we are still catching up on some of the understandable "deferred maintenance" of our synod in terms of relationships. With 30 congregations

consistently in the call process, and congregations in all of our conferences that will need to become radically engaged in their communities, consolidate and/or partner, or close in the next several years, we need our staff.

The ELCA is engaged in a capital campaign and several synods are following suit. After spending several years bringing clarity and closure to our last synod capital campaign, I confess that I'm not eager to embark on a new one. The closest we have come is making it possible for individuals to give directly to our synod online. Some synods are decreasing the portion of mission support they share with churchwide to below 50%. We take great pride in our generosity and I suspect would not make such a decision without a thorough discussion and vote at a synod assembly.

So Pastor Sprang and I stand ready to help and train our congregations and pastors to grow as stewards. We are eager to meet with congregational councils and share about our ministries. Since I know the best way to get people to increase their giving is to ask them to increase their giving, I am drafting a letter for our congregations that will do just that and give you a target to aim for—I know, the bishop hasn't done that in a long time. I remember when the bishop did. Also, please understand that the synod is like so many congregations in that what we need most in terms of special gifts—including noisy offerings—is support for our ongoing work.

I invite you to read the final two reflections in the August Newsletter.

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

## Change is a Given

Every new generation has its conflicts with previous generations. It might be music, or lifestyle, or morality, or any other of a variety of practices. I lived through the 1960's when Rock and Roll music changed the world. Our parents thought it was the devil the way Elvis shook or the Beatles' long hair. It was a way for young people to rebel. It happens to every generation. My parents grew up with Big Band music, which was a change from their parents. My son's generation has a much more varied taste.

Taste in music is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to differences and preferences for each generation. A recent Pew Charitable Trust shows that there are wide gaps between older and younger generations regarding the use of technology, music, work ethic, moral values, respect for others, politics, and religion.

Each generation has its differences. Over the centuries, older generations have given in and embraced, or at least tolerated the need for change to facilitate the next generation. It has happened for centuries. It does not seem to be happening well in the church right now. There is a collective lament across the Christian church that the younger generation is not coming to worship or participating in things we have always done. At the same time there seems to be little motivation to listen to the younger generation or a willingness to change to accommodate them in the church. If we expect the younger generation to be part of the church, then it's imperative to walk along side of them and hear what they have to say.

When Christian Churches started global mission endeavors over 100 years ago, we often went with an attitude of – “we know what they need; they need to be more like us”. That worked for a while, but eventually new mission churches in other countries wanted to make mission their own. The church listened to them and adopted the concept of **accompaniment**. We listened and walked with them and learned from them as they shared with us. We have become stronger partners and our Global Mission efforts have become stronger by listening.

It is time for the church to use the concept of “accompaniment” in engaging our context. To walk along side of the next generation along with our neighbors and communities. Time to ask about their challenges, their dreams, their interests, their needs and make them the mission priorities of the church. In Thom Rainer's book, [Autopsy of a Deceased Church](#), he states that the single most deadly symptom of a dying church is looking inward and not listening to those outside.

How can your church accompany the next generation? How can your church listen to those outside? Jesus called the disciples to a ministry that would not always be comfortable, but would be faithful. “Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it’” (Matthew 16:24-25).

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

### Synod Finances

as of June 30, 2017

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

### Synod Office Eucharist

The weekly Synod Office Eucharist will now be held at 11:30 am on Wednesdays at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Lansing.

We invite you to join the Synod staff for worship!

### 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

#### July

July 18	You Matter Day	Faith Lutheran, Saginaw
---------	----------------	-------------------------

#### August

August 13-20	Honduran Lutheran Visit	Around the Mitten Synod
--------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

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.

<b>Bay Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Emily Olsen, Dean</b>	<b>Kalamazoo Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Kjersten Priddy, Dean</b>
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	Paul Kehnle, Stated Supply. Dean Beckwith, Pastoral Care/Congregational Vote 7/16
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/Interviewing
Resurrection/Saginaw	Barbara and Tim Bender, Interim/Interviewing		
St. John/Saginaw	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	<b>Stony Lake Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Doug Ogden, Dean</b>
Grace/Vassar	Supply Pastors/Awaiting Candidate	Immanuel/Muskegon	Jack Ferra, Interim
St. Peter/Unionville	Andreas Teich, Administrative Pastor / Preparing MSP	St. Luke/Muskegon	Jack Ferra, Interim
		Samuel/Muskegon	Jonathan Reid, Stated Supply/Awaiting Candidate
<b>Capital Area Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean</b>	<b>Sunrise Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean</b>
University/East Lansing	John Schleicher, Interim/Interviewing	Trinity/Barton City	F. Laraine Sundin retiring January 2018/Discerning Future
<b>Greater Grand Rapids Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean</b>	<b>Traverse Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Rosanne Anderson, Dean</b>
Grace/Hastings	Paul Kuhlman, Intentional Interim/Awaiting Candidate	Calvary/Elk Rapids	Supply Pastors/Interviewing
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/Congregational Vote 7/16	Bethany/Northport	Supply Pastors/Discerning Future
		Immanuel/Suttons Bay	Supply Pastors/Interviewing
		St. Paul's/Reed City	Dawn Pooley retiring June 2018