



North/ West Lower Michigan Synod

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Term Limits: A Dry but Important Read

At its April meeting, I will bring to Synod Council an amendment to bylaw S8.51.01 of our constitution: "The persons holding the office of vice president and secretary shall be limited to two consecutive terms in their respective offices." At our Synod Assembly in May, I hope that we will eliminate these term limits.

We considered a resolution to eliminate term limits for vice president and secretary last May; it received majority approval but not the two thirds majority required to change our bylaws. After the assembly, I received feedback that I should have done a better job of communicating the rationale for this change. I am generally reluctant to comment on resolutions we will consider; however, in this instance, I feel more than invited to do just that.

In thinking about the roles of vice president and secretary, we must consider the important work they are responsible for and how having consistency in these roles contributes to the success of the Synod. Both our vice president and secretary have big jobs. As stated in our constitution, "The vice president shall chair the Synod Council." This means the vice president is completely responsible for the Synod Council, from orienting members to setting meeting agendas to developing plans for implementing council actions. In addition, the vice president chairs the Executive Committee, which deals with sensitive matters and serves as our synod's human relations committee. The vice president is also responsible for organizing our delegation to the churchwide assembly. The way in which the vice president and bishop partner together is important, and when a vice president cannot carry out all these responsibilities, much of the work falls to the bishop and the partnership of ordained and lay leadership is lost.

In addition to his or her day to day responsibilities, our constitution states: "In the event of the death, resignation, or disability of the bishop, the vice president, after

consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the conduct of the duties of the bishop until a new bishop shall be elected or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop resumes full performance of the duties of the office." In my five years as bishop, six bishops left office before their terms ended. In those instances, gifted vice presidents were essential in providing the guidance and consistency necessary for a successful transition. While I have no plans to vacate this office early—in fact, Cathy and I have discerned that, if this Synod and God desire it, we are available to serve a second term—I nevertheless want the Synod to be in the strongest possible position in the event something unforeseen should happen.

In a similar vein, the secretary also plays a vital role in the functioning of the Synod as he or she holds us accountable to our governing documents and to the decisions we have made. As outlined in S8.32 of our constitution, the secretary is responsible for keeping and distributing the minutes of all meetings of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and Executive Committee; is authorized and empowered, in the name of this synod, to attest all instruments which require the same, and which are signed and sealed by the bishop. In consultation with the bishop, the secretary is also responsible for classifying and arranging all important documents and depositing them in the archives of the Synod, as well as submitting a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly to the secretary of the ELCA at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly. It is important to remember that the diligent work of the secretary in creating, maintaining, and organizing Synod documents and archives is necessary to ensuring the Synod functions as a cohesive unit.

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While some are understandably concerned that a vice president or secretary might serve too long, my perspective is different. Occasionally in the life of the church, persons possessing exceptional gifts of leadership and commitment are lifted up by the Holy Spirit through the will of the saints to serve the church with their gifts. Such persons stand out in their ability and set the bar high for any who might follow. Though term limited offices of the church are intended to assure that leadership positions be made available to a broader number of qualified individuals, such limits can also deprive the church of both continuity and competence, especially during times of transitions and potential instability. For these reason, as of 2014, 70% (45/65) of synods do not have term limits. Our current model is in the minority.

Therefore, I will ask the Synod Council of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod to recommend to the 2018 Synod Assembly that synod bylaw S8.51.01: "The persons holding the office of vice-president and secretary shall be limited to two consecutive terms in their respective offices" be stricken from the constitution of this synod. Persons holding such offices will be required to stand for re-election to that office as specified in S8.51: "The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be: The vice president; and secretary of this synod shall each be elected to a term of four years and may be re-elected."

As I write this, I'm mindful of opportunities to serve our synod and urge you to visit the nominations information at <http://mittensynod.server303.com/events/assembly/>

Now, let's get back to Lent!

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

Signs of the Spirit

North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly
May 20-22, 2018

Registration is now open for the 2018 Synod Assembly! Visit the Assembly page on the Synod website (<http://mittensynod.org/events/assembly/>) for information on registration, lodging, nomination forms, submission of reports for the synod assembly book, resolutions, and display requests.

We are pleased to welcome the ELCA's Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton. She will preach at the opening Eucharist Sunday evening, address the assembly Monday, and preside at Tuesday's closing Eucharist. Additionally, two town hall-style gatherings midday Monday will offer voting members and guests the opportunity to engage with Presiding Bishop Eaton and Bishop Satterlee in a more informal setting.

Our assembly theme will be explored in greater depth in the April Bishop's Newsletter, but we are excited to share one aspect of our gathering now! **We want to see and hear about the Signs of the Holy Spirit's work in your ministry setting! We encourage every congregation, mission partner, task force, and table create and bring to Assembly a standard-size poster with pictures, art, and words describing how the Holy Spirit is at work in their setting.**

These posters will be displayed around the Assembly meeting room. During lunch sessions on Monday, several of our mission partners will speak briefly, and all will be invited to check out these posters. It is our hope that these "Signs of the Spirit" will inspire and stir up our awareness of the Holy Spirit's work in our midst.

It's not too early to start thinking about what your congregation or ministry organization's poster might look like! Pray for eyes that see the signs of the Spirit's work. Then be creative—engage the artistic and communications skills among your members. Let's surround ourselves and our deliberations at Assembly with Signs of the Spirit!

