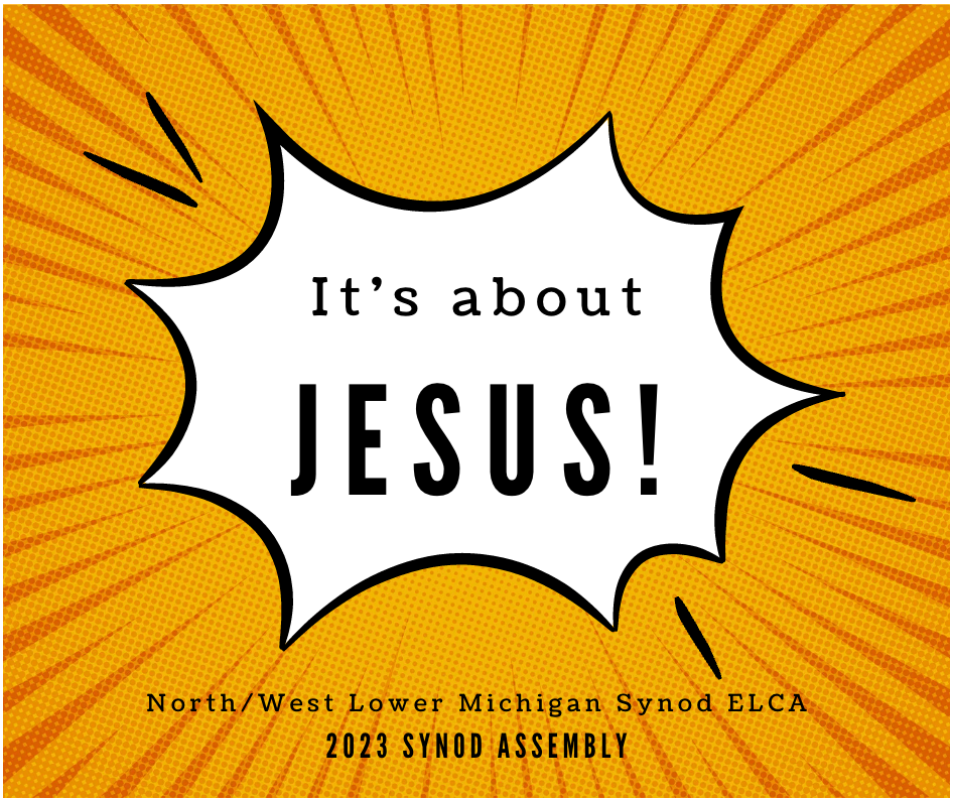


Section B – Staff and Officer Reports

Greeting from Presiding Bishop Eaton B2

Report of the Bishop B3-B14

Indeed, Bishop Satterlee is Legally Blind B15-B16

Roster Changes B17-B19

Visitation Report B20-B24

Report of the Vice President B25-B28

Synod Council Roster B29-B30

Summary of Executive Committee and Synod Council Actions B31-B58

Anniversary Recognitions B59

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Dear siblings in Christ,

We know the gospel changes lives and that God's power and grace are real and at work today. Together we are called to bear God's creative and redeeming word to all the world. What if we could make God known to more people? To the child who's never heard of Jesus? To young adults who are trying to make sense of the world? To older adults who often feel lonely and isolated?

Our purpose – "to activate each of us so that more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love" – is an expression of our calling and our longing for others to know the love of God in Christ Jesus. We live out our purpose through worship and service, in our congregations and communities, through our individual vocations and our collective work as church together.

Many of you have wondered why we set a goal to reach one million new, young and diverse people. We believe that each of us is made in the image of God, redeemed by Jesus on the cross, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Our focus on young and diverse people is not exclusive but an acknowledgment that younger and more diverse people are disproportionately missing from our pews and gatherings. We are challenging one another to reach out across differences of all sorts to meet our neighbors.

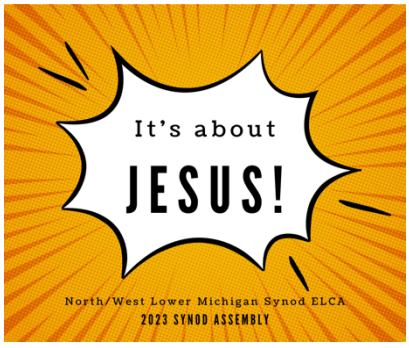
Setting a goal to engage with one million is a way for us to know whether the work we are doing is, in fact, reaching new people. It encourages us to work together to be a church that cares about the world around us and is effective and faithful in responding to God's call.

Join us on this future-focused journey to widen our welcome and break down the barriers that keep people from engaging with the church. Together, we can help people experience the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

In Christ,

Elizabeth A. Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton Presiding Bishop Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Report of the Bishop

North/West Lower Michigan Synod ELCA

2023 Synod Assembly

May 7-9, 2023

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

Introduction

Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). I approach the 2023 edition of the annual anthology of the ministry of "the Office of the Bishop" or "the Synod Staff" as a report of the ways our synod witnesses to Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This report describes the efforts of *people* who work hard, serve faithfully, and try their best. I thank my partners in ministry and collaborators in the writing of this report: Pastor Rosanne Anderson (Assistant to the Bishop), Pastor David Sprang (Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission), Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek (Director of Finance), Ms. Cathy Satterlee (Driver and Administrative Support), Ms. Chelsey Satterlee (Director of Communications), Vice President Sandy Schlesinger (Chair of Synod Council), and Ms. Ann Stavros (Office Manager). I thank Pastor Christina Bright (Acting Director of Candidacy) for providing additional Candidacy information. I also thank this report's editor, Ms. Chelsey Satterlee, and the Assembly Book's editor, Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek.

What many call "the Synod" is more encompassing than either bishop or staff. "The Synod" is also *people*. Most serve in and through congregations, which participate in, share resources with, and support the work of the Synod. Some entrust their time, talent, and treasure to the ministry of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. I thank all who have led, served, and shared their resources with our church, whether congregation, synod, or denomination, in these difficult and challenging times. I especially thank those who directly supported the work of our synod, including Synod Council and the Conference Deans.

Assembly Theme: It's About Jesus!

For the apostle Paul, regardless of what we refer to, it's about Jesus. In Colossians 1:16-18, Paul writes,

> …for in [Jesus] all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. [Jesus] himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church; [Jesus] is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

That Jesus is about everything is life-changing, world-shaping, good news, especially these days. Whether it's the war in Ukraine, earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, violence at Michigan State University, division in our country, decline in the church, or all of the forms of death that relentlessly visit us, people long to hear that Jesus is with us, raising us to his own abundant life, forgiving us, giving us a second chance when we need one, and freeing and empowering us to work alongside him in reconciling the world to God's very self.

Jesus is also the answer for those desperate to enliven and grow their congregation. Today, the only reason new people will come to church is that they have heard the story of Jesus, experienced Jesus's love, and are intrigued by Jesus. They come to church to determine whether the community that bears Jesus's name reflects Jesus's life and work. New people are not coming to church to save or extend the life of a congregation. We therefore need to discover the joy, even fun, of sharing the story of Jesus for no reason other than the story of Jesus is such life-giving good news.

Since, as Paul declares, Jesus is about everything and Jesus has first place in everything, Synod Council adopted as our assembly theme, "It's about Jesus!" In planning this assembly, we undertake to give Jesus "first place." We ask, even insist, that everyone presenting to the assembly first and foremost speaks of Jesus and then draws a clear connection between Jesus and their program, issue, purpose, or ministry. In my assembly fantasy, a panel of three people (I will leave you to imagine who) sits in front of a large gong. If those addressing the assembly from the podium get too far into their speech without speaking of Jesus, someone from the panel gets up, strikes the gong, and the speaker is removed from the platform.

We know that many are excited to return to an in-person assembly so they can talk to their friends. We will provide three opportunities to talk to your friends about Jesus. We will ask you to share with the people at your table: (1) the story about Jesus from the gospels that is meaningful to you that day and why, (2) a time you unmistakably experienced Jesus outside of church, and (3) good news about Jesus these two stories lead you to share. To learn more, please watch my video on our assembly webpage. You can find it here: https://youtu.be/NQW-YTLGEag.

VISION

"But we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:23–24). My operating vision remains "Proclaiming Christ and prayerfully participating in Jesus's 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's work of reconciliation, and contributes to either renewing congregations, empowering leaders, or strengthening connections.

LIVING STONES

"Like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

Living Stones provide the framework for our strategic initiatives for the three-year period of 2023-2025. You can find them here: https://www.mittensynod.org/living-stones/. I find this framework helpful in directing and communicating synod mission and the work of the staff. Compared to my previous assembly reports, the format has evolved to reflect the Living Stone Initiatives Synod Council adopted in December 2022. Most significant, sharing the story of Jesus comes first. This is our number one priority because it is the work to which Jesus has called us and it is the church's future. I have not included Living Stone Initiatives for which there is not yet anything to report.

This report is forward-looking because the staff and I have, as I said in my February newsletter article, turned toward Jesus and are moving ahead. In preparing this report, I reread my report to the 2022 assembly and intentionally chose not to repeat many things I included in that report in favor of anticipating new things that are to come. I hope reading my 2023 report energizes and excites you for the years ahead!

LIVING STONES INITIATIVE: SHARING THE STORY OF JESUS

Jesus said, "You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:48). By "these things," Jesus means his suffering, death, and resurrection, and that repentance and forgiveness are to be proclaimed in his name to all nations. Jesus charges us and empowers us with the Holy Spirit to share this good news.

YOU ARE WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS: In November 2022, we released *You Are Witnesses of These Things: Sharing the Story of Jesus* to assist Christians to feel comfortable and competent sharing the story of Jesus. This resource is available primarily from Amazon (https://bit.ly/3DXlk2e). We are grateful to Pastor Sprang and our New and Renewing Mission Table for providing a copy to everyone attending the assembly.

We will provide workshops, both in-person and via Zoom, to equip leaders to use this resource. Ms. Chelsey Satterlee and I will offer a workshop on the book at the assembly. You can sign up for the workshop when completing the registration form for Synod Assembly. Pastor Sprang and I will also lead a retreat planned especially for lay people September 17-18, 2023 at the St. Francis Retreat Center in Dewitt, MI. You can learn more about the retreat and register here: http://bit.ly/3IxBuBz.

At this writing, 10 congregations in our synod are using this resource. You can find that list here: http://bit.ly/3KDMno3. Please let me know if you are using the book and you would like to be added to the list. I am also delighted to visit groups using this book via Zoom.

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. Please contact Pastor Sprang when your congregation is ready to apply for a Connect Grant.

SYNODICALLY AUTHORIZED WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES: In response to the times in which we live, "mission congregations" have become "synodically authorized worshiping communities." They are reviewed and renewed by Synod Council annually. They do not need to meet predetermined benchmarks and they are not permitted to own property. Our synod has two Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities:

Sudanese Christ Lutheran Community and United Campus Christian Fellowship. We continue to support these communities and remain vigilant to opportunities for other synodically authorized worshiping communities.

Sudanese Christ Lutheran Community continues to gather for worship at Christ/Wyoming. Supporting relatives and others in South Sudan is integral to their ministry. We thank their servant leader, Mr. Paul Mawut. We also thank Pastor Rob Schmidt and Christ/Wyoming for their care and accompaniment.

