



North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

March 18, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Peace be with you!

In these rapidly changing days of uncertainty and disruption, we rejoice in the many ways the congregations, leaders, and people of our Synod continue to proclaim Christ, care for one another, and love their neighbor, especially the most vulnerable among us. Thank you!

A responsibility of the Office of the Bishop is to discern and recommend responsible next steps in addressing the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Protecting the health of congregation members and the public and mitigating the spread of the COVID-19 virus are principal considerations. In all our deliberations, we remain grounded in being church together for the sake of the world. We are grateful that all of the bishops of this church are in persistent communication with one another and that we benefit from the wisdom, guidance, and recommendations of our Presiding Bishop and churchwide organization.

After prayerful reflection and in keeping with the recommendations of the Office of the Secretary and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Bishop Satterlee recommended and Synod Council affirmed that we will NOT gather for Synod Assembly May 14-16, 2020 in Mount Pleasant.

At this point, we are exploring whether we will have a re-scheduled shortened (half-day) assembly in the fall for essential business or whether we will defer the next synod assembly until 2021. At this time, it is still too early to make this determination.

Synod Assembly Registration fees and Display Table fees will be refunded. If you submitted a credit card payment, it will be refunded to your card. If you submitted a check, you will be issued a refund check. Please allow 2-3 weeks for processing. All hotel rooms have been automatically cancelled. If you have any questions about refunds, please contact Ann Stavros at annstavros@mittensynod.org.

We will inform you of additional updates, including the date and location of the next assembly and how we will carry out essential business, as soon as we are able to make these determinations. I am grateful that Synod Council is charged with serving as our Board of Directors between assemblies.

We know that this announcement will generate many questions and concerns. Bishop Satterlee and the Synod Staff are working diligently to respond to those who have reached out. We thank you for your patience and understanding as there are a lot of messages.

We make this decision mindful of our overriding responsibilities to proclaim the Gospel and minister to our neighbors. We also understand the difficult implications of our decision, but we believe that the serious risks of under-reaction outweigh the risks of over-reaction to the current pandemic.

Christ is with you!

Ms. Christine E. Allen, Secretary

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