



North/ West Lower Michigan Synod

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Crazy Generosity

In II Corinthians 9:7 Paul writes, "God loves a cheerful giver." It is a familiar passage. Paul is mentoring the Corinthian Christians along, as they have had challenges in their development. Paul writes in other places that generosity can be a spiritual gift. All of that flies in the face of the "scarcity" thinking that is infesting our world today. Interest rates are up, tariffs are harmful, income is stagnant, and many don't think they have enough, even when living in the upper middle class.

God talks about abundance: "That you may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10). As humans our default is always scarcity. I remember a quote from John Schramm. In his book, [Things That Make for Peace](#), he said, "the problem with the world today is every time our basket gets half full, we get a bigger basket". We never know what is enough, how to be satisfied. It is like turning me loose at an all-you-can-eat ice cream bar. By the time I admitted I was full, I would have a stomach ache.

We can reframe our thinking by recalling our blessings. Most of you reading this will be way above the average wealth compared to much of the world. We have good homes, steady incomes, abundant food, power that stays on 24/7, connection to the World Wide Web, lovely church buildings, leisure time, family time, and so much more. There are people in the world who do not live with their families because they have to go where the work is. People who live in houses made of cardboard and blue tarps. People who eat from the scraps in dumpsters, and go hungry for the sake of their children. We are blessed. God talks about abundance. We have an abundance of grace, forgiveness, hope, and life. When we are generous we are reflecting the generosity God shows to us.

When God's people wanted to be thankful, they gave a tithe. Abraham was the first (Genesis 19), and it was passed on to his children. When God's people wanted to be generous they started by giving back a tenth, and they gave it first. Not from the leftovers, not from the scraps. They gave their best because God gives the best. God gave us God's only son and Jesus gave his life freely for us.

Giving and living generosity is healthy, promotes happiness, and it is good for us and others. We have a wealth of ways to give. Your congregation is the place to start. Your congregation's mission support through the synod and beyond is a next step in generosity. Special gives provide over the top giving opportunities. Lutheran Disaster Response is helping right now with recover efforts from Hurricane Florence, with the civil war in Sudan, wildfires in the western U.S. and the tsunami in Indonesia. The ELCA has given \$2.6 in scholarships for seminary students this year. Our synod has helped 9 congregations with ministry grants to better serve their community. You can be generous with your time. Most of our congregations in the synod are involved in some kind of food ministry – either pantries or community meals. God's Work Our Hands provides many opportunities to work in the communities we serve.

God is generous and calls us to live out our godly lives in our generosity to others. We give our money, we give our time, we give our skills, and we give our attention to others in generous gratitude for what God has given and continues to give to us.

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

Synod Finances as of September 30, 2018

September Revenue and Support

Mission Support	\$ 89,086
Other	\$ 5,243
Total	\$ 94,329

September Expenses

Support to ELCA	\$ 44,543
Other	\$ 57,703
Total	\$ 102,246

Net Assets Released from Restriction

	\$ 0
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Net Change in Fund Balance

	\$ (7,917)
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Year to Date Revenue and Support

Mission Support	\$ 875,652
Other	\$ 96,903
Total	\$ 971,955

Year to Date Expenses

Support to ELCA	\$ 437,826
Other	\$ 617,258
Total	\$1,055,084

Net Assets Released from Restriction

	\$ 1,156
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Net Change

in Fund Balance	\$ (81,973)
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Finance Matters

Many congregations are preparing their annual stewardship focus and planning discussions about funding their ministries in 2019. An important element of stewardship that may be overlooked is the safe and appropriate handling of funds. Now is a good time to review your financial policies and procedures.

Separation of financial responsibilities is a key factor in a congregation's financial health and well-being. "No person should be placed in a position where any suggestion of mishandling of funds must be defended by the word of one person against that of another" and "the pastor should not be an authorized [check] signer" are examples of helpful guidelines found in "Congregational Treasurers and Bookkeepers Financial and Accounting Guide."

View the guide:

<https://bit.ly/2NAp5OH>

View other helpful resources:

<https://bit.ly/2Nz2Ngz>

Preaching Stewardship

Want to be more bold in preaching about stewardship? Learn the best of Bishop Satterlee's D.Min. teachings during this two-part program consisting of presentations, discussion, and sharing and critiquing sermons about stewardship. Join us November 4-5, 2018 and January 13-14, 2019.

Learn More and Register: <https://bit.ly/2PZB0bi>

Upcoming Events

October	
15-17	Autumn Leadership Event , Livonia
23-25	LARC Retreat , Conway
26-27	Discernment Retreat , Battle Creek
26-27	ELMM Retreat: Daniel, Apocalyptic and the Early Jewish Period , Saginaw
26-28	One Year to Live: Men's Retreat , Manteno, IL
27	For the Living of These Days , Portage

November	
4-5	Preaching Stewardship , Dewitt
9-11	Mitten Youth Summit , Midland
22-23	Synod Office Closure , Thanksgiving

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/CALL ACCEPTED: Christopher Laughlin, Installation 10/21, 2pm
Prince of Peace/Rose City	Jeff Bonn, Intentional Interim/Preparing MSP	Savior/Kalamazoo	Paul Neuchterlein, Interim
Grace/Vassar (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Awaiting a candidate	St. Paul/Three Rivers	Marleen Kinker resigning 9/30/Interim arrangements in process
St. Paul's/Au Gres	Supply Pastors/Exploring Cooperative Ministry with Grace/East Tawas	Stony Lake Conference	Rev. Doug Ogden, Dean
St. Timothy/Midland (part-time)	Gerald Ferguson, administrative pastor/ Entering cooperative ministry with Trinity/Midland	Samuel/Muskegon	Chris Anderson, Interim/ Preparing MSP
Trinity/Midland (part-time)	CALL ACCEPTED: Megan Crouch (MN), Installation 10/20, 5pm	Sunrise Conference	Rev. Chryis Bright, Dean
Capital Area Conference	Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean	Peace/Gaylord	Gary Grieger, part-time interim/Preparing MSP
St. Stephen/Lansing	Erick Johnson, Interim/ Awaiting candidates	St. Paul/Alpena	Supply pastors/Preparing MSP
Grace/Lansing	John Schleicher, Interim	Traverse Conference	Rev. Rosanne Anderson, Dean
Calvary/Lansing	Laura Gerstl-Beukema resigning as of 9/30/Interim arrangements in process	St. Paul's/Reed City	Matt Deames, Interim
Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean	Augustana/Tustin	Supply Pastors/Awaiting candidates
Peace/Holland	Paul Kehnle, stated supply/ Interim arrangements in process		
Christ/Wyoming	CALL ACCEPTED: Justin Walker, Installation 11/4, 4pm		