This academic year, United Campus Christian Fellowship, our ecumenical campus ministry at Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC), and Kendall College of Art and Design, began worship with a meal on Sundays at GVSU and on Wednesdays at GRCC. Interest continues to grow. Three ELCA Lutherans serve on the executive board. We thank Pastor Kate Van Valkenburg for her leadership and Bread of Life/Hudsonville for serving as fiscal agent.

STRATEGIC CONGREGATIONS: Support Grants for our Strategic Congregations (Zion/Saginaw and Trinity/Battle Creek) continue. Strategic congregations cannot become self-sufficient because the congregations minister directly to people in poverty. They are strategic because their engagement is essential to the neighborhood and community. We thank Pastors Sue Hand and Kjersten Sullivan for their ministry on our behalf. We also thank the congregations and members of our synod for making it possible for us to partner with these congregations through your mission support.

MISSIONINSITE: Due to the ELCA eliminating the Office of Research and Analysis, our synod has joined many others in subscribing to MissionInsite, which provides detailed demographic analysis to congregations about the composition of their community. It is also a helpful resource for congregational call committees preparing their ministry site profiles. Pastor Sprang is eager to work with congregations to examine up-to-date data about the communities they serve and assist congregations in discovering opportunities to share the story of Jesus in their neighborhood and community. Please contact Pastor Sprang directly if your congregation desires a consultation. Funds to cover the cost came from the New and Renewing Mission Table and we thank them.

LIVING STONES INITIATIVE: WELCOME

Our synod has a renewed commitment to discuss ways to welcome all God's people. While we need to grow in our ability to share the story of Jesus will all people, we are already sharing Jesus's love with them through our congregations' food pantries, homeless ministries, refugee assistance ministries, participation in Reconciling in Christ, welcoming of persons with disabilities, their caregivers, and families, and many other ministries. We know that when people are overwhelmed by the oppressive realities of the world, they may not have the capacity to receive the story of Jesus and so we undertake to respond to those realities and the forces of evil at work in the world that seek to oppose God. Thank you for care, courage, compassion, and commitment.

RACIAL JUSTICE: We worked with Justice Leaders Collaborative and offered several sessions of "Introduction to Social Justice" and one session of "White People Working for Racial Justice." Building on these courses, we will develop and implement a plan for helping our synod address racial justice. I thank

Pastor Anderson for being the driving force behind this effort and look forward to receiving her counsel and direction as we undertake, recruit, and convene a task force this fall.

MINISTRY WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TASK FORCE: Our Ministry with Persons with Disabilities Task Force held a learning day for rostered ministers and lay people in October 2022 and will offer additional training and consultation with congregations. The Task Force has also applied for grants from the ELCA (Disability and Holy Innovations) for a series of workshops to equip our congregations to welcome people who live with impairments, their families, and caregivers. We thank Pastor Megan Crouch, Pastor David Sprang, Pastor Clay Bates, and the task force for their leadership in this effort.

YOUTH MINISTRY: We continue to support Living Water Ministries, and their summer camps and other youth events, as the foundation for youth ministry in our synod. You can learn more about their programs at http://www.elcalivingwater.com.

Most of our congregations who had youth ministry programs find themselves in a place of rebuilding or restarting after the pandemic. Some had successful Vacation Bible School programs this summer. To support these efforts, the topic for our 2023 Autumn Leadership Event is sharing the story of Jesus with youth and young adults and will feature presentations from Jake Mulder, author of *Growing Young*. More information about this event will be released in the coming months.

We are excited to share that the ELCA Youth Gathering will be held July 16-20, 2024 in New Orleans under the theme for the Gathering is "Created to Be." We encourage our congregations' participation in the Gathering, including MYLE, the tAble, and the Young Adult Gathering. We thank Pastor Dan Schewe (Trinity/Grand Rapids) for serving as our synod's Youth Gathering Champion. You can learn more about the Gathering here: https://www.elca.org/gathering.

CAMPUS MINISTRY: Campus Ministry Grants have again been awarded for 2023. With funds from an ELCA Grant and money from our synod budget, we support campus ministries at Michigan State, Central, Western, and Grand Valley State Universities. We thank the pastors and leaders who carry out this ministry to young adults on our behalf. We thank the congregations and members of the Synod who make this ministry possible through their mission support.

RENEWING CONGREGATIONS

CALL PROCESS: Lutherans believe the triune God works through the church to call and send deacons and pastors to congregations. The Synod Staff therefore considers the call process essential to congregations sharing the story of Jesus and experiencing renewal. You can read the call process manual here: https://bit.ly/3kup99r.

Our synod continues to experience an uptick in retiring and departing pastors. As I write this report, 21 congregations are or will be in the call process; 13 are full-time calls. We include a report of congregations in transition in the monthly Bishop's Newsletter. I am profoundly grateful to retired pastors who serve as interim and stated supply pastors, giving congregations the time they need to carefully and prayerfully call their next pastor. Some congregations would not be sustainable without the service of retired pastors.

I summarized some of the "wrinkles" in the call process we are addressing in my 2022 report. Please be mindful of our need to be competitive in retaining and attracting pastors to our synod as we consider the 2024 Compensation Guidelines.

PASTORAL CARE OF CONGREGATIONS: This year, the Synod Staff provided enormous pastoral care to congregations and lay congregational leaders who are dealing with some very challenging issues including pastors' serious illness and exhaustion, escalating conflict and factions in the congregation, facing the reality that the congregation may not survive, and congregational leaders feeling unqualified for this work and that it is undermining their faith. I find myself praying with lay leaders more and more, even as I thank them for their service.

Obviously, we do not hear from every congregational leader. Therefore, we thank congregations that submitted the parochial reports (Forms A and C) 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.

SUSTAINABILITY: Sustainability is a growing focus of our ministry and we expect it to continue to increase. In addition to congregations, we hear from people concerned about the end of synod ministries. This is a new learning for me, as I now understand that, more than sustaining the congregation, leaders are expected to sustain beloved ministries within the congregation. We are committed to accompanying struggling congregations and synod ministries and assisting them in realistically assessing their sustainability and, where appropriate, either partnering with neighboring congregations, both ELCA and full communion partners, or moving toward holy closure.

Even in many healthy congregations, worship attendance (in-person and/or virtual) is down by as much as 50%. While finances are the presenting issue, the real issue is that congregational leaders are exhausted and no longer have the energy to continue keeping the congregation going. Leaders also feel demoralized when congregations come to a decision to end their ministry and people outside the congregation, particularly retired pastors, challenge and shame them for their decision or propose ideas about how to save the congregations that they want someone else to implement.

Congregations that find themselves at-risk desire to explore the possibility of returning to "mission congregation status," so that additional funding and support from the Synod and possibly other sources becomes available. While in mission development, congregations benefitted from synod funding (within the synod budget, designated offerings at synod assemblies, etc.), ELCA funding (via grants), and support from other congregations across our synod as they moved through the mission congregation process. At the end of the process, the Synod rejoiced when congregations became established, independent, and active. "Returning to mission congregation status" is not an option as once you become a congregation in the ELCA, you can't go back. Additionally, the ELCA has restructured how new worshipping communities are developed and "mission congregation status" no longer exists.

PARTNERSHIP: The partnership in Unionville between St. Peter and the Moravian Church, which began this year, appears to be going really well. We thank Pastor Jeff Bonn for his leadership. 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).

Seven congregations completed their ministry since our last assembly: St. John/Hagensville (Rogers City), St. James/Jackson, St. John/Lake City, St. Stephen/Lansing, St. Timothy/Midland, Holy Trinity/Niles, and Gethsemane/Wyoming. We commend these congregations to God's care as we thank the people of these congregations for their faith, service, and witness that Jesus brings life out of death, even the death of their beloved congregation. People regularly tell me that they refuse to believe that God would ever allow their congregation to close. The witness of these seven congregations is that, indeed, God does. Then, Jesus brings life out of death.

ADULT THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION COURSES: In January 2023, we launched our new Adult Theological Education Program. I function as Dean of the program and recruit professors, review curriculum, and negotiate contracts. Ms. Chelsey Satterlee manages registration, leads the Zoom sessions, and produces the video recordings. Our first course on Corinthian Correspondence led by Dr. Walter Taylor concluded in February 2023. We have had an overwhelmingly positive response to this course and we thank Dr. Taylor and the participants for a great start to our program. Dr. Kit Kleinhans, Dean of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University, will teach Luther's Small Catechism for Adults for six weeks beginning October 24, 2023. More information on this session will be released in the coming months.

EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY: Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry (ELMM) held its final session in November 2022. Due to low registration numbers, the ELMM Board of Governors thoughtfully and prayerfully agreed that that continuing the program was not responsible financial stewardship. I thank Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek for her leadership, the mentors for their support, our instructors for their teaching, and our participants for their openness to learning and sharing their gifts across the Synod.

EMPOWERING LEADERS

CANDIDACY: Lutherans confess God instituted the Ministry of Word and Sacrament (pastors) and the Ministry of Word and Service (deacons) so the apostolic and prophetic word (the story of Jesus) might continue through the ages. Raising up pastors and deacons is essential to the Church sharing the story of Jesus. In this synod, the cost of theological education is no longer a hindrance to pursuing a vocation in rostered ministry; scholarships and financial aid from ELCA synods, seminaries, and congregations exceed the number of students. Seminary education is flexible, offering both residential and distance learning options. If they so desire, most graduates return to their home synod.

We must grow in identifying candidates for rostered ministry and inviting them to consider this call. This work happens primarily in the congregation. Pastor Christina Bright, Acting Director of Candidacy, and I are available and eager to answer questions and provide support. To further assist, we have developed the template for a discernment day for our synod, which we anticipate announcing in the coming year. We hope congregations will identify people in whom they experience gifts for public ministry or a call to serve as a pastor or deacon and accompany them to this event. One of my mentors described God's call to be a pastor as "an itch you just can't scratch." If you are experiencing such an itch, or if you have been asked to consider this possibility, please reach out to either Pastor Bright or me.

The various stages of Candidacy continue to ebb and flow as is the norm. I am excited that Ms. Tina Beauvais of St. Peter/Unionville is approved for ordination, available for call, and we pray for her ordination in the near future. I describe the call to public ministry as a three-legged stool. A candidate needs all three legs or the stool collapses. The first leg is a personal or internal call: "I believe God is calling me to be a pastor/deacon." The second leg is the church's recognition and affirmation that a someone possesses the gifts and skills, faith and commitment to serve: "We see in you with the gifts to be a pastor/deacon." The third leg of the stool is a specific faith community that believes God is calling this person to be their pastor or deacon. The members of our Candidacy Committee help candidates discern and clarify their sense of call, assess their giftedness and readiness to proceed to various stages in the candidacy process, and sometimes make difficult and painful decisions that a candidate is not ready to serve as a pastor or deacon. We thank Pastor Anderson, Pastor Bright, and the members of the Candidacy Committee for their ministry on our behalf. You can learn more about the candidacy process at https://www.elca.org/candidacy

As of March 2023, there are 15 people in the Candidacy process. This includes three applicants, two currently on internship, one beginning internship this fall, one recently approved/assigned and two on leave from candidacy. The remainder continue their academic studies with six in distributive (virtual) learning programs.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: 100 pastors and deacons received complimentary copies of my book, *My Burden is Light: Making Room for Jesus in Preaching*. We were able to provide these complimentary copies to rostered ministers in our synod because of a gift to the Synod from Ms. Christine Allen. You can learn more about the book here: http://bit.ly/3SAxrZY.

Ms. Christine Allen is also underwriting a three day retreat October 16-18, 2023 to discuss *My Burden is Light: Making Room for Jesus in Preaching.* The retreat will be held at the St. Francis Retreat Center in Dewitt, MI. You can learn more about the retreat here: https://bit.ly/3K5z0gc.

The 2023 Autumn Leadership Event for rostered ministers will be a one day event held at St. Luke's/Grand Rapids on September 12, 2023. The theme is "Sharing the Story of Jesus with Youth and Young Adults." The presenter is Jake Mulder of the Fuller Youth Institute, who is author of the book *Growing Young*. More information about the event will be shared in the upcoming months.

This year, we plan to apply for a significant grant from the Lilly Endowment's Compelling Preaching Initiative. These five-year grants are hard to get, but provide an opportunity to plan a program to emphasize preaching among our pastors and deacons.

PASTORAL CARE OF ROSTERED MINISTERS: This year, the Synod Staff provided considerable pastoral care to rostered ministers dealing with death, illness, exhaustion, conflict, discernment, and factions within their congregations seeking to end their calls. People blame the pastor that the congregation has not returned to "normal" after the pandemic. Pastors feel powerless and in their hearts blame themselves. Many dissatisfied parishioners seem to have the impression that congregations can change pastors as easily as people change their socks and that pastors will put up with any amount of abuse because they are called by God. Neither is the case. While some synods have more pastors than congregations, we do not, and those pastors would rather wait where they are than go anywhere else. Pastors, including recent seminary graduates, understand that there are many ways to serve God and proclaim the gospel so they do not necessarily need to be pastors of inward looking congregations who do not want to change.

DISCIPLINE: We are electing members to our Consultation and Discipline Committees. The bishop can call a consultation panel to assess allegations, listen directly to a pastor and congregation, and make recommendations to the bishop. As bishop, I have found consultation panels invaluable. Members of the Discipline Committee serve on a panel that receives and assesses information in a disciplinary hearing, and determines the outcome. Disciplinary hearings are rare and we have never had one in our synod. The chief responsibility of members of the Discipline Committee is to join me in praying we never do.

ROSTER: I thank those pastors and deacons who completed the required annual report to the bishop. I mention this here because, though the primary purpose of the annual report is to provide an update on pastors' and deacons' life and ministry, we always learn things that help us update our records and keep them accurate. 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 any 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.

SEMINARY DEBT REDUCTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: This is the most successful of our original Living Stones Initiatives. We thank Lord of Life/Portage and Pastor Joan Herbon for a very generous gift to this ministry. The Seminary Debt Reduction Assistance Program Committee awarded a second round of grants in Fall 2022. Thank you Ms. Linda Wicander, Pastor Christina Bright, and Mr. Rich Weingartner for your ministry on our behalf.

STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS

PREACHING THE WORD AND ADMINISTERING THE SACRAMENTS: Please see the attached visitation report. Pastor Anderson recently commented with surprise and delight at the joy she experienced preaching at a congregation that invited her for no other reason than to have her with them. There was no concern or issue that she needed to address or settle. We once worried about connecting the Synod to the congregations; these days we appreciate the congregations connecting with us. Pastor Sprang and I appreciate your forbearance as we may not be readily available because of needs throughout the Synod.

During the pandemic, congregations adopted liturgical language, practices, and patterns that they continue to use. The effect for the Synod Staff is that many congregations now have a one-of-a-kind order of worship. I currently do not have the time necessary to memorize a unique liturgy every week. Even when I do, my liturgical "muscle memory" kicks in as I lead worship and I end up getting the congregation's way of worshipping wrong. When I shared this with Pastors Anderson and Sprang, they affirmed this experience as well. At the request of several congregations, we are developing a template for congregations to use when Synod Staff is responsible for leading the liturgy. We anticipate this resource will be available in June 2023.

DISASTER RESPONSE: Thank you for your generous response to natural disasters. Inspired by the Flint Water Crisis, we established a fund so we are ready when natural disasters, such as the flood in the Bay Conference, occur in our synod and state. Thanks to your generosity, we have also been able to send support to other synods and to Lutheran Disaster Response and Lutheran World Relief to assist with national and global disasters. Thank you!

GUN SAFETY: In response to the shootings at Oxford High School and Michigan State University, I continue to join other faith leaders in supporting End Gun Violence Michigan in advocating for common sense gun reform, including universal background checks, safe storage, and red flag laws. Jesus said, "Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword" (Matthew 26:52). What Jesus said of swords is equally true for guns. Every Sunday that I prepare to stand in the pulpit and at the altar, I cannot help but think that someone could come into church with a gun and I would never see the bullets coming. This certainly impacts our ability to share and receive the story of Jesus. I am especially grateful to those who have reached out to share their support of my efforts in this area.

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 Ms. Chelsey Satterlee, Director of Communications.

Our Mitten Synod Webpage provides news, information, and resources for congregations and leaders: http://www.mittensynod.org. A Weekly Update is sent to our synod's email 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 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 using the sign up form on the homepage of the Synod's website. Click the link included in this paragraph, scroll down on the right side of the homepage to the box that says "Sign up for the Weekly Update," and enter your name and email address into the form.

The Synod is also active on Twitter (@mittensynod), Instagram (@mittensynod), YouTube (@NorthWestLowerMichiganSynod) and Facebook. On Facebook, we have both a page and a group. The page, North/West Lower Michigan Synod – Official (https://www.facebook.com/MittenSynodELCA/) is where the Synod Office posts news. The group, North/West Lower Michigan Synod Community (https://www.facebook.com/groups/70174344761/) 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 webpage at https://craigasatterlee.com, which includes news and updates, information on my books, links to my published articles, and writings, and a public schedule. Many find the schedule and resources available on my website 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 Synod's Weekly Update emails, my website, my Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/people/Craig-Alan-Satterlee/100082821280193/), my Twitter (@CraigASatterlee) and my YouTube channel (@CraigASatterlee).

ADMINISTRATION

SYNOD OFFICE: With the closing of St. Stephen/Lansing, we moved the Synod Office to 240 S. Bridge St., Suite 120, Dewitt, MI 48820. Thank you to Ms. Cathy Satterlee for coordinating the move and to the Synod Staff for playing an essential part in our relocation. If you need to mail something to the Synod Office, please use our new mailing address: P.O. Box 517 Dewitt, MI 48820.

The Synod Staff primarily works from home with a weekly staff meeting via Zoom. Ms. Ann Stavros and Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek drop by the office for mail, filing, etc. I work from the office with unscheduled regularity. This pattern is consistent with the resolutions on climate change the Synod Assembly adopts every year. Thanks to a gift from St. Stephen/Lansing, we completed the process of transferring our files from paper to digital. We also adopted Zoom as our default way of meeting because it is both better for the planet and more efficient. I sometimes attend three Church Council meetings in a single evening.

SYNOD STAFF: We experienced transition in our staff again this year.

Ms. Rebecca Bossenbroek completed her ministry as Director of the Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry (ELMM) program. For the last 10 years, Rebecca has been the vision and driving force of that ministry. We thank her for her many gifts and faithful dedication to participants and teachers.

Ms. Dawn Brackmann resigned as our synod attorney due to her expanding role as a professor at Grand Valley State University. Dawn is a trusted partner and advisor and I will miss her even as I wish her well in her next chapter. I am excited to welcome Ms. Lynn Kriser as our Synod Attorney. I was privileged to work with Lynn closely when she was president of St. Stephen/Lansing and she has my confidence and trust.

Pastor Rosanne Anderson is in the process of retiring following a serious illness. I experience Pastor Anderson's departure as a personal and professional loss, even as I rejoice that she heard and is heeding God's call to embrace the next season of her life. You can read Pastor Anderson's announcement and my statement here: http://bit.ly/3ZIprc7. In this time of transition, please pray for Pastor Anderson, send questions and concerns that went to her to me, and be patient with us as we take up Pastor Rosanne's portion of our common work.

As some may know, I am a Star Trek fan. In a teaser for the new season of Star Trek: Picard, Sir Patrick Stewart's character Jean-Luc Picard intones, “As long as you and your crew remain steadfast, you are never without hope.” Picard’s words help me consider Jesus’s assertion: “I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:6). Picard’s crew is Jesus’s vine. Picard’s steadfast is Jesus’s abide. Picard’s hope is Jesus’s bear much fruit.

I am hopeful and bearing fruit because I abide in Jesus, not by myself, but as a member of the crew that is our Synod Staff. This crew is steadfast—unwavering in our devotion to Jesus and to you. I regularly experience Jesus in Rosanne, Rebecca, Dawn, Lynne, Cathy, Chelsey, Sandy, David, and Ann. Many of you regularly share with me that you do as well. I have a hunch this is enough acknowledgment to make the staff uncomfortable, so I will stop here. I encourage you to thank them when you see them at assembly.

The staff and I are hopeful because we do not abide in the vine that is Jesus all by ourselves. The synod crew is so much larger than us who gather on Wednesday for staff meeting. I am thinking of so many people in the Synod, who share the story of Jesus with us and who have been Jesus for us. Thank you. I pray we leave assembly having shared the story of Jesus with one another, been Jesus for one another, and experienced the joy and fun that comes from sharing the story of Jesus for no other reason than Jesus is such good news. We can do this when we recognize that, whatever “it” is, it’s about Jesus.

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, add in tolerant 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

ROSTER CHANGE REPORT

Event	Name	Name	Date	Location
Deaths				
Rev.	John	Morris	06/04/2022	Retired
Rev.	Gerald	Switzer	02/13/2023	Retired
Rev.	Earl	Merz	03/01/2023	Retired
Installations				
Rev.	Nicole	Smith	06/22/2022	Hope/Plainwell
Rev.	Alex	Aivars	09/14/2022	Christ United/Dewitt
Rev.	Robert	Schmidt	10/02/2022	Christ/Wyoming
Rev.	Gerald	Ferguson	11/06/2022	All Saints/Mason
Rev.	Edward	Ruble	12/11/2022	St. Peter/Battle Creek
Rev.	Robert	Martin	02/05/2023	Christ/Michigan Center
On Leave from Call				
Rev.	Martha	Porter-Reid	01/01/2023	On Leave from Call
Ordinations/Clergy				
Rev	Edward	Ruble	10/14/2022	St. Peter/Battle Creek
Ordinations/Deacons				
Resignations or Removed from Roster				
Deacon	Julia	Nelson	5/1/2023	Family Leave
Transfers In				
Rev.	Sharon	Van Dam	05/31/2022	West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod
Deacon	Peter	Fotheringham	11/01/2022	Lower Susquehanna Synod
Rev.	Marcille	Miller	11/11/2022	Southern Ohio Synod
Rev.	Robert	Martin	01/01/2023	Florida/Bahamas Synod

Transfers Out				
Rev.	William	Hoerger	05/26/2022	Indiana/Kentucky Synod
Rev.	Christopher	Anderson	06/01/2022	Slovak Zion Synod
Rev.	Marcia	Shumate-Schultz	12/12/2022	Southeastern Synod
Rev.	Rheanna	Goodrich	03/01/2023	New England Synod
Rev.	Carolyn	Heider	02/02/2023	Minneapolis Area Synod
Rev.	George	Heider	02/02/2023	Minneapolis Area Synod
Rev.	Jane	Mountain	02/17/2023	Upstate New York Synod
Retirements				
Rev.	David	Doane	06/01/2022	Augustana/Tustin
Rev.	Wayne	Shearier	07/01/2022	Holy Trinity/Niles
Rev.	Lee	Welker	08/01/2022	Gethsemane/Wyoming
Rev.	Jane	Mountain	09/01/2022	Harbor of Grace/Muskegon
Rev.	Andreas	Teich	11/01/2022	Messiah/Bay City
Rev.	Carolyn	Heider	12/01/2022	Feast of Victory/Acme
Rev.	Ellen	Schoepf	05/01/2023	Faith/Okemos
Rev.	Rosanne	Anderson	05/01/2023	Synod Staff
Calls Accepted				
Rev.	Thomas	Pederson	04/16/2023	Messiah/Constantine
Rev.	Bruce	Thorsen	04/23/2023	Faith/Okemos
Rev.	Kevin	O'Bryan	04/30/2023	Zion/Freeland
Removed from Call by Congregational Vote				

Congregation Actions	
St. John Lutheran Church/Saginaw	Closed 11/22/2020
St. Timothy Lutheran Church/Midland merged with Trinity Lutheran Church/Midland	06/01/2022
Gethsemane Lutheran Church/Wyoming	Closed 7/31/2022
Saint Stephen Lutheran Church/Lansing	Closed 8/31/2022
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church/Niles	Closed 09/25/2022
St. John Lutheran Church/Rogers City (Haggenville)	Disaffiliate from ELCA 11/13/2022
St. James Lutheran Church/Jackson	Closed 11/01/2022
St. John Lutheran Church/Lake City	Closed 4/16/2023

Synod Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Congregational Visitation Summary – Preaching/Presiding

July 2013 – March 2023

# Preach	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	24
# Congs	2	4	8	10	14	11	17	10	5	3	7	8	5	0	5	1	0	2	1	2	1

LOCATION	CONGREGATION	CAS	DES		A2B
BAY CONFERENCE					
Au Gres	St. Paul (16)	3	6		7
Bay City	Messiah (5)	3	2		
Bridgeport	St. Matthew (16)	5 install	5		6
East Tawas	Grace (8)	1	6		1
Freeland	Zion (9)	3	6		
Gladwin	Christ the King (24)	4	13		7
Marlette	Hope (13)	3	3		7
Midland	St. Timothy (14)	3	7		4
Midland	Trinity (8)	3 Install	4		1
Mt. Pleasant	Immanuel (19)	4	15		
Rhodes	Hope (5)	1	3 install		1
Rose City	Prince of Peace (14)	2	6		6
Saginaw	Ascension (10)	2	3		5
Saginaw	Faith (16)	2	8 Install		6
Saginaw	Our Savior (14)	3	10		1
Saginaw	Resurrection (7)	3 install	4		
Saginaw	St John (14)	5 install (2)	7		2
Saginaw	Zion (9)	1	7		1
Unionville	St. Peter (13)	3	9 install (3)		1
Vassar	Grace (6)	2	4		

CAPITAL AREA CONFERENCE					
Charlotte	Peace (5)	4 install			1
Coldwater	Reformation (5)	2	1		2
Dewitt	Christ United (7)	6	1		
East Lansing	St. Paul (7)	2	2		3
East Lansing	University (20)	15 install (2)	2		3
Grand Ledge	Immanuel (6)	3	1		2
Hillsdale	Trinity (12)	3	3		6
Jackson	Immanuel (6)	5 install	1		
Jackson	St. James (8)	5 install	1		2
Lansing	Bethlehem (6)	4	1		1
Lansing	Calvary (8)	4	2		2
Lansing	Grace (7)	4	2		1
Lansing	Redeemer (2)	2			
Lansing	St. Stephen (13)	9	2 install		2
Mason	All Saints (9)	4	1		4
Michigan Center	Christ (7)	3	2		2
Okemos	Faith (5)	3 install	1		1
GRAND RAPIDS CONFERENCE					
Big Rapids	Immanuel (13)	3 install	7		3
Comstock Park	Zion (7)	6	1		
Edmore	Our Savior's (6)	4	1		1
Gowen	Settlement (13)	10	1		2
Grand Rapids	Bethlehem (3)	1	1		1
Grand Rapids	Faith (4)	2	2		
Grand Rapids	St. Luke's (21)	13 install 2	3		5
Grand Rapids	Trinity (8)	6 ordain (2) Install (1)	1		1
Greenville	St. Paul (11)	09	1		1

Hastings	Grace (9)	3 install	2		4
Holland	Good Shepherd (5)	1 ordain	1		3
Holland	Peace (9)	5	2		2
Hudsonville	Bread of Life (6)	3	2		1
Kent City	Mamrelund (5)	3	1		1
Kentwood	Ascension/HC (4)	2	1		1
Rockford	Hope (6)	3	1		2
Sidney	Faith (8)	3	1		4
Sparta	Peace (5)	3	1		1
Woodland	Zion (7)	3 install	2		2
Wyoming	Christ (11)	4	2		5
Wyoming	Christ Sudanese (16)	4	12		
Wyoming	Gethsemane (5)	1	2		2
KALAMAZOO CONFERENCE					
Allegan	Immanuel (9)	5			4
Baroda	St. John (6)	2	1		3
Battle Creek	St. Peter (12)	8 install 2	1		3
Battle Creek	Trinity (21)	11	6 install		4
Constantine	Messiah (12)	6	2		4
Kalamazoo	Savior (13)	5 Install	1		7
Kalamazoo	Trinity (9)	3	3		3
Niles	Holy Trinity (4)	2	1		1
Plainwell	Hope (10)	5	2		3
Portage	Lord of Life (6)	3	2		1
Portage	Prince of Peace (8)	4	1		3
South Haven	Peace (8)	5	1		2
St. Joseph	Saron (8)	5	1		2
Three Rivers	St. John/Trinity (9)	5	1		3
STONY LAKE CONFERENCE					

Fruitport	Edgewood (6)	2	3		1
Ludington	Bethany (7)	4	2		1
Ludington	Emanuel (5)	3	1		1
Ludington	Victory Trinity (7)	4	2		1
Muskegon	Harbor of Grace (8)	2	5		1
Muskegon	Immanuel (6)	2	3		1
Muskegon	Our Savior (12)	4	3		5
Muskegon	Samuel (7)	3	3		1
Muskegon	St. Luke (7)	2	4		1
New Era	Trinity (12)	3	6		3
North Muskegon	First (3)	1 preside	1		1
Whitehall	Lebanon (8)	4	3		1
SUNRISE CONFERENCE					
Alpena	Grace (3)	1install	2		
Alpena	St. Paul (8)	5	1		2
Barton City	Trinity (4)	3	1		
Cheboygan	St. Thomas (9)	2	3 install		5
Gaylord	Peace (11)	6 Install	2		3
Hagensville	St. John (9)	4	1		4
Herron	St. Matthew (4)	2	1		1
Millersburg	St. James (12)	4	2		6
Ocqueoc	Trinity (12)	4	2		6
Oscoda	Hope St. John (4)	2	1	1	1
Posen	Leer (4)	1	3		
Spruce	New Life (8)	4	2		2
Spruce	Spruce (4)	2	1		1
TRAVERSE CONFERENCE					
Acme	Feast of Victory (8)	2 install	4		2
Cadillac	Zion (8)	2	2		4

East Jordan	Evangelical (6)	1	1		4
Elk Rapids	Calvary (19)	3	2		14
Frankfort	Trinity (3)	1			2
Grayling	St. John (8)	3	4		1
Kaleva	Bethany (10)	2 Install	2		6
Lake Ann	Advent (16)	8 install	1		7
Lake City	St. John (13)	4 Install (2)	4		5
Le Roy	Zion (2)	1	1		
Manton	Trinity (13)	2	5		6
Northport	Bethany (14)	3	2		9
Petoskey	Cross Christ (12)	4	5		3
Reed City	St. Paul (8)	2	2		4
Roscommon	Messiah (6)	1	3		2
Suttons Bay	Immanuel (10)	6	1		3
Traverse City	Bethlehem (6)	4	1		1
Tustin	Augustana (17)	1	4		12

Report of the Synod Vice President
Sandy Schlesinger

"Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will act."

~~~ Psalm 37:5

As I complete my third term as Synod Vice President, I give thanks for this amazing opportunity to serve with other lay leaders and rostered ministers who make a meaningful difference through various areas of mission & ministry across our synod. As per the constitution, my primary focus is to serve as chairs 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 2023 (with terms concluding on 8/31/2023):** Mr. Connor Ashley, the Rev. Clayton Bates, Ms. Phyllis Klingler, and Mr. Bill Trevarthen
- **Class of 2024:** Mr. Daniel Carter (Treasurer), the Rev. Betsy Kamphuis, Dr. Tim Lundgren, the Rev. Kate Van Valkenburg, Ms. Sandra Walker, and Mr. Richard Weingartner
- **Class of 2025:** The Rev. Dennis Smith (Secretary), the Rev. Neil Brady, the Rev. Christina Bright, Ms. Karla Chamberlain, Ms. Linda Wicander, and Ms. Holly Wohlfert

It is a joy to serve as the leader of this diverse group of committed leaders who have given their time & talents to further God's mission across the synod. In particular, I would like to extend my thanks to the members of the **Class of 2023** who complete their current terms of service on August 31, 2023 – their leadership and dedication to the work of the synod is truly appreciated!

NWLM Synod Council Terms		
Through 8/31/23	**Through 8/31/24**	**Through 8/31/25**
Executive Committee		
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		
ASHLEY Mr. Connor (Second Term)	**KAMPHUIS** Rev. Betsy (Second Term)	**BRADY** Rev. Neil (First Term)
BATES Rev. Clay (First Term)	**LUNDGREN** Dr. Tim (Second Term)	**BRIGHT** Rev. Chrisy (First Term)
TREVARTHEN Mr. Bill (First Term)	**VAN VALKENBURG** Rev. Kate (Unexpired Term)	**CHAMBERLAIN** Ms. Karla (First Term)
KLINGLER, Ms. Phyllis (Unexpired Term)	**WALKER**, Ms. Sandra (First Term)	**WICANDER** Ms. Linda (First Term)
	WEINGARTNER Mr. Richard (Second Term)	**WOHLFERT** Ms. Holly (Second Term)

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):

- Expressed thanks for the leadership, wise counsel, and strategic partnership provided by Ms. Dawn Brackmann who resigned as Synod Attorney at the end of 2022 to focus on her expanding role as a professor at Grand Valley State University
- Welcomed and appointed Lynn Kriser as our new Synod Attorney in early 2023
- Approved appointment of the Rev. Megan Crouch as chair of the N/W Lower MI Synod Global Mission Committee, effective September 1, 2023
- Approved appointment of the Rev. Jonathan Reid as chair of the N/W Lower MI Synod Resolutions Committee
- Designated United Campus Christian Fellowship as a Synod Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC) for 2023 and designated as their servant leader: Pastor Kate Van Valkenburg (annual requirement)
- Designated Sudanese Christ Lutheran Community as a Synod Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC) for 2023 and designated as their servant leader: Paul Mawut (annual requirement)
- Approval and support of plans for each Synod Assembly – including date(s), location (in-person or Zoom), theme, agenda, registration fees and other logistics, approval of the assembly Reference & Resolution, Nomination, Credentials and Election Committee chairpersons, designation of Synod Assembly offerings, approval of documents and reports to move forward to the Synod Assembly, etc.
- Approved dates for the 2024 and 2025 Synod Assemblies as follows: Saturday, May 11, 2024 (Zoom; focus on required business) and Sunday, May 18 to Tuesday, May 20, 2025 (in-person with location to-be determined; focus on the bishop election and required business).
- Developed proposed 2024 Synod Compensation Guidelines for consideration by the 2023 Synod Assembly
- Developed the proposed 2024-25 Fiscal Year Budget (for the next fiscal year) to align with expectations of incoming mission support & planned mission & ministry expenses
- Support strategic processes & programs led by the Bishop and staff – including the on-going “Living Stones” initiatives, management and support of call processes, Seminary Debt Reduction grant management, Synod Disaster Fund management, Synod Trust management (i.e., Grace and Wilson Trust, etc.), support of social justice initiatives, support of ELCA grant submissions, etc.
- Support the Bishop in communicating and/or clarifying synod policies and procedures
- Support and engage in leadership training across the synod, including sunsetting of the Equipping Leaders for Mission & Ministry (ELMM) program, kick-off of a new Adult Theological Education Program with the Bishop serving as Dean, on-going Synod Boundaries training, and continuing Social Justice training, etc.
- 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

- 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 . . .

Recommendations to 2024 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. This year's assessment was based on base salary levels in 2023 for Pastors at 0, 5, 10, 20, and 30 years of ordination/service – see below:

Synod	NWLM - 2023	SE MI	NW OH	NE OH	Southern OH	INDIANA/KY	NWLM - 2024 Proposal
Years of Service	2023 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	2023 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	2023 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	2023 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	2023 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	2023 Minimum Base Salary - Pastors	+6.0% to Starting Base Salary - Pastors
% Increase with Models from Previous Year	*+4.5%*	*+3%*	*+3%*	*(new model for 2023 - est. at +3%)*	*+4%*	*(new model for 2023 - % increase not stated)*	*+6.0% RECOMMENDED*
0 yrs of service (First Call)	**42,240**	43,308	38,325	42,700*	45,592	40,400*	**44,774**
5 yrs of service	**44,240**	45,774	41,253	44,100	48,336	42,320	**46,774**
10 yrs of service	**46,740**	48,471	44,223	45,500	51,093	43,985	**49,274**
20 yrs of service	**52,540**	53,441	50,181	48,300	56,496	46,600	**55,074**
30 yrs of service	**59,540**	56,169	56,115	51,100	60,354	48,580	**62,074**
	*NOTE: Minimum Defined Base Compensation = Base Salary + Housing or Housing Allowance (est. as 30% of Base Salary) + Social Security Offset (7.65% of Base Salary + Housing). This table lists **minimum Base Salaries only** - excluding other contributors to the overall Defined Base Compensation such as additional degrees, prior experience, higher than average responsibilities / congregation size(es), etc.*						
Additional Input on Synod Models	+$500/yr thru 16 yrs; +$700/yr for 17+ yrs	not stated	+$350/yr beyond 30 yrs	*Stated salaries are a "best estimate" based on a new model. Assumes a median housing price of $150,000 within the model.	not stated	*Stated salaries are a "best estimate" based on a new model. Assumes a median housing price of $200,000 and "median" congregation size within the model.	**For Reference: Recent SS Cost of Living (COLA) Increases** 2020 - 1.6%; 2021 - 1.3%; 2022 - 5.9%; 2023 - 8.7%

Key "take-aways from the 2023 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 continue to be in line and competitive with the other synods in our region
- In general – we continue to be in the "middle of the pack" for most of the assessed years of service
  - Our recommended starting base salaries (at 0 yrs of service) are the third lowest of the 6 synods
  - Our recommended base salaries at 30+ yrs of service are the second highest of the 6 synods
- Based on variability of the Social Security Cost-of-Living (COLA) increases over the past 3 years due to global economic uncertainty (see table above – increases ranging from 1.3 to 8.7%), it is difficult to predict the likely increases planned within the other Region 6 synods in 2024.
- With the anticipation of 20+ 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 2024 Compensation Guidelines are highlighted in red font in the draft document available on the synod assembly website. Key changes being recommended for adoption in 2024 include:

- **Lines 129/259/867:** A 6% 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.
- **Line 728:** Daily compensation for Pastors or Deacons under contract increased to $225 per day plus expenses (up from $200/day). If a full day is not required, a congregation may contract based on an hourly rate of $30 per hour (up from $25/hr), with minimum pay of two hours or $60 (up from $50).
- **Line 736:** Compensation for supply preaching increased to $225 for a single worship service (up from $200) with $50 for each additional worship service (no change)

Our work continues as we participate in Christ's own work of reconciling the world to God's very Self. We do this through our shared focus on vision and strategy as we use our collective gifts and talents to serve as God's hands across the Mitten – doing what we know Jesus would do!

'Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.'"

~~~ John 5:19

Thanks be to God for all that we do in His (and in Jesus') name!

Yours in Christ,

Sandy Schlesinger
NWLM Synod Vice President

2022-23 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
Physical Address: 240 South Bridge St., Suite 120
Dewitt, MI 48820
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 517, Dewitt, MI 48820
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)

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

BRADY Rev. Neil
Home Church: Peace - Charlotte
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/25 (first term)

BRIGHT Rev. Christina (Chrisy)
Home Church: New Life – Spruce
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/25 (first term)

CHAMBERLAIN Ms. Karla
Home Church: Grace - Lansing
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/25 (first term)

KAMPHUIS Rev. Betsy
Home Church: St. Paul – Greenville; Settlement - Gowan
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 Dr. Tim
Home Church: Trinity – Grand Rapids
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/24 (second term)

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

VAN VALKENBURG Rev. Katherine (Kate)
Home Church: Bread of Life - Hudsonville
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/24 (unexpired term)

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

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

WICANDER Ms. Linda
Home Church: Immanuel – Mt. Pleasant
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/25 (first term)

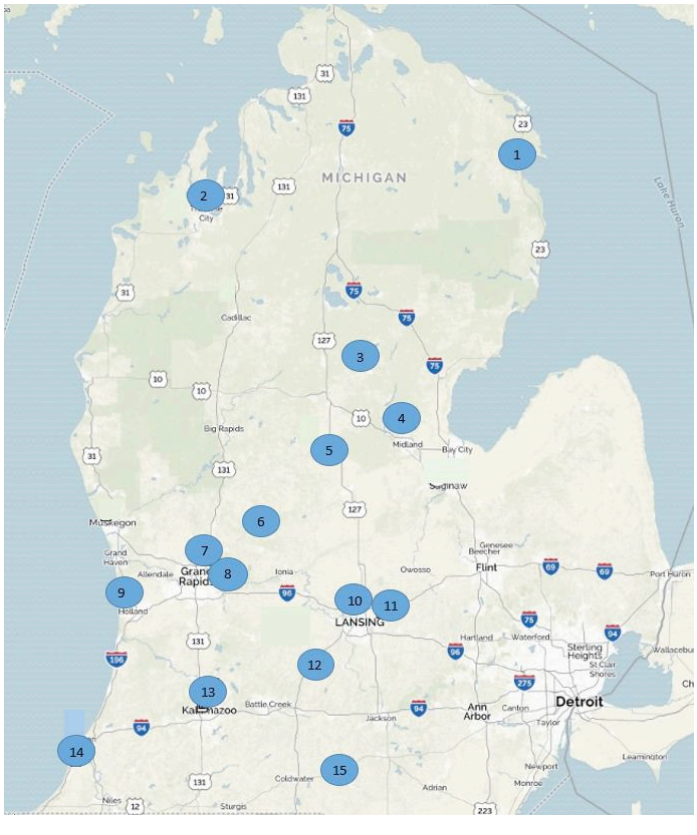
WOHLFERT Ms. Holly
Home Church: Trinity - Kalamazoo
3-yr term, exp. 8/31/25 (second term) General Business

Synod Council: 2022-23 Term

NWLM Synod Council Terms		
Through 8/31/23	**Through 8/31/24**	**Through 8/31/25**
Executive Committee		
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		
ASHLEY Mr. Connor (Second Term)	**KAMPHUIS** Rev. Betsy (Second Term)	**BRADY** Rev. Neil (First Term)
BATES Rev. Clay (First Term)	**LUNDGREN** Dr. Tim (Second Term)	**BRIGHT** Rev. Chrisy (First Term)
TREVARTHEN Mr. Bill (First Term)	**VAN VALKENBURG** Rev. Kate (Unexpired Term)	**CHAMBERLAIN** Ms. Karla (First Term)
KLINGLER, Ms. Phyllis (Unexpired Term)	**WALKER**, Ms. Sandra (First Term)	**WICANDER** Ms. Linda (First Term)
	WEINGARTNER Mr. Richard (Second Term)	**WOHLFERT** Ms. Holly (Second Term)

2022-23 Synod Council & Synod Leaders

1 – Rev. Chrisy Bright
2 – Asst. to the Bishop – Pr. Rosanne Anderson
3 – Asst. to the Bishop – Pr. David Sprang
4 - Ms. Sandy Schlesinger
5 – Ms. Linda Wicander
6 – Rev. Betsy Kamphuis
7 - Mr. Daniel Carter
8 – Dr. Tim Lundgren
8 – Rev. Kate Van Valkenburg
9 – Rev. Clay Bates
10 – Ms. Karla Chamberlain
10 – Synod Attorney Ms. Lynn Kriser
10 - Bishop Craig Satterlee (Synod Office)
10 – Mr. Bill Trevarthen
10 - Ms. Sandra Walker
11 – Mr. Richard Weingartner
12 – Rev. Neil Brady
13 – Rev. Dennis Smith
13 – Ms. Holly Wohlfert
14 - Mr. Connor Ashley
15 – Ms. Phyllis Klingler



Synod Council and Executive Committee
Motions: February 2022 – March 2023

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Motion EC.22.02.01.
Approve the Executive Committee Minutes from December 7, 2021.
Secretary Smith/Second Bishop Satterlee
Adopted

Motion EC.22.02.02.
As a result of on-going COVID-19 risks in indoor, large group settings, recommend that Synod Council change the 2022 Synod Assembly from an in-person meeting in Mt. Pleasant (currently scheduled for Thursday to Saturday, May 12-14, 2022) to a remote meeting to take place on Saturday, May 14, 2022.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Secretary Smith
Further **Discussion:** Requires re-negotiation and management of the signed contract with the hotel for the 2022 event.
Adopted

Motion EC22.03.01.
Approve the Executive Committee Minutes for February 8, 2022.
Secretary Smith/Second Mr. Carter
Adopted

Motion EC22.03.02.
Recommend that Synod Council approve the following statement to congregations regarding the Portico retirement rate to be included as new guidance in the proposed 2023 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines:
"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."
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Bishop Satterlee
Discussion:
For the synod staff, retirement rates have ranged from 10-12%, depending on years of service/ordination.
Adopted

Motion EC22.03.03.
Recommend that Synod Council approve the new Separation Guidance (Appendix D and other related sections) within the proposed 2023 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines as presented.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Dr. McCorkle
Adopted

Motion EC22.03.04.
Recommend that Synod Council approve a 4.5% increase to the applicable base salary models within the proposed 2023 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines as presented.
Mr. Carter/Second Pr. Smith
Discussion:
1) Options for Base Salary increases ranging from 3-6% for pastors were provided to illustrate the differences in salary adjustments within the synod's model
2) With the possibility of ~28 congregations in the call process over the next 6-8 months, we will want to remain competitive from a guidelines 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 candidate.

