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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

“And [Jesus] said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15).

Dear siblings in Christ,

When I talk about our goal of engaging a million new, young, diverse people I get asked a lot, “I’m not new, young, or diverse. Am I not important to the church anymore?” My answer is always the same, “You’ve never been more important.”

When we committed to our new goal, we identified our purpose as “Activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.” This goal does not happen without the people who are already part of this church. Theresa of Avila talked about the church as the hands and feet of Christ in the world, the very way God will work to engage new people.

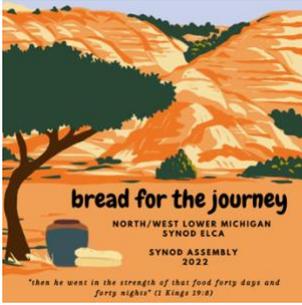
Those aren’t easy things to do and certainly not ones that only a few of us can do alone. God has blessed us with so many resources to do this work: nearly 3.6 million people, 65 synods, and 350 CWO staff, plus colleges, universities, seminaries, social ministry organizations, and other affiliated organizations, and our separately incorporated ministries. We truly are a church of abundance.

So, what can you do right now?

- Pray. For our church. For one another. For those whom we have yet to meet.
- Find time to listen to people who are new to the ELCA, young, and/or diverse. Share the story of Jesus with them.

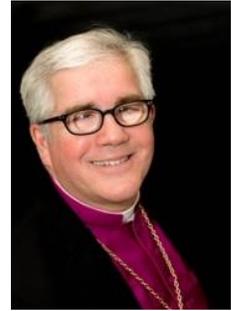
Along the way, don’t forget: You are important.

Grace and peace,



Report of the Bishop

North/West Lower Michigan Synod ELCA 2022 Synod Assembly



What follows is the 2022 anthology of the ministry of what some call “the Office of the Bishop” and others call “the Synod Staff.” Lately, I am reminded that “the Synod” is more than either of these. I thank my collaborators in the writing and editing of this report and in the ministry it represents: Pastor Rosanne Anderson (Assistant to the Bishop), Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek (Director of Finance and Program Administrator of Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry (ELMM)), Ms. Chelsey Satterlee (Director of Communications), Vice President Sandy Schlesinger (Chair of Synod Council), Pastor David Sprang (Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission), and Ms. Ann Stavros (Office Manager). I also thank this report’s editor, Ms. Chelsey Satterlee, and the Assembly Book’s editor, Pastor Rosanne Anderson.

VISION

“Proclaiming Christ and Prayerfully Participating in Jesus’ own work of reconciling the world to God’s very Self by Renewing Congregations, Empowering Leaders, and Strengthening Connections.” This vision provides the “template” for all my reports. It also directs my ministry and the work of the Synod Staff. We desire that everything we do proclaims Christ, is bathed in prayer, is part of Jesus’ work of reconciliation, and that we can draw a direct line from whatever we are doing to either renewing congregations, empowering leaders, or strengthening connections.

LIVING STONES

The Living Stone Initiatives are identified throughout this report. Living Stones provides a framework for our strategic initiatives for the three-year period (2020/21-2022/23). I find this framework helpful in directing and communicating Synod mission and the work of the Staff. I am also grateful that some of our Living Stone contributors plan to continue their financial commitment after the third year of the program. For these reasons, in this final year, I will assess the status of the Living Stone Initiatives, refine them, and propose a direction for the ensuing two years (2023/24, 2024/25). I expect this renewed direction will be a refinement rather than a radical departure from what we are doing currently.

PROCLAIMING CHRIST

Pastor Anderson, Pastor Sprang, and I are returning to congregations on Sunday mornings. We prioritize going where there is a need: pastor leaving, installation, significant event, need or conflict, or a pastor away. We are beginning routine visitation. We are not yet staying in hotels. We continue to mask and maintain social distance, and do not participate in congregation meals. None of us is compelled to go where we are uncomfortable. As we move toward returning to in-person worship, we look for guidance as to whether our being in congregations each week continues to be a priority for the Synod.

For the past few months, we provided video sermons for congregational use. As the use of these sermons waned, we paused them starting the week of April 4. We will continue to monitor the number of COVID-19 cases and reassess the needs of pastors and congregations in determining if/when to resume these videos.

RENEWING CONGREGATIONS

CALL PROCESS: 12 congregations are currently in the call process and 14 more will be in the call process in the next 6–12 months. 13 are full-time calls, 13 are part-time calls, some very part-time. The reasons pastors are seeking calls or retiring include (1) the need to be closer to family, (2) irreconcilable differences with the congregation over COVID-19 precautions and politics, and (3) congregations electing to address financial shortfalls by reducing the pastor to part-time.

The Synod Staff considers matching the best pastor or deacon with the right congregation key to renewing congregations. We therefore make the call process our highest priority. This inevitably means that we cannot do everything individuals and groups within our Synod request, direct, and expect the staff and me to do. Rearranging staff priorities will result in congregations experiencing an even longer call process.

You can read the call process manual [here](#). New wrinkles are impacting the call process, mainly by making it even slower and more complicated. First, we cannot expect to receive first call pastors (seminary graduates) every year. In response to the small number of seminary graduates and the high percentage of seminary graduates who geographically restrict where they are willing/able to serve, the Conference of Bishops established a first call process in which seminary graduates ordinarily return to their home synod. This means that seminary graduates are no longer assigned to synods. Bishops work together to help seminary graduates address their own needs and desires and the needs of the Church. With all of the ELCA bishops, I spend considerable time implementing this first call (not assignment) process.

Second, we have found that some pastors are more interested in going to or staying in a certain location rather than serving a congregation. They want to live in their ideal place more than serve their ideal congregation. As a result, some areas of the country have pastors waiting for calls; other areas of the country cannot get pastors to come for calls. Even in our Synod, Grand Rapids appears to be the desired location.

Third, some pastors tell their councils they are leaving and then either change their minds or decline to give a date. In response, the councils want to renegotiate the terms of the call for the pastor to stay. Pastors are wise not to inform their councils that they plan to leave until they have talked with me and to heed my advice if I tell them the time has not yet come to inform the council.

Fourth, pastors who have not been part of the call process for decades and congregational leaders who “know how the call process works” or should work—either the way it worked decades ago when there was an “oversupply” of pastors or the way industry works – resist the call process as it is. I think we have changed the call process four times in the nine years that I have served as bishop. We will attempt to give congregations the call process they

want; however, the requested call process usually slows down receiving a pastor. For example, congregations that require a choice of three candidates will wait longer as we try to find them.

Fifth, we are experiencing an uptick in retiring and departing pastors who want to manage the call process for their successor and have an ongoing pastoral role in the congregation they are leaving. ELCA policy clearly states that the pastoral relationship ends with the end of the call. More important, pastoral candidates have little interest in congregations where the previous pastor is still involved and usually decline the opportunity to interview. If pastors are not ready to relinquish their pastoral role in a congregation and become part of another, they should not relinquish their call.

We will continue to meet with call committees via Zoom because this allows us to be a consistent partner. We meet with the council as part of the exit interview, with the call committee after the Ministry Site Profile is complete, and again for consultation and direction.

I am profoundly grateful to retired pastors who serve as interim and stated supply, giving congregations the time they need to carefully and prayerfully call their next pastor.

TEACHING: Both the Synod's Ministry with Persons with Disabilities Task Force and Environmental Stewardship Task Force led book discussions this year. The Synod also sponsored a series of Introduction to Social Justice courses through Justice Leaders Collaborative. 14 of our congregations are registered to participate in the ELCA's Building A Culture of Generosity program provided by the ELCA Church Council. They will receive training and coaching in stewardship. I am grateful to Pastor Sprang for recruiting these congregations.

EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY (ELMM): LIVING STONES INITIATIVE: 75 congregational leaders over the three-year period will complete a retooled Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry (ELMM) program in four tracks: (1) Lutheran Bible study leader; (2) stewardship specialist; (3) community evangelist/catalyst; (4) assisting minister. A new track, "Pastoral Care Assistant Training" debuted in February 2022. Dates and instructors for three virtual sessions in the fall are confirmed with plans for an in-person event in October underway. Recruitment for ELMM remains challenging. Information on the upcoming sessions is available on the ELMM website: <https://elmm.org>.

YOUTH: LIVING STONES INITIATIVE: Our youth, especially those in smaller congregations, are afforded an additional level of youth ministry, to build on the excellent events provided by Living Water Ministries. Pastors and congregations report to me that youth ministry will be a post-pandemic rebuild as families figure out what their new reality will be.

PASTORAL CARE: I am inspired by and grateful for the congregations and leaders who have been faithful, steadfast, patient, and creative during the pandemic. We have seen congregations such as these grow stronger. As pastors and deacons often respond to those who are struggling, so the Synod Staff is most often involved with congregations struggling with health and viability.

We thank the congregations that submitted the parochial reports (Forms A and C), which congregations are required to complete annually. In reviewing these reports, we are not grading individual pastors/deacons or evaluating specific congregations. Rather, we are looking

for trends in our Synod that will assist us in identifying congregations where synod support and engagement might be helpful. Of course, the Synod Staff is eager to help every congregation that asks.

JAMES 3:17 CONGREGATION GRANTS: Established by Synod Council, these grants financially assist congregations whom the bishop, in consultation with the assistants, assesses need for a “Wise One” as described in James 3:17 for a defined period. “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy” (James 3:17). A “wise one” is someone outside the congregation—a detached observer, examiner, advisor, expert, or consultant—to bring a congregation this kind of wisdom.

In addition to helping negotiate congregational conflicts, which continue to increase, our pastoral care of congregations increasingly involves issues of *sustainability* and *partnership*.

LIVING STONES INITIATIVE: Struggling congregations receive accompaniment and assistance to realistically assess their sustainability and, where desirable, to partner with neighboring congregations, both ELCA and full communion partners.

SUSTAINABILITY: We continue to spend considerable time helping congregations assess their sustainability. I have written a tool congregations can use to assess their viability and sustainability, which we provide to congregations after we begin working with them.

PARTNERSHIP: St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Midland voted to become part of Trinity Lutheran Church in Midland. We thank the people of St. Timothy for their faith and service and Pastor Gerald Ferguson for his pastoral care and leadership.

As congregations consider partnering, Pastor Sprang has provided resources on Cooperative Ministry, which are available on the Synod website:
<https://www.mittensynod.org/mission/cooperative-ministry/>

Many congregations in our synod that are not in need of partners do not want to consider partnering until they figure out who they are after the COVID-19 pandemic. In various ways, our ecumenical partners shared with me a bit of wisdom that I find very helpful. When I reach out to them at a congregation’s request to pursue a partnership, they answer that they are very open to pursuing partnerships whose goal is either to enhance the ministry of Jesus Christ or to help our congregation to close. They are not interested in partnerships whose goal is enabling stasis and maintaining the status quo.

COMPLETING THEIR MINISTRY: Jesus said, “Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor” (John 12:24-26). Under the leadership of Bishop Emeritus John Schleicher, Pastor Jim Couser, and Pastor Rick McKenzie, Calvary Lutheran Church in Lansing completed its ministry this year and generously shared its assets to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ. We commend this congregation to God’s care as we thank the people of Calvary for their faith and service. St. Stephen in Lansing and Gethsemane in Wyoming are

discerning whether the time has come to complete their ministry. We hold these congregations in prayer.

MISSION/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: As I compiled this report, I rejoiced that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod continues to grow as a publicly engaged church. Thank you for your care, courage, compassion, and commitment.

CONNECT GRANTS: These grants are awarded to congregations to assist in implementing new ideas for connecting the congregation and its community by meeting new people, reconnecting with people, and moving those met online into greater relationship with Jesus and the church. We are able to award Connect Grants throughout the Synod. We received our first application and look forward to more.

JOHN D. SCHLEICHER CARE OF CREATION GRANTS: In response to the resolution on responding to the climate emergency adopted at our 2021 assembly, Synod Council established the John D. Schleicher Care of Creation Grants using some of the money given by Calvary, Lansing. Three (3) one-time, \$750 grants will be awarded to inspire and assist congregations (or a group of congregations) in responding to climate change as a matter of faith and discipleship by initiating a project that includes education, conservation, and/or advocacy. The grants are named to honor Bishop Emeritus John D. Schleicher for his commitment to and leadership in care of creation. We received one application for the John D. Schleicher Care of Creation Grants.

COVID-19 RESPONSE GRANTS: Beginning in 2020 and continuing through all of 2021, the Synod applied for and received a total of \$65,000 from ELCA donations to distribute to our congregations doing extra outreach in their communities during the pandemic. 23 congregations received grants and touched the lives of approximately 2,000 people per week.

CAMP NOAH: In 2021, the Synod was the primary sponsor for Camp Noah, a flood recovery program. This camp was held virtually for the children of Mid-Michigan who were affected by flooding.

REVIVE: LIVING STONES INITIATIVE: 18 congregations participating in REVIVE, a 2 year-long vitality program developed specifically for our Synod. Since congregation teams cannot meet in person, REVIVE has been making videos that congregations can use. Examples include videos on the topics of “Growing Young” and Outreach to Millennials and Generation X. Videos and resources can be found on the Synod’s website: <https://www.mittensynod.org/mission/revive/>.

DISASTER RESPONSE: We contributed \$5000 to the Indiana-Kentucky Synod to assist those affected by the recent tornados. We also contributed \$5000 from our Synod Disaster Response Fund to Lutheran World Relief to assist with the refugee resettlement crisis in Ukraine. All contributions to our Synod Disaster Response Fund through Easter are designated for this purpose.

WELCOME: LIVING STONES INITIATIVE: Our Synod makes a renewed commitment to discuss ways to welcome all God's people. The items that follow together indicate that our Synod is widening its welcome.

RACIAL JUSTICE: I appreciate Pastor Anderson serving as the point person in this effort. We completed our third Introduction to Social Justice class with Justice Leaders Collaborative.

Pastor Anderson is working with Justice Leaders Collaborative to schedule a follow up class, “White People Doing their Work”, this summer.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT: Pastor Ellen Schoepf serves as coordinator of our Synod’s AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities) initiative, which is the ELCA’s response to unaccompanied minors who cross our border. Synod Council made a financial gift to assist refugees from Afghanistan through Samaritas; many of our congregations are actively working to support and welcome refugees from Afghanistan.

OPEN HEARTS, OPEN CHURCH is working with congregations exploring becoming Reconciled in Christ (RIC). As a bishop, I expect and hold our church accountable to respect the four perspectives acknowledged in the ELCA social statement, [Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust](#). As one who has had Leviticus 21:17-20 quoted to me as biblical proof that my visual impairment disqualifies me from serving as a pastor (and bishop), I rejoice when congregations find ways to proclaim the LGBTQIA+ Community is not beyond God’s grace and has a full share in God’s service.

MINISTRY WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TASK FORCE: Our Ministry with Persons with Disabilities Task Force will hold a day long learning event for our Synod on October 22, 2022 at Prince of Peace in Portage. The Task Force has also shared a list of resources for those interested in this ministry: <https://www.mittensynod.org/disability-ministries-resources/>

GUN SAFETY: In response to the gun violence that is occurring across our state and country, and in particular the shooting at Oxford High School, I attended an event to end gun violence at the State Capitol on April 13 with four other bishops. The event was sponsored by End Gun Violence Michigan, a coalition of faith leaders, organizers, and affected families. More information is available here: <https://www.mittensynod.org/news/end-gun-violence-michigan/>

VOTING RIGHTS: I was asked for a statement on voting rights. We do support the ELCA’s social resolution and voting initiatives and share those on our website. We also highlighted that information in the April newsletter. Please recall that we worked hard in October/November 2020 to increase awareness about voting rights and help people make their voting plan.

EMPOWERING LEADERS

RECRUITMENT: LIVING STONES INITIATIVE: 20 candidates for rostered ministry are identified, accompanied, and supported. Pastor Anderson, Director of Candidacy for our Synod, worked with Directors of Candidacy from the other Region 6 synods (Southeast Michigan, Indiana-Kentucky, Northwest Ohio, Northeast Ohio and Southern Ohio Synods) to plan and present a discernment retreat. This retreat is a yearly event for people who are exploring their vocational call and discerning if God might be calling them to rostered ministry in the ELCA. This year, it was held virtually on March 5-6, 2021.

CANDIDACY: Pastor Anderson reports the various stages of Candidacy continue to ebb and flow as is the norm. As of March 2022, there are 17 people in process. This includes 3 inquirers, 3 applicants, 3 currently on internship, 1 continuing a part-time internship into the second year; 2 beginning internship this fall, 1 awaiting approval for assignment and 1 withdrawal from

candidacy. The remainder continue their academic studies with 2 studying on campus and 6 in distributive (virtual) learning programs.

FIRST CALL: Every newly ordained pastor or deacon in the ELCA is required to participate in First Call Theological Education for the first three years after ordination. It includes continuing education events held in each synod. Our first call pastors will participate in a virtual retreat for all first call pastors and deacons in Region 6 on April 25-26, 2022. Pastor Anderson leads the planning of this year's event under the theme of conflict management.

CONTINUING EDUCATION ROSTERED MINISTERS & CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS: LIVING STONES INITIATIVE: Rostered and congregational leaders receive increased opportunities for inspiration and continuing education. The Autumn Leadership Event is scheduled for October 9–11, 2022 in Mt. Pleasant.

ROSTERED MINISTER INDEBTEDNESS: LIVING STONES INITIATIVE: Rostered ministers are relieved of some measure of educational indebtedness. We received a gift of \$20,000 from Lord of Life in Portage. I am so grateful to them and to all who support this ministry. I also thank Linda Wicander and her team for faithfully carrying out this annual work.

PASTORAL CARE: I continue to have conversations with pastors about retirement. We have added additional retirement resources to our website for easy access. View resources: <https://www.mittensynod.org/leaders/resources-for-leaders/general-resources-for-leaders/>

We are responding to an increasing number of requests for conversation about a variety of hurts/needs in the lives of pastors. We refer/assist them to find counseling when appropriate. I want to acknowledge that several retired pastors are concerned that I am not doing enough to provide direct pastoral care to retired pastors. From their perspective, I have spent too much time responding to COVID-19. My understanding is that retired pastors who are not serving congregations are members of congregations with pastors, so this is not a priority for me. Therefore, whether retired pastors need pastoral care or want to tell me what pastors and I should be doing rather than receive pastoral care, I welcome retired pastors who desire to have a conversation with me to call and leave a message at the office; those that do know I call them back.

DISCIPLINE: We held boundary training via Zoom in March. It was well attended. We were blessed to have Barbara Keller who does this work for the ELCA as our first presenter. "Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline," the governing code of conduct for the church, now includes expectations of congregation members. We are encouraged to make these expectations known. Review document: http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Definitions_and_Guidelines_for_Discipline_2021.pdf

ROSTER: The report on changes in the roster is appended to this report. I am grateful to Ms. Ann Stavros for assisting me in this work. As the person ultimately responsible for maintaining the roster for our Synod, I am very concerned about inaccuracies and omissions. If you find omissions or inaccuracies, please let us know. If you notify us prior to the assembly, I will amend the roster report as part of my oral report to the assembly.

STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS

COMMUNICATIONS: Some reading this report are voting members attending their first Synod Assembly, and perhaps are being “introduced” to synodical ministry. I therefore want to review some of the ways we communicate, many of which are maintained by Director of Communications, Ms. Chelsey Satterlee.

Our **Synod website** provides news, events, information, and resources for congregations and leaders: <http://www.mittensynod.org>. A **Weekly Update** is sent to our Synod’s e-mail distribution list every Tuesday at 10 AM and contains news for the week. The **Bishop’s Newsletter** is published on the 15th of each month and is also sent to our Synod’s email distribution list. It includes longer articles, snapshots of upcoming events, call process updates, and an update on the Synod’s finances. You can subscribe to receive both these resources by entering your email address on the sign-up form located on our Synod webpage. Click the link included in this paragraph and scroll down on the right side of the page to the box that says sign-up for the Weekly Update.

On **Facebook**, we have both a page and a group. The page, North/West Lower Michigan Synod (Official),¹ is where the Synod Office posts news. The group, North/West Lower Michigan Synod Community,² is a place for conversation where anyone can post. Posts to this group are not approved or endorsed by the Synod.

I maintain a personal website, **CraigASatterlee.com**, that includes my public schedule: <http://craigasatterlee.com>. Many find this helpful when planning events that involve the bishop. Most Mondays, I produce a short video called **Take One**, in which I review my weekly schedule, comment on happenings in the Church and the world, and offer reflections on the scripture readings from the Revised Common Lectionary for the coming Sunday. As its name suggests, *Take One* is recorded in one and only one take; there are no do-overs. I serve as both host and cameraman. You’ll find a link to each *Take One* segment in the *Weekly Update*. I also post a link to Facebook, my website, and my YouTube channel.

CAMPUS MINISTRY: Synod Council authorized a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community at Grand Valley State University. In partnership with the ELCA, we continue to support Campus Ministry at Michigan State, Central Michigan, Western Michigan, and now Grand Valley State.

OUR POST-PANDEMIC SYNOD

The Synod Staff continues to work from home with a weekly staff meeting via Zoom. Ms. Ann Stavros drops by the Synod Office for mail, filing, etc. We will continue this pattern indefinitely for two reasons. First, Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek (Director of Finance and Program Administrator for Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry), Ms. Chelsey Satterlee (Director of Communications), and Ms. Ann Stavros (Office Manager) all manage secondary “day jobs,” so we introduced flexibility and working remotely even before the pandemic. Ms. Dawn Brackmann (Synod Attorney) always worked with us remotely. Second, asking the pastoral staff

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/MittenSynodELCA/>

² <https://www.facebook.com/groups/70174344761/>

to come to Lansing contradicted the resolution on climate change the Synod adopted at the 2021 Assembly. In the coming year, we will begin the process of transferring files from paper to electronic. These changes resulted in the separation of Ms. Renee Dixon (Executive Assistant to the Bishop), who I thank for her service.

Second, as we support congregations and leaders for all sorts of reasons, we meet using Zoom as our default approach so Pastor Anderson or Pastor Sprang and I can both attend the same meeting. We visit church council meetings for shorter periods and for specific topics and attend several meetings in a single evening, making our response time faster. We are also saving on gas, which is both economical and appropriate for the environment.

“The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, ‘Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.’ He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God” (1 Kings 19:7-8). God grant us all an angel’s touch, the bread of the Word, and strength for the journey. We who God has called to serve this Synod are grateful to be journeying with you.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Craig Satterlee". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name of the signatory.

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

Indeed, Bishop Satterlee is Legally Blind

I assume that, for some, a bishop (teacher, scholar, administrator, ordained minister, someone who has power over you) who also manages a disability is a new experience. Over the years, students and colleagues have found the following “protocol,” which I originally developed for the permanent community of the Lutheran School of Theology, helpful. I share it in the hope that it will be helpful to you as well.

1. I am legally blind. I have less than 10 percent of normal vision with correction. I do not know what that means, since I have never seen “normally.” I am the expert on my vision and how it impacts my life and work. Bring all questions and concerns about my vision to me. Making assumptions and conclusions about my abilities and limitations without consulting me is inappropriate.
2. Since I cannot see faces, I know people by voice and appreciate being reminded of people’s names in order to match them with voices. When you greet me, tell me your name. My closest friends know and do this. When I know your voice, I will tell you. I only hold myself accountable to recognize my wife, daughter, and mother “on sight.”
3. Cluttered corridors and walkways can be hazardous for me, particularly when obstacles (chairs, dogs, furniture, construction) are placed unexpectedly. Please keep the hallways outside my office clear and do not rearrange or remove furniture from my office.
4. If you want to be certain that I receive information, use voice rather than email and provide hard copy rather than file attachment. I do not hold myself accountable for information posted on signs and bulletin boards.
5. Dr. Conrad Heyner, my first ophthalmologist, determined that it takes me 2 times longer than average to read and write. I am therefore very disciplined in managing time. Last-minute assignments, unexpected delays or interruption of services, and changes in schedule can be particularly burdensome for me.
6. I read English text in standard font, though 14 to 16 point is easier. I do not read cursive handwriting; someone reads it to me. Reading Latin, Greek, French and German are much more laborious undertakings.
7. Tasks such as locating a library book on the shelves, working office machines, and filling out forms are difficult for me. I sometimes get frustrated that I cannot do these tasks. I may ask for help or suggest ways around these tasks. As far as possible, please be accommodating.
8. Pointing and giving directions such as. “That way,” are not helpful. Try to be descriptive and concrete.

9. I will address questions and concerns about my disability directly. It is inappropriate to do it for me.
10. I will be consulted in order to determine ways that are most helpful both to me and the synod and church. It is inappropriate to unilaterally decide for me what and how much I can and cannot do.
11. I applaud and am deeply committed to our church's mission of bringing the power of the Gospel to bear on issues of diversity related to race, gender, culture, sexual orientation, and the environment. At times, I find this limited understanding of diversity painful because those most passionate about these issues are often the most oblivious, insensitive, and intolerant when it comes to issues of disability. I hope and pray for that time when the ELCA naturally counts persons who live with disabilities among the diverse voices that the church is called to struggle with and by which the church is blessed. In the meantime, I need to be disciplined in spending time in communities more attuned to issues of disability so that I will thrive in our church.
12. I am sympathetic to the appropriate use of technology in learning and worship. Since I do not participate and learn visually, I often experience this kind of class and meeting as a waste of valuable time; I also experience much technology-driven worship as personally exclusive. Please do not equate my lack of personal participation with antagonism toward the endeavor.
13. Address questions and comments about this protocol to me or to the appropriate administrative officer. Do not make comments to my family.

The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D.
Bishop, North West Lower Michigan Synod ELCA

2022 Roster Change Report

DEATHS

Rev. Dean Beckwith	10/18/2021	Retired
Rev. Robert Riedel	12/08/2021	Retired
Rev. Donald Herdmann	12/09/2021	Retired

INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Matthew (Max) Miller	6/21/2021	Grace/East Tawas
Rev. Matthew (Max) Miller	6/21/2021	St Paul/Au Gres
Rev. Mary Hughes	10/03/2021	St. John/Hagensville
Rev. Mary Hughes	10/03/2021	St. James/Millersburg
Rev. Mary Hughes	10/03/2021	Trinity/Ocqueoc
Rev. Jeffrey Bonn	12/12/2021	St. Peter/Unionville
Rev. Christopher Laughlin	1/16/2022	Immanuel/Allegan
Rev. Kari Fast	2/20/2022	Trinity/ Grand Rapids

ON LEAVE FROM CALL

Rev. Jeffrey Bonn	7/21/2021	On Leave from Call
Rev. Kari Fast	8/23/2021	On Leave from Call
Rev. Julie Winklepleck	9/01/2021	3rd year Educational Leave Renewal
Rev. Justin Walker	10/08/2021	Disability Leave
Deacon Julia Nelson	5/01/2021	6th year Family Medical Leave

ORDINATIONS/CLERGY

Rev. Mary Hughes	10/03/2021	St. John/Hagensville
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RESIGNATIONS OR REMOVED FROM ROSTER

Rev. Janai Robinson-Makarov	6/01/2021	On Leave from Call
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TRANSFERS IN

Rev. Alexander Steward	2/03/2022	Southeast Michigan Synod
Rev. Victoria Blough	2/11/2022	Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Rev. Matthew Deames	2/11/2022	Northern Great Lakes Synod
Rev. John Soyster	3/03/2022	Southwest California Synod
Rev. Leslie Soyster	3/03/2022	Southwest California Synod

TRANSFERS OUT

Rev. Marcille Miller	9/09/2021	Southern Ohio Synod
Rev. Jennifer Michael	11/02/2021	Southeastern Synod
Rev. Jessica Hahn	1/02/2022	New Jersey Synod
Rev. James Schalkhauser	2/03/2022	New England Synod
Rev. Ryan Prondzinski	3/07/2022	Minneapolis Synod

RETIREMENTS

Rev. Terry Williamson	7/01/2021	Christ United/Dewitt
Rev. David Blank	11/01/2021	St. Luke's/Grand Rapids
Rev. Karen Niemeyer	2/01/2022	Trinity/Grand Rapids
Rev. William Huether	3/01/2022	

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. Alexander Aivars	3/27/2022	Christ United/Dewitt
Rev. Alexander Steward	4/02/2022	Specialized Ministry/Synod

CONGREGATION ACTIONS

Calvary Lutheran Church/Lansing	January 2022
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Report of the Synod Vice President Sandy Schlesinger

*“I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.”
- Philippians 4:13*



What a difference a year makes as we get closer and closer to being able to envision a “new normal” in terms of leading mission & ministry in a post COVID-19 environment! While we are still in what is categorized as a “global pandemic”, data continues to indicate that spread of infections and related hospitalizations are reducing significantly across Michigan and beyond. While research continues across global scientific communities to further our understanding regarding options for prevention and care, we thank God that this pandemic appears to be moving to a more manageable state (i.e., endemic)!

Through this challenging journey, we have supported each other and together we have accomplished very meaningful ministry across our synod! Kudos to all of our rostered and lay leaders who continue to lead intentionally and creatively through the “ebbs and flows” of COVID – your efforts are appreciated!

As per the constitution, my primary focus as synod Vice President is to serve as chair of the Executive Committee and Synod Council which serves as the synod’s “Board of Directors” between synod assemblies. In addition to Bishop Craig A. Satterlee (Class of 2025), the following leaders serve with me (Class of 2023) on Synod Council:

- **Class of 2022 (with terms concluding on 8/31/2022):** The Rev. Christina Bright (filling the unexpired term of Pr. Jessica Hahn who moved to a new call in December 2021), Dr. Candy McCorkle (Executive Committee Member), Ms. Caroline Peterson, the Rev. Bill Uetrict, and Ms. Holly Wohlfert
- **Class of 2023:** Mr. Connor Ashley, the Rev. Clay Bates, Ms. Phyllis Klingler, and Mr. Bill Trevarthen
- **Class of 2024:** Mr. Daniel Carter (Treasurer), the Rev. Betsy Kamphuis, Mr. Tim Lundgren, the Rev. Kate Van Valkenburg, Ms. Sandra Walker, and Mr. Richard Weingartner
- **Class of 2025:** The Rev. Dennis Smith (Secretary)

NWLM Synod Council Terms			
Through 8/31/22	Through 8/31/23	Through 8/31/24	Through 8/31/25
Executive Committee			
MCCORKLE Dr. Candy (Unexpired Term)	SCHLESINGER Ms. Sandra, VP (Third Term)	CARTER Mr. Daniel, Treasurer (Third Term)	SATTERLEE Bishop Craig (Second Term)
			SMITH, Rev. Dennis, Secretary (First Term)
Synod Council At-Large Members			
BRIGHT Rev. Chryis (Unexpired Term)	ASHLEY Mr. Connor (Second Term)	KAMPHUIS Rev. Betsy (Second Term)	
PETERSON Ms. Caroline (Second Term)	BATES Rev. Clay (First Term)	LUNDGREN Dr. Tim (Second Term)	
UETRICH Rev. Bill (Second Term)	TREVARTHEN Mr. Bill (First Term)	VAN VALKENBURG Rev. Kate (Unexpired Term)	
WOHLFERT Ms. Holly (First Term)	KLINGLER, Ms. Phyllis (Unexpired Term)	WALKER, Ms. Sandra (First Term)	
		WEINGARTNER Mr. Richard (Second Term)	

It continues to be an honor and privilege to serve as the leader of this diverse group of engaged and committed leaders who give of their time and talents to further God's mission across the synod. In particular, please join me in thanking the members of the Class of 2022 who will complete their current terms in August 2022 – their leadership, engagement, and dedication to the mission and ministry of the synod is truly appreciated!

Highlights of key activities managed by the Executive Committee and Synod Council since the last synod assembly include (note that this is not an inclusive list):

- Appointment of the Rev. Christina Bright to fill the unexpired Synod Council term of the Rev. Jessica Hahn who moved to a new call in New Jersey at the end of 2021
- Appointment of the Rev. Kate Van Valkenburg to the open Young Adult – Female position on Synod Council
- Approval to move the Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community Explore at Grand Valley State University in partnership with United Christian Campus Ministry to a regular Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community
- Approval to implement new John D. Schleicher Care of Creation Grants with the purpose of inspiring and assisting NWLM Synod congregations (or a group of congregations) to respond to climate change as a matter of faith and discipleship. The grants are named to honor Bishop Emeritus John D. Schleicher for his commitment to and leadership in the care of creation.
- Support to develop and implement multiple CONNECT GRANTS for use across all NWLM Synod Conferences to support new ideas to connect a congregation and its community, helping them to meet new people, reconnect with people, and move those met online into greater relationship with Jesus and the church
- Support for a new JAMES 3:17 Fund (restricted fund) for use by the Bishop in assisting congregations who would benefit from independent consultation or guidance relative to a specific area of focus
- Support for Living Water Ministries' plans to engage congregations across the synod to raise funds aligned to their "Gift of Camp Freely Given" strategy to make camp free for all participants in 2022
- Finalizing the decision to change the 2022 Synod Assembly date and format from a 2.5-day in-person meeting to a virtual 1-day event in light of continuing concerns with large gatherings based on the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. Plans for an in-person Synod Assembly in 2023 will carry forward (May 7-9, 2023 in Mt. Pleasant).

- Development of proposed 2023 Synod Compensation Guidelines for consideration by the 2022 Synod Assembly
- Development of a proposed 2023-24 Fiscal Year Budget (for the next fiscal year) to align with expectations for mission support and planned spending with the assumption that COVID-19 will move from “pandemic” to “endemic” status and ministry across the synod will move forward within a “new normal” model
- Oversight of strategic processes and programs led by the synod staff – including the on-going “Living Stones” initiatives, management and support of call processes, Seminary Debt Reduction grant management, Synod Disaster Fund management (COVID-19 impacts, mid-Michigan Flooding, etc.), synod trust programs (i.e., Grace and Wilson Trust, etc.), support of social justice initiatives, support of ELCA grant submissions, etc.
- Communication and clarification of synod policies and procedures as questions and concerns arise
- Continued support and engagement in leadership training across the synod, including Equipping Leaders for Mission & Ministry (ELMM), Rostered and Lay Leader Synod Boundaries training, and Social Justice training
- Leading all aspects of Human Resource management for the synod staff. This includes performance reviews, compensation management for synod staff (called, support, and deployed), approval/oversight of sabbatical plans for called staff, addressing resource needs as staffing changes take place, managing inquiries (confidential and otherwise) from synod members relative to synod staffing and other issues or initiatives
- Support of the sabbatical for Assistant to the Bishop Pr. David Sprang that took place in the fall of 2021
- Continued partnership with and encouragement and support of Bp. Craig Satterlee, Asst. to the Bishop Pr. Roseanne Anderson, and Asst. to the Bishop / Dir. of Evangelical Mission Pr. David Sprang as they carry out strategic/constitutional responsibilities across the synod and beyond on behalf of all congregations and synod members
- Fulfillment of many other responsibilities including approval of roster/congregation changes, management of changes to synod and/or congregation constitutions, budget development and fiduciary oversight of synod-led initiatives, appointments of members to serve on synod committee/boards, synod assembly preparation and oversight, providing support for synod events as requested by the bishop, and so on . . .

Additional Details: Recommendations to 2023 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines

Specific to compensation of rostered ministers across our synod, the Bishop and Synod Council have led a multi-year strategy to ensure our compensation guidelines are fair and competitive with other synods in our region. To sustain the gains and ensure continued competitiveness, our process includes assessment of our current fiscal year compensation guidelines against those in the 5 other synods within ELCA Region 6. For 2022, the assessment based on base salary levels for Pastors at 0, 5, 10, 20, and 30 years of ordination/service – see below:

Synod	NWLM - 2022	SE MI	NW OH	NE OH	Southern OH	INDIANA/KY	NWLM - 2023 Proposal
	2022 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	2022 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	2022 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	2022 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	2022 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	2022 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	+4.5% to Starting Base Salary - Pastors
Years of Service							
% Increase from Previous Year	2%	4%	3%	1.3%	not stated	1.3%	4.5% RECOMMENDED
0 yrs of service (First Call)	40,420	42,046	37,209	40,675	43,828	<150 in Worship: \$40,469 151-300 in Worship: \$44,247	42,240
5 yrs of service	42,420	44,441	40,051	42,225	46,477	<150 in Worship: \$41,989 151-300 in Worship: \$45,766	44,240
10 yrs of service	44,920	47,059	42,935	43,775	49,128	<150 in Worship: \$43,508 151-300 in Worship: \$47,286	46,740
20 yrs of service	50,720	51,844	48,719	46,875	54,323	<150 in Worship: \$46,547 151-300 in Worship: \$50,325	52,540
30 yrs of service	57,720	54,533	54,480	49,975	58,033	<150 in Worship: \$50,547 151-300 in Worship: \$54,325	59,540
Additional Input (Base Salary only - excl. Housing)	+\$500/yr thru 16 yrs; +\$700/yr for 17+ yrs	not stated	+\$350/yr beyond 30 yrs	+\$310/yr beyond 30 yrs	not stated	+\$400/yr beyond 30 yrs	For Reference: Recent SS Cost of Living (COLA) Increases 2020 - 1.6%; 2021 - 1.3%; 2022 - 5.9%

Key “take-aways” from the 2022 ELCA Region 6 assessment of Base Salaries for Pastors include:

- Our recommended starting base salaries (at 0 yrs of service) through 30 yrs of service are in line with the other synods in our region
- In general – we are in the “middle of the pack” across the synods for most of the assessed years of service
 - Our recommended starting base salaries (at 0 yrs of service) are the second lowest of the 6 synods
 - Our recommended base salaries at 30+ yrs of service are the second highest of the 6 synods
- Based on the variability of the the IRS recommended Social Security Cost-of-Living (COLA) increases over the past 2-3 years (see table above – increases ranging from 1.3 to 5.9%), it is difficult to predict the likely increases planned within the other synods in our region. Note: Government salaries (OMB - Office of Management & Budget) increased by 2.7% in 2022 and are planned to increase by 4.6% in 2023.
- With the possibility of ~28 congregations in the call process over the next year, we want to remain competitive from a compensation guideline perspective. Note that congregations who seek a new pastor may need to offer or negotiate a compensation package that provides more than the stated guidelines in one or more areas (base salary, retirement rate,

housing allowance, etc.) in order to finalize an agreement with their preferred rostered minister.

Recommended changes to the NWLM Synod 2020 Compensation Guidelines are highlighted in red font in the draft document available on the [synod assembly website](#). Key changes being recommended for adoption and use starting in 2023 include:

- **Lines 94-98:** Acknowledgement that “In some cases, it may benefit the rostered minister to select either the Bronze+ or Silver+ plan which can come with a **Health Savings Account (HSA)**.” The Gold+ plan continues to be recommended – however, if the rostered minister wants to take advantage of the new Health Savings Account (HSA) option, they would need to change their benefits to either the Bronze+ or Silver+ plan. Further details can be obtained directly from Portico.
- **Lines 118-125:** The Synod recommends that congregations contribute the 12% retirement rate for rostered ministers (Pastors and Deacons). This 12% rate should be used whether the pastor is called full-time or part-time, as this percentage is calculated on their defined compensation and will therefore reflect a reduced amount if the pastor is not full-time. Additional retirement contributions can be made by the employee (member pretax). Our compensation guidelines did not provide guidance on the retirement rate in past versions so this is a new recommendation area. Again – further information can be obtained from Portico.
- **Lines 129/259/867:** A 4.5% increase is recommended for starting base salaries for Clergy and Deacons to remain competitive in our compensation packages relative to other synods in our region.
- **Appendix D - Separation Guidance:** This is a new area of guidance starting in 2023. As most congregations do not participate in state unemployment insurance, rostered ministers are not eligible for unemployment compensation from the state. As such, congregations are strongly encouraged to consider whether severance pay is appropriate to provide care and continued income for the rostered minister during a transition period. Within the guidance provided, It is recommended that a congregation generally provide a severance package with 3 to 6 months’ continuation of salary (including housing allowance if applicable and FICA offset) and insurance benefits (including pension contributions). Further details and rationale can be found in Appendix D of the proposed document.

We are an active synod led by extremely gifted leaders who are committed to the success of congregations across the synod as we partner together in mission and ministry – even in the midst of a world-wide pandemic! Thanks be to God for all that we do together in His Name!

Yours in Christ,

Sandy Schlesinger

NWLM Synod Vice President

2021-22 Synod Council

Executive Committee

SATTERLEE Rev. Dr. Craig A., Bishop
Home Church: St. Stephen - Lansing
6-yr term, exp. 8/31/25 (second term)
North/West Lower Michigan Synod
2900 N. Waverly Road
Lansing, MI 48906
517-321-5066 (synod office)
bishopcraigsatterlee@mittensynod.org

SCHLESINGER Ms. Sandy, Vice President
Home Church: Trinity - Midland
4-yr term, exp. 8/31/23 (third term)
5804 Woodcliff Drive
Midland, MI 48640
989-859-7843 (cell)
sandyschlesinger@gmail.com

CARTER Mr. Daniel (Dan), Treasurer
Home Church: Faith - Grand Rapids
4-yr term, exp. 8/31/24 (third term)

HAHN Rev. Jessica, Member-at-Large
Home Church: Trinity - Hillsdale
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/22 (second term)

SMITH Rev. Dennis, Secretary
Home Church: St. John's – Three Rivers
4-yr term, exp. 8/31/25 (first term)

Synod Council At-Large Members

ASHLEY Mr. Connor
Home Church: Saron - St. Joseph
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/23 (second term)

BATES Rev. Clay
Home Church: Peace - Holland
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/23 (first term)

KAMPHUIS Rev. Betsy
Home Church: St. Paul – Greenville
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/24 (second term)

KLINGLER Ms. Phyllis
Home Church: Trinity - Hillsdale
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/23 (unexpired term)

LUNDGREN Mr. Tim
Home Church: Trinity – Grand Rapids
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/24 (second term)

MCCORKLE Dr. Candy
Home Church: Immanuel – Jackson
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/22 (unexpired term)

PETERSON Ms. Caroline
Home Church: Trinity – New Era
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/22 (second term)

TREVARTHEN Mr. William (Bill)
Home Church: University – East Lansing
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/23 (first term)

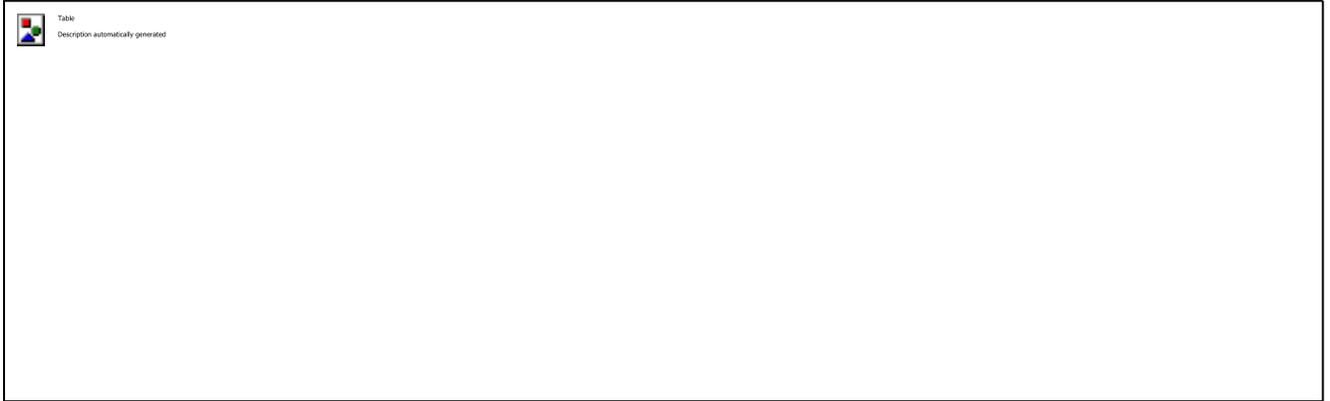
UETRICH Rev. William (Bill)
Home Church: First – Muskegon
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/22 (second term)

WALKER Ms. Sandra
Home Church: Redeemer – Lansing
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/24 (first term)

WEINGARTNER Mr. Richard
Home Church: Faith - Okemos
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/24 (second term)

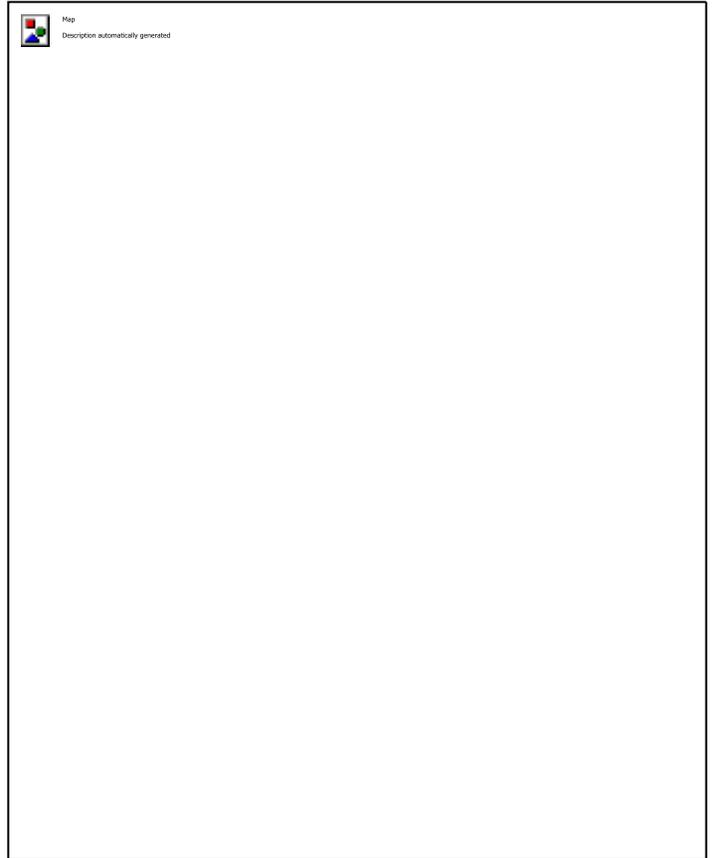
WOHLFERT Ms. Holly
Home Church: Trinity - Kalamazoo
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/22 (first term)

Synod Council: 2021-22 Term



2021-22 Synod Council and Synod Leaders

- 1 – Asst. to the Bishop – Pr. Rosanne Anderson
- 2 – Asst. to the Bishop – Pr. David Sprang
- 3 - Ms. Sandy Schlesinger
- 4 – Ms. Caroline Peterson
- 5 – Rev. Bill Uetrict
- 6 – Rev. Betsy Kamphuis
- 7 - Mr. Daniel Carter
- 8 – Mr. Tim Lundgren
- 8 – Synod Attorney – Ms. Dawn Brackmann
- 9 – Pr. Clay Bates
- 10 - Bishop Craig Satterlee (Synod Office)
- 10 – Mr. Bill Trevarthen
- 10- Ms. Sandra Walker
- 11 – Mr. Richard Weingartner
- 12 – Ms. Holly Wohlfert
- 13 – Dr. Candy McCorkle
- 14 - Mr. Connor Ashley
- 15 – Rev. Jessica Hahn
- 15 – Ms. Phyllis Klinger
- 16 – Rev. Dennis Smith



Congregation Anniversaries

Celebrating 150 Years

- Lebanon, Whitehall

Celebrating 100 Years

- St. Paul, Reed City
- Redeemer, Lansing

Ordination Anniversaries

Ministers of Word and Sacrament

5 Years

- Karen Z. Niemeyer, 2/26/2017

10 Years

- Ellen M. Schoepf, 8/29/2012
- Justin J. Walker, 8/25/2012
- Marilyn V. Robinson, 9/23/2012
- Rheanna R. Goodrich, 8/11/2012
- Travis W. Wilson, 7/29/2012

15 Years

- Timothy D. Jahn, 6/17/2007

20 Years

- Julie Winklepleck, 7/14/2002
- Matthew A. Smith, 7/21/2002

25 Years

- Bryan G. Schneider-Thomas, 6/4/1997

30 Years

- Jay M. Schrimpf, 6/7/1992

35 Years

- Craig A. Satterlee, 7/19/1987
- Clayton H. Bates, 7/26/1987
- David M. Doane, 8/16/1986
- William E. Huether, 10/4/1987

40 Years

- Dennis E. Remenschneider, 1/31/1982

- Lee S. Welker, 6/6/1982

45 Years

- Paul E. Kuhlman, 5/29/1977
- Pauline R. Standley, 6/19/1977
- Thomas E. Pederson, 1/30/1977

50 Years

- Franklin E. Rothfuss, Jr., 6/18/1972
- John W. Burrow, 11/5/1972

55 Years

- W. Thomas Zollman, 1/1/1967

60 Years

- Charles G. Schultz, 6/3/1962
- Robert M. Hannemann, 9/2/1962
- William N. Nicholson, 5/15/1962

Ministers of Word and Service

15 Years

- Kathleen L. Bonn, 9/15/2007