**"Leading with Faith, Hope, Love, and Knowledge"
Walking Together Spring 2018**

Saturday, April 21

St. Luke Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids

Congregational leaders carry so many important responsibilities for the faith communities they serve! "Walking Together" is an annual day for congregational leaders – a day of worship, learning, and friendship designed to ground you in God's gracious promises and encourage and equip you for your work. The many workshops will provide you with new insights for your tasks and offer you a chance to meet and share ideas with others leading congregations like yours.

Registration closes April 10! Sign a few leaders or your whole council up for Walking Together today! **Learn more and Register:** <http://bit.ly/2DlIr5j>

Coats for the Homeless



During Synod Assembly, the North/West Lower Michigan will be collecting donations to purchase coats from The Empowerment Plan. This Detroit based non-profit organization is focused on permanently elevating families from the generational cycle of homelessness. The coats are water-resistant and can transform into a sleeping bag, or be worn as an over-the-shoulder bag when not in use. The coats are constructed of durable, water resistant Cordura fabric from Carhartt, upcycled automotive insulation from General

Motors, and other materials. It costs \$100 to sponsor a coat, which covers the cost of labor, materials, and overhead expenses, plus \$15 for shipping. To learn more about The Empowerment Plan, visit: <http://www.empowermentplan.org/> and plan to stop by the donation table during Synod Assembly.

Grant for Revitalizing and Renewing Congregational Websites

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod has approved a grant aimed at addressing the gap in the existence and effectiveness of congregational websites within the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. A church's online presence is one of the most important ways the public learns about a congregation and their ministries. A well designed and easily accessible website is vital for a congregation to effectively participate and communicate with their community, engage in mission, and attract visitors and new members. Within the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, there is an inconsistency with the quality and effectiveness of congregational websites. With this grant, Chelsey Satterlee, the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Communications Director, will visit and evaluate the websites of all congregations in the North/West Lower Michigan Synod and provide feedback and guidance. Additionally, Chelsey will provide an initial 20 congregations with direct assistance in creating a congregational website. All congregations should expect to receive feedback on their website within the next six weeks.

Synod Finances

as of February 28, 2018 (Note: February 1 begins the new fiscal year)

February Income		Year to Date Income	
Mission Support	\$ 110,558	Mission Support	\$
All Other Income	\$ 5,439	All Other Income	\$
Total Income	\$ 115,997	Total Income	\$
Expenses			
Support to ELCA	\$ 55,279	Support to ELCA	\$
All Other Expenses	\$ 69,375	All Other Expenses	\$
Total Expenses	\$ 124,654	Total Expenses	\$
Plus Net Assets Released			
From Restricted Funds	\$ 0		\$
Balance +/-	- \$ 8,657	Balance +/	\$

Our audited FY2017 Financial Reports will be published in the 2018 Synod Assembly Book and will be available online before the Assembly.

Synod Boundaries Workshop

Register Now!

All rostered ministers who have not attended a Boundaries Training in three years are strongly encouraged to attend. Lay Leaders may also attend.

April 26
Registration \$10
St. John, Grayling

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

ELCA Draft Social Statement

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod is scheduling hearings to facilitate your input on the ELCA Draft Social Statement on Women and Justice.

We invite you to attend one of the hearings.
Learn More: <http://bit.ly/2FzqKFi>

Earth Day Sunday

Earth Day is April 22, 2018. The Environmental Stewardship Task Force (ESTF) of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod encourages congregations to consider uniting with other churches around the country in celebrating Earth Day on April 22. Below are some resources for planning:
www.textweek.com; www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org;
www.miipl.org; www.creationjustice.org;
www.letallcreationpraise.org

Upcoming Events

March

March 25	ELCA Draft Social Statement Hearing	First Lutheran, Muskegon
March 25	Palm Sunday	
March 29	Maundy Thursday	
March 30	Good Friday	

April

April 1	Easter	
April 19	ELCA Draft Social Statement Hearing	St. Peter, Battle Creek
April 21	Walking Together	St. Luke, Grand Rapids
April 22	ELCA Draft Social Statement Hearing	Advent, Lake Ann
April 26	Synod Boundaries Workshop	St. John, Grayling

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 (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Awaiting a candidate	Messiah/Constantine	Tom Pederson, Interim/ Awaiting a candidate
Prince of Peace/Rose City	Jeff Bonn, Intentional Interim	St. John's/Baroda	Jim Morgan, Interim/ Congregational Meeting 3/18
Grace/Vassar (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Awaiting a candidate	Stony Lake Conference Rev. Doug Ogden, Dean	
St. Paul's/Au Gres	Supply Pastors/Exploring Cooperative Ministry with Grace/East Tawas	Samuel/Muskegon	Chris Anderson, interim/ Preparing MSP
St. Timothy/Midland (part-time)	Gerald Ferguson, administrative pastor/ Exploring cooperative ministry/Interviewing	Sunrise Conference Rev. Chrissy Bright, Dean	
Capital Area Conference Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean		Traverse Conference Rev. Rosanne Anderson, Dean	
University/East Lansing (associate pastor)	Haley Vay Beaman, interim associate pastor/ Interviewing	St. Paul's/Reed City	Dawn Pooley retiring June 2018/Preparing MSP
St. Stephen/Lansing	Erick Johnson, Interim/ Preparing MSP	Messiah/Roscommon	Supply Pastors/Discerning future
Greater Grand Rapids Conference Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean		Augustana/Tustin	Supply Pastors/ Discerning future
Mamrelund/Kent City	Matt Deames, Intentional Interim/Interviewing		
Christ/Wyoming	Polly Standley, Interim/ Interviewing		