Adopted

Motion: EC22.09.01.
Approve the Executive Committee Minutes for February 8, 2022.
Secretary Smith/Second Mr. Carter
Adopted

Motion: EC22.09.02.
Recommend that Synod Council appoint Ms. Linda Wicander to serve as Member-at-Large on the NWLM Synod Executive Committee.
Ms. Schlesinger / Second: Mr. Dan Carter
Adopted

Motion EC22.12.01.
Approve the Executive Committee Minutes for September 6, 2022.
Secretary Smith/Second Bishop Satterlee
Adopted

Motion EC22.12.02.
Recommend that Synod Council endorse the proposal for Living Stones Initiatives, 2023-2025 as presented.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Ms. Wicander
Adopted

Motion EC22.12.03.
Recommend that Synod Council approve the high-level agenda and logistics for the 2023 North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly, including registration costs, process and voting technology (including use of "Vevox"), as presented in this motion and accompanied by support documentation in Synod Council resource folder on the synod website. The in-person assembly will take place May 7-9, 2023 in Mt. Pleasant with the theme of "It's About Jesus!".
Sandy Schlesinger/Second Bishop Satterlee
Discussion on Logistics:

- The meeting quorum will be established by the Synod Council Executive Committee once registration is closed. The quorum will be based on 1) the allowable number of voting members within congregations of this synod as of the registration deadline along with 2) their relative size (which dictates # of voting members allowed from that congregation) as per guidelines provided in the synod constitution.
- Use of "Vevox" for voting purposes with paper ballot back-up as needed
- Participants will need to register in advance as in past years where "Vevox" technology was used for voting. No same-day registration will be allowed for voting purposes. Attendees registering after the registration deadline will be considered "visitors" at the meeting when determining a quorum.
- Relative to voting - in addition to advance registration to enable voting credentials to be established, attendance at a training session and/or viewing of a training video that will be provided is strongly encouraged.
- Management of the voting results and how final results are displayed to the voting members following verification by the bishop. This is in keeping with past practice before the advent of electronic voting technology.
- Early Bird Registration Fee (including assembly costs & meals for Sunday - Tuesday) is $200 for voting members & visitors; $150 for retired rostered ministers. Additional hotel cost is $104 per night for a standard room (2 nights needed).
- Regular Registration Fee (including assembly costs & meals for Sunday – Tuesday) of $225 for voting members & visitors; $165 for retired rostered ministers. Additional hotel cost is $104 per night for a standard room (2 nights needed). Additional details are provided in the 2023 SA Budget reference document.

Adopted

Motion EC22.12.04.
Recommend that Synod Council approve the recommendation that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod plan to hold future in-person synod assemblies every three years (aligned to bishop elections) with virtual synod assemblies with a "business only" agenda taking place in the years in between. The final decision on whether an assembly is in-person or virtual is to be made and/or adjusted by Synod Council as appropriate based on the required business to be conducted.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Pr. Smith
Adopted

Motion EC22.12.05.
Approve designation of 2023 Housing Allowances for Called Staff: Bishop Craig Satterlee: $45,000 and the Rev. Rosanne Anderson: $30,000.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Pr. Smith
Adopted (Abstained: Bishop Satterlee)

Motion EC23.02.01.
Approve the Executive Committee Minutes for December 6, 2022.
Pr. Smith / Second Ms. Wicander
Adopted

Motion EC23.02.02.
Recommend that Synod Council approve Bishop Satterlee's recommendation to appoint Lynn Kriser (University – East Lansing) as the N/W Lower MI Synod Attorney, effective immediately.
Ms. Schlesinger / Pr. Smith
Discussion: A brief C.V. of Atty. Kriser has been provided for Synod Council to review.
Adopted

Motion EC23.02.03.
Recommend that Synod Council approve preliminary plans for the 2024 N/W Lower MI Synod Assembly to be conducted remotely via Zoom on Saturday, May 11, 2024 with a duration of no more than 6 hours and a prioritized focus on required business only.
Ms. Schlesinger / Pr. Smith
Discussion: The recommended date takes the following into account – Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and the Festival of Homiletics. This is in alignment with the motion passed by Synod Council in December 2022 to hold future in-person synod assemblies every three years (aligned to bishop elections) with virtual synod assemblies with a "business only" agenda taking place in the years in between. Bishop Satterlee added that a number of in-person retreats are in the plans for the fall of 2023 and into the spring of 2024.
Adopted

Motion EC 23.02.04.
Recommend that Synod Council approve preliminary plans for the 2025 N/W Lower MI Synod Assembly to be conducted in-person from Sunday, May 18 to Tuesday, May 20, 2025 with a prioritized focus on the bishop election and required business.
Ms. Schlesinger / Mr. Carter

Discussion: The recommended dates take the following into account – Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and the Festival of Homiletics. This also honors the alternating pattern of Sunday -Tuesday (2013) and Thursday to Saturday (2019) for Synod Assemblies with bishop elections. This is in alignment with the motion passed by Synod Council in December 2022 to hold future in-person synod assemblies every three years (aligned to bishop elections) with virtual synod assemblies with a "business only" agenda taking place in the years in between.

Adopted

Motion EC23.02.05.

Recommend that Synod Council approve a 5.0% increase to the applicable base salary models within the proposed 2024 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines as presented.

Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Carter

Discussion and Input to the Discernment Process:

- A competitive assessment of minimum base salaries for pastors across the Region 6 synods was completed. Our strategy to remain competitive remains effective.
- Options for Base Salary increases ranging from 4.5-8.5% for pastors were provided to illustrate the differences in salary adjustments within the synod's model
- 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 approximately 15-20 congregations in the call process over the next year, we want to remain competitive from a 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 candidate.

Adopted (Abstain: Bishop Satterlee)

Motion EC23.02.06.

To adjourn the regular meeting of the Executive Committee and move to Executive Session of the Executive Committee. Bishop Satterlee to be excused from the Executive Session.

Ms. Schlesinger / Second Ms. Wicander

Adopted

E-Motion EC23.02.01.

Approve Dr. Candy McCorkle and Mr. Richard Weingartner as potential nominees for the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church from the N/W Lower MI Synod.

Ms. Schlesinger / Second Bp. Satterlee

Explanation:

- From the ELCA - each synod council or synod executive committee will be invited to submit two potential nominees. In addition, there will be an open nomination process. For each region the Church Council will appoint two people from among the synod nominations and one person from the open nominations. At-large members will be chosen from among all the names received, both from synod nominations and from the open nomination process.
- See attached and below for additional details.

Adopted

Motion EC23.03.01.

Approve the Executive Committee Minutes for February 2, 2023, as amended.

Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Carter

Adopted

Motion EC23.03.02.

Adjourn the Executive Committee meeting and move into Executive Session to include all Executive Committee members and the Synod Attorney. There will be no minutes of this Executive Session recorded.

Ms. Schlesinger/Second Bishop Satterlee

Adopted

SYNOD COUNCIL

Motion SC22.02.01.

Approve the Synod Council Minutes from December 11, 2021. Receive the Executive Committee Minutes from December 7, 2021.

Pr. Smith / Second Ms. Peterson

Discussion: (Correct the spelling of Mr. Weingartner's name)

Adopted (abstain, Pr. Bright and Pr. Van Valkenburg)

Motion SC22.02.02.

Receive updated constitutions for Trinity – Hillsdale and Bread of Life - Hudsonville.

Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Trevarthen

Discussion:

- Note that the "legal" constitution for a congregation is the one that is received and archived by the synod.

- Trinity – Hillsdale: Constitution received in December 2021. This version includes additional updates to accommodate the King's Kupboard ministry of the congregation and duties of the Property Committee chairperson.
- Bread of Life - Hudsonville: General constitutional updates

Adopted (abstain, Ms. Klinger and Pr. Van Valkenburg)

Motion SC22.02.03.
Synod Council supports moving the Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community – Explore Phase at Grand Valley State University in partnership with United Christian Campus Ministry to a regular Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community.
Bishop Satterlee / Secretary Smith
Discussion: This move is the next step in the process of forming them into a worshiping community and in the future, a congregation. This is supported by:

- The synod New and Renewing Mission Table (motion on Jan 25, 2022)
- Bishop Satterlee and Pastor Sprang (DEM)
- The ELCA Director of New Start Ministry, Ruben Duran

Adopted (Pr. Van Valkenburg- abstained)

Motion SC22.02.04.
Approve the 2022 sabbatical proposal as presented by Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Rosanne Anderson.
Vice President Schlesinger / Second Dr. McCorkle
Discussion: Vice President Schlesinger noted that this will be the first sabbatical for Pr. Anderson.
Adopted

Motion SC22.02.05.
Designate the balance of the gift from Calvary – Lansing to the CONNECT Grant Fund for use across the Capital Area Conference.
Bishop Satterlee / Second Pr. Bates
Discussion: This $10,000 gift was provided by Calvary-Lansing (as part of the closure process) for use at the discretion of the synod. $3000 is planned for archiving and $2,250 is aligned to the new John D. Schleicher Care of Creation Grant Program (approved at the December 2021 Synod Council meeting). This leaves a balance of approximately $4750 that will be moved to the CONNECT Grant Fund. Bishop Satterlee offered further explanation, noting post-COVID-19 exigencies.
Adopted

Motion SC22.02.06.
Executive Committee/ No second required
As a result of on-going COVID-19 risks associated with large indoor, group settings, Synod Council shall change the 2022 Synod Assembly from an in-person meeting in Mt. Pleasant (currently scheduled for May 12-14, 2022) to a remote meeting to take place on Saturday, May 14, 2022.
Executive Committee / Second not needed

Discussion: Requires re-negotiation of the contract with the hotel for the 2022 event in order to minimize any change penalties. Discussions with hotel are on-going. Synod Attorney Brackmann will lead the negotiation with the hotel.
Transitioning the Assembly to a remote format is fully supported by Synod Staff and the Conference Deans should this change be approved by Synod Council.
A synopsis of the thoughtful and lengthy discussion of this motion and its rationale is provided by Vice President Schlesinger as a referenced addendum to these minutes. Please refer to Synod Council Related Documents, February 2022.
Adopted (roll call vote – unanimous vote of voting members present)

Bishop Satterlee reminded Synod Council that the result of this vote is the vote of the entire Synod Council and will be published in the synod newsletter as such.

Motion SC22.02.07.
The agenda for the 2022 Synod Assembly, to be conducted remotely via Zoom on Saturday, May 14, 2022, shall be limited to no more than 6 hours in duration with a prioritized focus on required business only.
Vice President Schlesinger/ Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC22.02.08.
Synod Council approves the following Continuing Resolution:
Due to the Synod Assembly restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, protocols for the presentation and consideration of resolutions and churchwide memorials presented to the Resolutions Committee for the 2022 Synod Assembly only are:
1. All resolutions and churchwide memorials shall be submitted to the chair of the Resolutions Committee by April 8, 2022.
2. All resolutions and churchwide memorials shall be included in the pre-Assembly packet. No additional resolutions or churchwide memorials will be considered during the 2022 Synod Assembly.
3. Prior to the 2022 Synod Assembly, ZOOM meetings shall be scheduled during which resolutions and churchwide memorials, correctly submitted for consideration by the 2022 Synod Assembly, will be discussed.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Mr. Weingartner
Discussion: A similar continuing resolution was adopted for the 2021 Synod Assembly which was conducted remotely via ZOOM.
Adopted

Motion SC22.02.09.
Receive the report of the treasurer as presented.
Bishop Satterlee /Pr. Kamphuis
Discussion: Pr. Bates raised a question about endowments and support given. Pr. Sprang answered that Rebecca Bossenbroek (Finance Director) has prepared such a document that shows how endowments are used and reported.
Adopted

Motion SC22.02.10.
Approve updates to the NWLM Synod Seminary Debt Reduction Program as provided in the Synod Council Documents.
Vice President Schlesinger /Second Mr. Weingartner
Discussion: Changes are focused on management and carryover of funds from year to year.
Adopted

Motion SC22.02.11.
Move the meeting of the February 2022 Synod Council into Executive Session to include Synod Council members and the Synod Attorney.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Ms. Peterson
Discussion: The Bishop, Assistants to the Bishop, and Synod Staff are excused.
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.01.
Approve the Synod Council Minutes from February 12, 2022. Receive the Executive Committee Minutes from February 8, 2022.
Secretary Smith / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.02.
To extend "On Leave from Call – Family Leave" rostered status for an additional year for Deacon Julia Nelson (fifth renewal; effective May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023).
Bishop Satterlee / Second Pr. Bright
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.03.
To change roster status from "Active" to "Retired" for Pr. William Huether, effective March 1, 2022.
Bishop Satterlee/Second Ms. Peterson
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.04.
Extend a Synod Call to the Rev. Alexander Steward to serve as a specialized minister in the role of Chaplain at Kindred Hospice in Grand Rapids, MI. This Synod Call is co-terminus with employment in this position.
Bishop Satterlee/Second Mr. Weingartner
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.05.
Approve the Agenda and Rules of Organization and Procedure to move forward to the 2022 NWLM Synod Assembly as presented.
Vice President Schlesinger / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.06.
Appoint the Rev. Rachel Laughlin as chair of the 2022 Synod Assembly Elections Committee. Within this position, Rev. Laughlin will assemble additional committee members as needed to facilitate the remote voting process using the VeVox voting software.
Bishop Satterlee / Second Pr. Bright
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.07.
Appoint the Rev. Kjersten Sullivan as chair of the 2022 Synod Assembly Credentials Committee. Within this position, Rev. Sullivan will assemble additional committee members as needed to facilitate the registration and credential verification process for the remote assembly.
Bishop Satterlee / Second Mr. Weingartner
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.08.
Appoint the Rev. Betsy Kamphuis as chair of the 2022 Synod Assembly Reference & Resolution Committee. Within this position, Rev. Kamphuis will assemble additional committee members as needed to address needs within the remote assembly.
Bishop Satterlee / Second Ms. Peterson
Adopted
Abstain: Pr. Betsy Kamphuis

Motion SC22.04.09.
Appoint Ms. Sandy Schlesinger as chair of the 2022 Synod Nominating Committee. Within this position, Ms. Schlesinger will assemble additional committee members to facilitate the nomination process.
Bp. Satterlee / Second Pr. Smith
Adopted
Abstain: Ms. Schlesinger

Motion SC22.04.10.
Approve the 2022 Slate of Nominees for Synod Positions to move forward to the 2022 Synod Assembly as presented.
Vice President Schlesinger / Second Pr. Smith
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.11.
Receive the report of the treasurer.
Vice President Schlesinger /Second Ms. Wolfert
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.12.
In accordance with the NWLM Synod Constitution, Section S15.31., receive the annual audit of the NWLM Synod 2021-22 financial records as conducted by CPA firm Maner Costerisan in February-March 2022. The final report is dated March 28, 2022.
Treasurer Carter/Second Pr. Kamphuis
Discussion: This audit focused on the 2021 fiscal year which took place from February 1, 2021 – January 31, 2022.
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.13.
With thanks, we lift up the leadership and engagement of NWLM Synod Council members who are coming to the end of their elected terms in August 2022: Dr. Candy McCorkle, Ms. Caroline Peterson, the Rev. Bill Uetricht, and Ms. Holly Wohlfert. Their commitment and dedication to the ministry conducted across this synod throughout their terms is much appreciated!
Vice President Schlesinger / Second Bishop Satterlee
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.14.
Approve the following statement to congregations regarding the Portico retirement rate to be included as new guidance in the proposed 2023 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines:
"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."
Executive Committee/Second Not Needed
Discussion:

- For the synod staff, retirement rates have ranged from 10-12%, depending on years of service/ordination.

Adopted

Motion SC22.04.15.
Approve the new Separation Guidance (Appendix D and other related sections) within the proposed 2023 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines as presented.
Executive Committee/Second Not Needed
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.16.
Approve a 4.5% increase to the applicable base salary models within the proposed 2023 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines as presented.
Executive Committee/Second Not Needed
Discussion:

- Options for Base Salary increases ranging from 3-6% for pastors were provided to illustrate the differences in salary adjustments within the synod's model. Comparison with neighboring synod guidelines provided.
- 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 ~29 congregations in the call process over the next 6 months, we want to remain competitive from a 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 candidate.

Discussion: Are recommended ½ rates for pastors ½ of the full-time guidelines? Per Bishop Satterlee, congregations are encouraged to refer to the chart and apply an appropriate ratio. It was noted that there are ongoing recruitment and retention challenges impacting this synod. Bishop Satterlee noted that across denominations there is an expected 40% drop in the number of persons seeking to enter into ministry.
Adopted

Motion SC22.04.17.
Approve the proposed 2023 NW Lower MI Synod Compensation Guidelines to move forward to the 2022 Synod Assembly as presented.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion: SC22.09.01.
Approve the Synod Council Minutes from April 2, 2022. Receive the Executive Committee Minutes from March 29, 2022.
Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion: SC22.09.02.
Approve the Synod Assembly Minutes from May 14, 2022.
Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Weingartner
Adopted

Motion: SC22.09.03.
Receive the updated constitution from First - Muskegon.
Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Carter
Discussion: The "legal" constitution for a congregation is the one that is received by Synod Council and archived by the synod.
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.04.
To extend "On Leave from Call – Education" roster status for the Rev. Julie Winklepleck (fourth year; effective September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023).
Bishop Satterlee / Second Mr. Weingartner
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.05.
To change roster status from "Active" to "Retired" for Pr. David Doane, effective June 1, 2022. Bishop Satterlee/Second Pr. Brady
Adopted

Motion SC 22.09.06.
To change roster status from "Active" to "Retired" for Pr. Wayne Shearier, effective July 1, 2022. Bishop Satterlee/Second Pr. Van Valkenburg
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.07.
To change roster status from "Active" to "Retired" for Pr. Lee Welker, effective August 1, 2022. Bishop Satterlee/Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.08.
To change roster status from "Active" to "Retired" for Pr. Jane Mountain, effective September 1, 2022. Bishop Satterlee/Second Mr. Ashley
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.09.
Endorse the theme: **"It's About Jesus"** for the 2023 Synod Assembly.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Pr. Bright
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.10.
Receive the report of the Treasurer.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Pr. Smith
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.11.
Approve redirection of the Equipping Leaders for Mission & Ministry (ELMM) Scholarship Fund balance to the Adult Theological Education Fund as recommended by the NWLM Synod Mission Endowment Fund Committee.
Mr. Carter / Second Pr. Smith
Discussion: Reference the MEF August 2022 Minutes for the recommendation.
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.12.
Approve redirection of the Interim Ministry Fund balance to the Bishop's Teaching Fund as recommended by the NWLM Synod Mission Endowment Fund Committee.
Mr. Carter / Second Mr. Weingartner
Discussion: Reference the Mission Endowment Fund, August 2022 Minutes for the recommendation.
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.13.
Approve updates to the NWLM Synod Grant Award, Fund Management, and Investment Policies document as recommended by the NWLM Synod Mission Endowment Fund Committee.
Mr. Carter / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Discussion: Reference the Mission Endowment Fund, August 2022 Minutes for the recommendation.
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.14.
Approve changes to the Seminary Debt Reduction Assistance Program as recommended by the Seminary Debt Reduction Committee.
Ms. Wicander / Second Pr. Van Valkenburg
Discussion:
Assembly Seminary Debt Reduction Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1NQ-c0azjw
Adopted

Motion SC22.09.15.
Appoint Ms. Linda Wicander to serve as "Member-at-Large" on the NWLM Synod Executive Committee.
Executive Committee / No Second Needed
Discussion: As a recently elected lay-female member of the Synod Council, Ms. Wicander brings both gender balance to the Executive Committee as well as years of prior experience on Synod Council, including two consecutive 3-yr terms from 2015-2021. She also leads the Synod's Seminary Debt Reduction Committee and has served on the Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee multiple times in recent years.
Adopted (Abstain: Linda Wicander)

Motion SC22.12.01.
Approve the Synod Council Minutes from September 10, 2022. Receive the Executive Committee Minutes from September, 2022.
Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC22.12.02.
Receive the updated constitution from Peace – Gaylord, Grace – East Tawas, and Redeemer – Lansing.
Pr. Smith / Ms. Chamberlain
Discussion: The "legal" constitution for a congregation is the one that is received by Synod Council and archived by the synod.
Adopted

Motion SC22.12.03.
On behalf of the entire synod, the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Council gives thanks to Rebecca Bossenbroek, Director of Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry (ELMM), for her commitment to excellence and her wise and inspirational leadership of all aspects of the program. Thanks to the efforts of Rebecca, the Board of Directors, instructors, and the numerous mentors over the years, many synod members have grown in their faith through learning, skill development, and on-going ministry leadership. As the ELMM program sunsets and transitions to a new Adult Theological Education model starting in 2023, we express appreciation and thanks for the meaningful impact provided by Rebecca in this leadership position. Thanks be to God!
Bishop Satterlee/Second Ms. Wicander
Adopted

Motion SC22.12.04.
Approve the updated 2023 sabbatical proposal for Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Rosanne Anderson as presented.
Bishop Satterlee/Second Pr. Bright
Adopted

Motion SC22.12.05.
Approve the 2024 sabbatical proposal for Bishop Craig Satterlee as presented.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Pr. Smith
Adopted

Motion:SC22.12.06.
To change roster status from “Active” to “Retired” for Pr. Andreas Teich, effective November 1, 2022.
Bishop Satterlee/Second Mr. Ashley
Adopted

Motion SC22.12.07.
To change roster status from “Active” to “Retired” for Pr. Carolyn Heider, effective December 1, 2022.
Bishop Satterlee/Second Ms. Chamberlain
Adopted

Motion SC22.12.08.
We give thanks for the leadership, wise counsel, and strategic partnership provided by our Synod Attorney, Ms. Dawn Brackmann, over the past 10 years. We wish Dawn well as she resigns from this position at the end of 2022 to focus on her expanding role as a professor at Grand Valley State University. Thanks be to God for lifting up Dawn to serve in this synod leadership position! We wish her well during this transition.
Bishop Satterlee/Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC22.12.09.
Endorse the proposal for the 2023-2025 Living Stones Initiatives as presented.
Executive Committee/Second Not Needed
Discussion: As elaborated by Bishop Satterlee, the Living Stones Initiative provides a framework for the activities of this synod over the period, 2023 – 2025. It is a continuation of the previous Living Stones Initiative. Bishop Satterlee intends to invite previous individual contributors to the initiate to continue their support. A friendly amendment to the Initiative, as presented, changes the word “they” to “we” in the third bullet paragraph under “Sharing Jesus.”
Adopted

Motion SC22.12.10.

