



North/ West Lower Michigan Synod

2900 N. Waverly Rd.
Lansing, MI 48906

517-321-5066

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On Mammon

Recently, I seem to be talking about money a lot— to rostered ministers in the Central States Synod, participants in our Preaching and Stewardship retreat, and to a congregational council or three. Money, what the Bible calls mammon, scares the church with the money we need and what happens when we don't have it. And despite all the ways God provides for the church, all the ways God protects the church, all the ways God blesses the church, we find ourselves grumbling, whining, and complaining. Worse, we hold on tightly to money rather than clinging to Christ Jesus and his cross.

It rarely occurs to us that God lifts Jesus up on a cross to free us from money's hold on us. Rather than being defined by money, we are named and claimed by the healing, life-giving power of God's grace in Jesus Christ. When Mammon says we are what we have; we are what we wear; we are what we do, Christ calls from the cross, "You are created in God's image, joined to my cross and resurrection in baptism, forgiven for my sake, free to live as God's servant and not a servant of Money."

Yes, I know. You have bills to pay. So do I. So that snake will still tempt and try to define us. But in Christ we can resist. We can bring some of our money and leave it there,

as a way of saying that we give God our love. We give God our trust. We give God our heart.

Giving away money to do God's work is a way that we trust and proclaim that we belong to God and not to our money. Giving away money is a faith practice by which we Christians publicly declare our loyalty to the living God, rather than buying and selling or dollars and cents. Giving money away is a concrete means of living into the new life accomplished in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection by participating in God's work of freeing, reconciling, and recreating. Giving away money is a way we render money a little less powerful by freeing ourselves—and all people—from its control, because giving money away transforms money into a sign of grace.

So how much money can you give away for God's work as a sign that you belong to God? Take the money you must have off the table—things like taxes, mortgage, rent, groceries, medical bills, and providing for your kids. The question remains: What will you do with the rest? Can you give some—a little more than you gave last year—away for the work of God's kingdom as an indication, a proclamation, and a celebration that you belong to God?

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Could you give a little more money to your church? I hope you can. I think you should. But, as you do, ask your church what I am asking you: Can we give a bit of our money away, say to the synod, for the work of God's kingdom, to proclaim and celebrate that our church does not belong to Money? Can we give a bit of our money away so that our neighbors and the world know that, at this church, we belong to God?

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

Achieving the Vision

The Holy Spirit is entrusting our synod the essential, foundational, and not so glamorous work of renewing congregations, empowering congregational and rostered leaders, and strengthening connections; this is the table that God has set before us; the table at which God invites us to sit. Claiming our seat at this table, we carry out our mission of "prayerfully participating in Christ's own work of reconciling the world to God's very Self by renewing congregations, empowering leaders, and strengthening connections."

As congregations and leaders find themselves caught up in the Holy Spirit's work, they want help in making the vision more and more real—and we want to help them. "After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to the, 'the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest'" (Luke 10:1-2). Since the harvest is so plentiful, we, like Jesus, have found that our mission of renewing congregations, empowering leaders, and strengthening connections will be more proactive and our synod more vibrant with another laborer—a full-time assistant to the bishop for synod life—joining us in the field. Our 2016 synod assembly approved a budget that makes this vision a reality. The Synod Council created the plan that makes this vision achievable. I ask you as congregations to increase your mission support so that you may participate in this vision.

Please review the materials linked below and watch for additional information to follow.

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

Achieving the Vision: <http://mittensynod.server303.com/news/achieving-the-vision-report-on-the-2017-2018-budget/>

Synod Finances as of October 31 2016

October		Year to Date	
Income		Income	
Mission Support	\$ 104,669	Mission Support	\$ 959,761
All Other Income	\$ 8,470	All Other Income	\$ 118,967
Total Income	\$ 113,139	Total Income	\$ 1,078,728
Expenses		Expenses	
Support to ELCA	\$ 52,335	Support to ELCA	\$ 479,880
All Other Expenses	\$ 74,040	All Other Expenses	\$ 620,105
Total Expenses	\$ 126,375	Total Expenses	\$ 1,099,985
Plus Net Assets Released	7,594		32,162
From Restricted funds			
Balance +/-	- \$ 5,643	Balance +/-	+ \$ 10,906

Anti-Racism Training

The Synod's Anti-Racism Team welcomes Judith Roberts, the Program Director for Racial Justice from the ELCA to present a workshop on Advancing Racial Justice! Laity and clergy are cordially invited to attend this fascinating workshop and to hear more about what our synod is doing to combat racism and encourage diversity.

This free event will be held November 19, 2016 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church in East Lansing.

Register Now : <http://mittensynod.server303.com/news/register-now-anti-racism-training/>

Reformation 500: A Pilgrimage of Remembering

It is with great pleasure and excitement that we invite you to join with us on this pilgrimage of remembering marking the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Come, be part of a 12-day Lutherland and Italy tour as we walk together in the footsteps of Martin Luther and witness sites important to his life as well as the treasured history and culture of Italy.

Come share in this time of prayerful celebration. We are sure you will be pleased with this tour for it is both high in value and low in cost. Our pilgrimage will be a joyful journey designed to highlight our Christian faith, help us appreciate its historical past as well as its art, culture and beauty; truly a time for Remembering our common heritage.

Few Spots Available! Register now: <http://mittensynod.org/news/2017-luther-trip-to-germany-and-rome/>

Upcoming Events

November		
November 19	Anti-Racism Training	St. Paul, East Lansing
November 24	Thanksgiving	

December		
December 23 - January 1	Synod Office Closed	
December 25	Christmas Day	

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	Paul Neuchterlein, Interim/Interviewing	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/Awaiting candidate	Prince of Peace/Portage	Jim Foster, Interim/ Interviewing
Capital Area Conference	Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean	Stony Lake Conference	Rev. Doug Ogden, Dean
University/East Lansing	John Schleicher, Interim/ Preparing MSP	Immanuel/Muskegon	Jack Ferra, Interim
Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Rev. Julie Schneider- Thomas, Dean	St. Luke/Muskegon	Jack Ferra, Interim
Faith/Sidney	Betsy Kamphuis, Administrative Pastor/ Interviewing	Zion/Fruitport	Supply Pastors/ Interviewing
Immanuel/Big Rapids	Bob Garrels and Jerry Schweitzer, Stated Supply/ Call Accepted: Peggy Rose (SEMI), transitional pastor	Sunrise Conference	Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean
Trinity/Grand Rapids	Part-time third assistant	Traverse Conference	Rev. Rosanne Anderson, Dean
St. Luke's/Grand Rapids	Associate Pastor	Feast of Victory/Acme	Supply Pastors/Call Accepted: Carolyn Heider (I-K)
Good Shepherd/Holland	Call Accepted: Jessica Rivera Walker	Calvary/Elk Rapids	Supply Pastors/ Interviewing
Grace/Hastings	Paul Kuhlman, Intentional Interim	Advent/Lake Ann	Chrysanne Timm, Transitional Pastor/ Preparing MSP
Mamrelund/Kent City	Matt Deames, Intentional Interim	Bethany/Northport	Supply Pastors/ Interviewing
Zion/Woodland	Polly Standley, Intentional Interim	Immanuel/Suttons Bay	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP