



North/ West Lower Michigan Synod

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A Start to the New Learning Year!

Although I enjoy all four seasons in this state we now call home, autumn has always been my favorite. The sky is a deeper blue. Nature's palette of foliage changes day by day. The air becomes crisp, and the nights cooler. Sweaters, jeans and boots emerge from the closet again. Grapes, apples, and pumpkins ready for harvest bring pops of color to area farms.

School begins too and September kicks off the program year complete with new opportunities for learning and service for all ages. Autumn feels a bit like another "new year", an opportunity for a fresh start at learning and growing. As I visit congregations around our synod, I hear about new Bible studies, Habitat for Humanity builds, courses in evangelism, financial wellness, care-giving, and parenting. Did you make a new year's resolution last January to develop a new skill or read your Bible more often? There are plenty of opportunities to help you meet that goal before 2018 comes to its close.

For the Living of These Days, September 15 & October 27 St Stephen, Lansing

Our Synod's Publicly Engaged Church Table is sponsoring two events exploring the works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Moderated by Pastor Erick Johnson, these sessions will include a presentation, viewing of the video "Bonhoeffer" by Martin Doblmeier, and a Q&A session. Lunch will be provided. Register at <https://bit.ly/2Msrzix>

ELMM (Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry) begins a new year of coursework for persons who desire training in scripture, Lutheran theology, ministry skills and discernment of gifts for ministry. Presenters include seminary faculty members and experienced rostered and lay leaders. Courses being offering this fall include studies of Hebrews, James and 1 Peter, as well as Apocalyptic Literature, including Daniel and Revelation. To learn more about this outstanding opportunity to learn for the sake of your congregation's ministry needs, visit <https://bit.ly/2mdx35n>

Autumn Leadership Event, October 15-17 Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Livonia

The Southeast Michigan Synod is hosting the annual Autumn Leadership Event for rostered leaders (pastors and deacons, associates in ministry and diaconal ministers). This year's focus is on wholeness and well-being and features Deacon Tammy Devine of Portico Benefits Services. Visit <https://bit.ly/2OlmjxK> to find registration and lodging information.

Region 6 Discernment Retreat, October 26-27 St Peter Lutheran Church, Battle Creek

Our synod is hosting the Fall 2018 Discernment Retreat – If you wonder if God might be calling you to become a deacon or pastor in the ELCA, you are invited to this time away to listen, pray and explore that call. Visit <https://bit.ly/2KU7ULC> for registration information.

It is never to late to learn, to grow in understanding, to reach for a goal or fulfill a resolution. Happy New (Learning) Year!

Rev. Dr. Chrysanne Timm
Assistant to the Bishop for Synod Life

Synod Finances
as of August 31, 2018

August Revenue and Support

Mission Support	\$ 125,299
Other	\$ 823
Total	\$ 126,122

Year to Date Revenue and Support

Mission Support	\$ 786,566
Other	\$ 91,059
Total	\$ 877,625

August Expenses

Support to ELCA	\$ 62,649
Other	\$ 62,983
Total	\$ 125,632

Year to Date Expenses

Support to ELCA	\$ 393,283
Other	\$ 559,555
Total	\$ 952,838

Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$ 1,156
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Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$ 1,156
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Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ 1,646
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Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ (74,057)
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Synod Eucharist

From July to September, the Synod Office Eucharist will move between the Synod Office in Lansing and the Samaritas Senior Living Center in Acme.

Worship will continue to take place at 11:30am on Wednesdays. We invite you to join us!

View the schedule for each week's location: <https://bit.ly/2KOkBHM>

Three Sides Podcast

Typically, it's said there are two sides to every story. But often a middle or third side of the story is revealed, providing another perspective to consider.

Three Sides is a new monthly podcast featuring stories from the ELCA. As a church that believes God is calling us into the world—together, Three Sides will present diverse voices from across the ELCA.

Episodes are available now! Subscribe on iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher or listen online: <https://bit.ly/2CPZyRx>

Portico Updates

Portico has released a number of new updates, including a schedule of enrollment dates, upcoming webinars, and new programs. Please take a moment to review all of the news and updates.

Learn more: <https://bit.ly/2CQrVz5>

Upcoming Events

September	
15	For the Living of These Days, Mt. Pleasant
28-29	ELMM Retreat: Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, Battle Creek
29	Ministry to Sick and Shut-In, Lansing

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

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

Accompaniment

In musical settings, accompaniment is music added to the melody to enhance it. The melody is richer and fuller when it is accompanied with other music. The accompaniment does not seek to change the melody, but make it better. In the foodie world, accompaniment is other foods added to a single food to make the meal more enjoyable and bring out additional tastes. The dictionary says accompaniment is "something added to something else to make it better".

Accompaniment is a description of the model of engagement we use in Global Missions. Years ago, we as a church and many other churches changed our way of working with indigenous peoples in mission settings from a colonial to an accompaniment model. We moved from telling our mission story in ways to make people like us, to ways of walking along side of people and sharing their life and asking them how we can help make their life and work better. In addition, we also shared with them things we could learn from them. That is accompaniment.

In the bible story of the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-27) Jesus demonstrates accompaniment, or walking with, as he travels the road with the disciples heading home to Emmaus. He walks with them and listens to what concerns them. Then it is in breaking bread that they come to know that it is Jesus. When Jesus talks about neighbors in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:43-48), one of the meanings of "neighbor" is someone we walk the road with. Jesus walked the roads of the Ancient Near East listening to people and the way he helps is enhanced by what he learned by listening to them tell their story.

The church is in a time of change and renewal. Many churches see their communities or neighborhoods in ways that we use to look at mission in foreign countries. There are assumptions made about what people need and what life is like, without ever really getting to know them as neighbors. What if we used the global mission model of accompaniment as a way of reconnecting with our context? How could we be listening to folks, walking with them, and asking what would enhance their lives and ours? When we rate the vitality of our congregation, can there be a component where the community rates how vital the work of the church is to the community? When we brainstorm mission/outreach ideas, could we also gather ideas from the community? Better yet, might be asking the community/neighborhood what projects they and the congregation could work on together?

A sure sign of vitality in a congregation is to work on accompaniment as a way to walk alongside of those who have never been in our buildings. How could walking along side of people in our communities lead us to share an invitation to have Jesus walk along side of others we meet?

The Rev. David E. Sprang
Assistant to the Bishop, Director for Evangelical Mission
Redevelopment, Renewal, Vitality Strategy

Preaching Stewardship

November 4-5, 2018 & January 13-14, 2019

Want to be more bold in preaching about stewardship? Looking for new ways to enhance conversation about mission support? Want to share in conversation with colleagues about how to grow stewards? This is for you! Pastors, Rostered Ministers, and Synodically Authorized Ministers are invited to two overnight trainings gleaning the best of Bishop Craig A. Satterlee's D.Min. teachings about preaching stewardship. The program consists of presentations, discussion, and sharing and critiquing sermons about stewardship. Each participant will also receive a copy of Bishop Satterlee's book [Preaching and Stewardship](#).

This two part program will be held November 4-5, 2018 and January 13-14, 2019 at St. Francis Retreat Center in Dewitt, MI. Registration is \$85 and includes overnight lodging and meals for both sessions.

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

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
Hope/Marlette (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Awaiting a candidate
Prince of Peace/Rose City	Jeff Bonn, Intentional Interim
Grace/Vassar (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Awaiting a candidate
St. Paul's/Au Gres	Supply Pastors/Exploring Cooperative Ministry with Grace/East Tawas
St. Timothy/Midland (part-time)	Gerald Ferguson, administrative pastor/ Entering cooperative ministry with Trinity/Midland
Trinity/Midland (part-time)	CALL ACCEPTED: Megan Crouch (MN), Installation 10/20, 5pm

Capital Area Conference	Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean
St. Stephen/Lansing	Erick Johnson, Interim/ Awaiting candidates
Grace/Lansing	John Schleicher, Interim
Calvary/Lansing	Laura Gerstl-Beukema resigning as of 9/30/Interim arrangements in process

Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean
Peace/Holland	Paul Kehnle, stated supply/ Interim arrangements in process
Mamrelund/Kent City	CALL ACCEPTED: Michael Conklin, Installation 9/23, 3pm
Christ/Wyoming	CALL ACCEPTED: Justin Walker, Installation 11/4, 4pm

Kalamazoo Conference	Rev. Kjersten Priddy, Dean
Messiah/Constantine	Tom Pederson, Interim/CALL ACCEPTED: Christopher Laughlin, Installation 10/21, 2pm
Savior/Kalamazoo	Paul Neuchterlein, Interim
St. Paul/Three Rivers	Marleen Kinker resigning 9/30/Interim arrangements in process

Stony Lake Conference	Rev. Doug Ogden, Dean
Samuel/Muskegon	Chris Anderson, Interim/ Preparing MSP

Sunrise Conference	Rev. Chryis Bright, Dean
Peace/Gaylord	Gary Greiger, part-time interim/Preparing MSP
St. Paul/Alpena	Supply pastors/Preparing MSP

Traverse Conference	Rev. Rosanne Anderson, Dean
St. Paul's/Reed City	Matt Deames, Interim
Augustana/Tustin	Supply Pastors/Awaiting candidates