



North/ West Lower Michigan Synod

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As stated in our mission statement, we “proclaim Christ and prayerfully participate in Jesus’s own work of reconciling the world to God’s very Self”. One of the most important ways we do this is by empowering leaders. By leaders, we mean both rostered ministers –pastors and deacons–and congregational leaders, which potentially includes all the baptized. Our goal is to attract, retain, and empower excellent leaders. Broadly speaking, the synod’s work in this area is comprised of five components. First, we lead the candidacy process and first call theological education, by which rostered ministers are formed. Second, we provide continuing education opportunities for rostered ministers (Autumn Leadership Event, You Matter, Living Word) and congregational leaders (Walking Together, ELMM), and opportunities for both to learn together (Synod Assembly, Living Fire, Learning with the Bishop). Third, we provide pastoral care for rostered ministers and, fourth, the Office of the Bishop provides oversight and discipline of rostered ministers.

The fifth area that bishops have been asked to take a leadership role in is encouraging congregations, pastors, and deacons to identify, encourage, and raise up congregational leaders, pastors, and deacons for our church. The ELCA is working hard to make seminary education both flexible and affordable so that quality theological education is available to all God’s people. As such, we are seeking people who have gifts for ministry and I invite you to help by identifying individuals with these gifts and encouraging them to be open to the possibility that

God is calling them to serve Christ’s Church. Planting a gentle seed in someone even as young as fourth grade can be very rewarding. Invite them to take a leadership role in worship; my daughter became my assisting minister at St. Timothy in Sturgis when she was in second grade. The council president also taught her how to count the offering. If you know a high school student with gifts for ministry, invite them to serve as my Bishop’s Chaplain when I visit your congregation for worship; I’ve had great conversations when this has happened.

Additionally, I invite you to help by praying and asking the Lord of the Church to raise up leaders for his Church. At its most recent gathering, the ELCA Conference of Bishops adopted a resolution calling the church to prayer: “As the Conference of Bishops, we call our worshiping communities to pray for raising up leaders for this church. We ask that the petitions of every worship service include a plea that new lay leaders, deacons, and pastors be identified, invited, encouraged, and supported in responding to God’s call to ministry.”

Do you know someone who would make a fine pastor, deacon, or leader in your congregation? Would you pray for them this Lent and tell them what you see in them sometime during the Easter season? What a way to celebrate Christ’s death and resurrection!

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

Dreaming Becomes Reality

Every six months the ELCA gathers leaders from around the church. These leaders are primarily pastor developers and lay leaders of new ministries, and pastor redevelopers and lay leaders of existing ministries. The purpose of these gatherings is to equip and empower leaders to be "missional" leaders. On February 22-26, 2017, over 350 church leaders, Directors for Evangelical Mission, and churchwide staff gathered in Chicago for the winter gathering of Missional Leaders. This was the largest Missional Leaders Training ever held by the ELCA. The North/West Lower Michigan Synod had six of our missional leaders in attendance including Pastor Christin Fawcett of All Saints, Mason, Abraham Mach and Paul Mawut of Sudanese Christ Lutheran, Wyoming, and Pastor Jane Mountain, Becky Schader, and Dee Lakos of Our Savior's, Muskegon. I always attend as a mentor and guide.



We as a church continue to make commitments that we will be a diverse church and welcome everyone, and while we know that it has been a slow path to achieve that goal, something unique happened at this gathering of leaders in Chicago. After years of work by ELCA staff, local congregations, and Directors of Evangelical Mission, a transformation took place. When all the participants gathered to worship, and celebrate the Eucharist at the end of the event, we realized that over half of the missional leaders gathered were people of color! It was exciting to see this beautiful multi-cultural blend of leaders come together and know that these gifted and talented leaders were starting new worshipping communities and redeveloping existing congregations around the country.

Worship was a rainbow of African nationals, Asians, African-Americans, Latinos, Middle Easterners, and white Americans. We were also excited to come together with our partners from The Episcopal Church, The United Church of Christ, The United Methodist Church, and The Presbyterian Church. These leaders were starting new ministries or restarting ministries in rural areas, urban settings, prisons, multi-cultural settings, ethnic specific communities, and outreach ministries to millennials, and those struggling with poverty and homelessness. We sang songs in three languages and the consecration of the elements for Eucharist were done in Spanish and English. The offering collected went to the newest mission congregation just started by the ELCA.



In a time where fear of immigrants and fear of our neighbor is rampant, this was an experience of what the church could be and is becoming. The worship service really did anticipate the feast to come; the image of the church that welcomes all people to God's gracious mission in the world. A mission of hospitality, forgiveness, and acceptance.

If you would like to know more about Missional Leader Training and if you would like to be a Missional/Transformational Leader, please contact me.

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

**"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.

Synod Finances

as of February 28, 2017

(Note: this begins the new fiscal year)

Income

Mission Support	\$ 121,767
<u>All Other Income</u>	<u>\$ 12,906</u>
Total Income	\$ 134,673

Expenses

Support to ELCA	\$ 60,884
<u>All Other Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 53,022</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 113,906

Balance +/- + \$ 20,767

**Lutherans Always Reforming: A Day of Social
Change Conversation**

The Publicly Engaged Church Committee of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod will be hosting a day-long educational event on Saturday, June 17 at University Lutheran Church in East Lansing. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Craig L. Nesson, Academic Dean and Professor of Contextual Theology at Warburg Seminary. A variety of workshops will also be offered throughout the day on topics including, immigration, criminal justice, advocacy, Open Hearts, Open Church, climate change, hunger, human trafficking, anti-racism, and more!

Registration is now open!

Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2n6A3lZ>

Upcoming Events

March

March 25	A Day of Conversation with Dr. James M. Childs, Jr	Faith Lutheran, Okemos
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April

April 2-5	Silent Directed Retreat	St. Francis Retreat Center, Dewitt
April 22-25	Women's Retreat	Omena House, Omena

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

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.

Registration information is now available on the Assembly page of the Synod Website. The final day to register is May 11, 2017. **If you are paying online, you must still submit a registration form to the Synod Office.**

Information on submitting resolutions is now available! All resolutions must be submitted to the Synod Office by March 15 for review and inclusion in the Synod Assembly Booklet.

Nomination Information is now available! The Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for Synod Council, and both the Discipline and Consultation Committees. Information can be found on the Assembly page of the the Synod website. All nomination and completed Bio Forms must be submitted to the Synod Office by March 31.

Table Display Request forms are now available! Forms must be submitted to the Synod Office by April 30.

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

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
Prince of Peace/Rose City	Dan Stoneback retiring June 2017	St. Peter/Battle Creek	Cheryl Johnson, Stated Supply/Interviewing
Faith/Saginaw	Nancy Steele (ECUSA), Interim/Interviewing	Immanuel/Allegan	Paul Kehnle, Stated Supply. Dean Beckwith, Pastoral Care
Our Savior/Saginaw	Ann Grady (ECUSA), Intentional Interim	Prince of Peace/Portage	Jim Morgan (UMC), Stated Supply/Interviewing
Resurrection/Saginaw	Barbara and Tim Bender, Interim/Reviewing MSP	St. John's/Baroda	MSP Received
St. John/Saginaw	Kathleen Basner, stated supply/Discerning Future	Stony Lake Conference	Rev. Doug Ogden, Dean
St. Peter/Unionville	Paulette Cummings retiring June 2017	Immanuel/Muskegon	Jack Ferra, Interim
Grace/Vassar	Jackie Ahearn retiring June 2017	St. Luke/Muskegon	Jack Ferra, Interim
		Samuel/Muskegon	Supply Pastors
Capital Area Conference	Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean	Sunrise Conference	Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean
University/East Lansing	John Schleicher, Interim/Interviewing	Traverse Conference	Rev. Rosanne Anderson, Dean
Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean	Calvary/Elk Rapids	Supply Pastors/Discerning Future
Faith/Sidney	Betsy Kamphuis, Administrative Pastor/ CALL ACCEPTED: John Autio (Northern Great Lakes). Installation 5/7	Advent/Lake Ann	Chrysanne Timm, Interim Pastor/Preparing MSP
St. Luke's/Grand Rapids	Associate Pastor/CALL ACCEPTED: Marcy Miller. Installation 4/30	St. John/Lake City	Roseanne Anderson retiring June 2017
Grace/Hastings	Paul Kuhlman, Intentional Interim/Preparing MSP	Bethany/Northport	Supply Pastors/Interviewing
Mamrelund/Kent City	Matt Deames, Intentional Interim	Immanuel/Suttons Bay	Supply Pastors/Interviewing
Zion/Woodland	Polly Standley, Intentional Interim/Interviewing		