Approve the high-level agenda and logistics for the 2023 North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly, including registration cost and process and voting technology (including use of Vevox), as presented. The in-person assembly will take place May 7-9, 2023 in Mt. Pleasant with the theme of "It's About Jesus!". Executive Committee/Second Not Needed

Discussion on Logistics:

- The meeting quorum will be established by the Executive Committee once registration is closed. The quorum will be based on 1) the allowable number of voting members within congregations in the synod as of the registration deadline along with 2) their relative size (which dictates # of voting members allowed from that congregation) as per guidelines provided in the synod constitution.
- Use of Vevox for voting purposes with paper ballot back-up as needed
- Participants will need to register in advance as in past years where Vevox technology was used for voting. No same-day registration will be allowed for voting purposes. Attendees registering after the registration deadline will be considered "visitors" at the meeting from a quorum perspective.
- Relative to voting - in addition to advance registration to enable voting credentials to be established, attendance at a training session and/or viewing of a training video that will be provided is strongly encouraged.
- Management of the voting results and how final results are displayed to the voting members following verification by the bishop
- Early Bird Registration Fee (including assembly costs & meals for Sunday - Tuesday) of $200 for voting members & visitors; $150 for retired rostered ministers. Additional hotel cost is $104 per night for a standard room (2 nights needed).
- Regular Registration Fee (including assembly costs & meals for Sunday - Tuesday) of $225 for voting members & visitors; $165 for retired rostered ministers. Additional hotel cost is $104 per night for a standard room (2 nights needed). Additional details are provided in the 2023 SA Budget reference document.

Additional Comments:

Bishop Satterlee strongly urged Synod Council members not to share this agenda with those outside of Council. Agenda's change. He also noted that there will be "table conversations" around witnessing to Jesus.

Ms. Satterlee emphasized that "Vevox" technology will be used for voting and that a firm deadline for voting member registration will be observed.

Adopted

Motion SC22.12.11.
Approve the recommendation that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod plan to hold future in-person synod assemblies every three years (aligned to bishop elections) with virtual synod assemblies with a "business only" agenda taking place in the years in between. The final decision on whether an assembly is in-person or virtual is to be made and/or adjusted by Synod Council as appropriate based on the required business to be conducted.
Executive Committee/Second Not Needed
Discussion: Bishop Satterlee noted that because this synod is registered in Ohio, we are required by Ohio state law to hold an Assembly every year. Assembly cost comparisons, as noted in the document, are significantly less for virtual Assemblies and may help ease budgetary strains on smaller congregation. Objections to the propose preponderance of virtual Assemblies over in-person Assemblies were conscientiously raised, noting that the synod is an expression of this church and as such, the body of Christ is not wholly present in a virtual format. It was also noted that virtual Assemblies are more environmentally friendly, especially in a synod as geographically large as this synod.
Adopted

Motion SC22.12.12.
Receive the report of the Treasurer as presented by the NWLM Synod Financial Director, Rebecca Bossenbroek.
Vice President Schlesinger/Second Mr. Weingartner
Adopted

Motion SC22.12.13.
Move into Executive Session to include Council members exclusive of the Bishop.
Schlesinger/Second Trevarthen
Discussion: Bishop, Assistants to the Bishop and Synod Staff members are excused.
Adopted

Motion: SC23.02.01.
Approve the Synod Council Minutes from December 10, 2022. Receive the Executive Committee Minutes from December 6, 2022.
Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Weingartner
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.02.
To change roster status from "Active" to "On Leave from Call" for Pr. Martha Porter-Reid, effective January 1, 2023.
Bp. Satterlee/Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.03.
Approve the recommendation of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod - New and Renewing Mission Table to designate United Campus Christian Fellowship as a Synod Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC) for 2023 and designate as their servant leader: Pastor Kate Van Valkenburg.
Bp. Satterlee / Second Pr. Brady
Adopted
(Abstained: Pr. Kate Van Valkenburg)

Motion SC.23.02.04.
Approve the recommendation of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod - New and Renewing Mission Table to designate the Sudanese Christ Lutheran Community as a Synod Authorized Worshiping Community (SAWC) for 2023 and designate as their servant leader: Mr. Paul Mawut.
Bp. Satterlee / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC.23.02.05.
Approve Pr. Megan Crouch to serve as chair of the N/W Lower MI Synod Global Mission Committee, effective September 1, 2023.
Bp. Satterlee/Second Ms. Wicander
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.06.
Approve Bishop Satterlee's recommendation to appoint Atty. Lynn Kriser (University – East Lansing) as the N/W Lower MI Synod Attorney, effective immediately.
Exec Committee / Second not needed
Discussion: A brief Bio, noting Atty. Kriser's credentials, was provided for review.
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.07.
Appoint the Rev. Christina Bright as chair of the 2023 Synod Assembly Elections Committee. Within this position, Rev. Bright will assemble additional committee members as needed to facilitate the voting process using the "VeVox" voting software.
Bp. Satterlee / Second Pr. Smith
Adopted
(Abstain: Pr. Christina Bright)

Motion SC23.02.08.
Appoint Pr. Kjersten Sullivan as chair of the 2023 Synod Assembly Credentials Committee. Within this position, Pr. Sullivan will assemble additional committee members as needed to facilitate the registration and credential verification process for the assembly.
Bp. Satterlee / Second Pr. Smith
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.09.
Appoint Pr. Jonathan Reid as chair of the Synod Resolutions Committee. Within this position, Pr. Reid will assemble additional committee members as needed.
Bp. Satterlee / Second Pr. Bright
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.12.
Appoint Pr. Betsy Kamphuis as chair of the 2023 Synod Assembly Reference & Resolution Committee. Within this position, Pr. Kamphuis will assemble additional committee members as needed to address needs within the assembly.
Bp. Satterlee / Second Weingartner
Adopted
Abstain: Pr. Kamphuis

Motion SC23.02.13.
Appoint Pr. Clayton Bates as chair of the 2023 Synod Nominating Committee. Within this position, Pr. Bates will assemble additional committee members to facilitate the nomination process.
Bp. Satterlee / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted
(Abstain: Pr. Bates)

Motion SC23.02.14.

Approve the 2023 Synod Assembly Offering to be designated as follows: Divide the offerings from the Synod Assembly worship services evenly between the Living Water Ministry Bridge Builder Fund and Lutheran World Relief: Crisis in Ukraine.
Ms. Schlesinger / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.15.
Synod Council approve preliminary plans for the 2024 N/W Lower MI Synod Assembly to be conducted remotely via Zoom on Saturday, May 11, 2024 with a duration of no more than 6 hours and a prioritized focus on required business only.
Exec Committee / Second not needed
Discussion: The recommended date takes the following into account – Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and the Festival of Homiletics. This is in alignment with the motion passed by Synod Council in December 2022 to hold future in-person synod assemblies every three years (aligned to bishop elections) with virtual synod assemblies with a "business only" agenda taking place in the years in between.
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.16.
Synod Council approve preliminary plans for the 2025 N/W Lower MI Synod Assembly to be conducted in-person from Sunday, May 18 to Tuesday, May 20, 2025 with a prioritized focus on the bishop election and required business.
Exec Committee / Second not needed
Discussion: The recommended dates take the following into account – Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and the Festival of Homiletics. This also honors the alternating pattern of Sunday -Tuesday (2013) and Thursday to Saturday (2019) for Synod Assemblies with bishop elections. This is in alignment with the motion passed by Synod Council in December 2022 to hold future in-person synod assemblies every three years (aligned to bishop elections) with virtual synod assemblies with a "business only" agenda taking place in the years in between.
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.17.
Receive the report of the Treasurer as presented.
Ms. Schlesinger / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.18.
Approve the proposed N/W Lower MI Synod budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year to move forward to the 2023 N/W Lower MI Synod Assembly for action and finalization.
Ms. Schlesinger / Second Pr. Smith
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.19.
To approve a 5.0% increase (Increased to 6% per amendment SC23.02.19.A1.) to the applicable base salary models within the proposed 2024 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines as presented.
Exec Committee / Second not needed
Discussion followed: Some members noted that pastors are already comparatively underpaid when compared to the private sector positions with equivalent education and expertise. Others noted that many congregations are financially strapped and may not be able to meet even the recommended minimum.
Adopted (one opposed)

Motion to Amend SC23.02.19.A1.
Amend SC23.02.19. to approve a **6.0% increase** to the applicable base salary models.
Pr. Van Valkenburg / Pr. Brad
Adopted (SC23.02.19. as amended)

Motion SC23.02.20.
To bring the 2024 N/W Lower MI Synod Compensation Guidelines, as approved by SC23.02.19. Amended to the 2023 Synod Assembly.
Ms. Schlesinger / Second Pr. Van Valkenburg
Adopted

Motion SC23.02.21.
Adjourn the regular February 11, 2023 meeting of the N/W Lower Michigan Synod Council in preparation for Executive Session.
Pr. Smith / Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

12:07 PM The regular meeting of the N/W Lower Michigan Synod Council was adjourned

Motion SC23.02.21.
Move into Executive Session to include Synod Council members only.
Ms. Schlesinger / Second Mr. Weingartner
(Bishop Satterlee, Assistants to the Bishop, and Synod Staff were excused.)
Adopted

Motion: SC23.03.01.
Approve the Synod Council Minutes from February 11, 2023 and receive the Executive Committee Minutes from February 7, 2023.
Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC23.03.02.

Approve the following Continuing Resolution related to determination of the lay / rostered minister distribution at each Synod Assembly:

S7.21.A23. Based on the voting membership of the Synod Assembly per *S7.21., duly registered by the stated registration deadline, the Credentials Committee of the Synod Assembly shall determine whether the required distribution of lay and clergy voting membership is achieved for the duration of the Assembly. If the lay/clergy distribution is not achieved, the presiding officer of the Assembly, in consultation with the Synod Council Executive Committee, may remove some or all of the registered retired, on leave from call, and those granted disability status members from the voting membership of the Assembly. If this adjustment results in a failure to meet the quorum requirement of S7.14., the voting membership of the Synod Assembly present may adjourn the meeting to another time and place in accordance with S7.14.01.

Pr. Dennis Smith / Second Mr. Weingartner

Adopted

Motion SC23.03.03.

Approve the following Continuing Resolution related to determination of the quorum at each Synod Assembly:

S7.21.B23. The Credentials Committee of the Synod Assembly shall determine the presence of a quorum for conducting business at the beginning of the initial and each adjourned meeting of the Assembly. Such determination may be accomplished by a simple showing of identification tags or electronic check-in

Pr. Dennis Smith / Second Mr. Trevarthen

Adopted

Motion SC23.03.04.

Remove Continuing Resolution S7.22.A19 from the NWLM Synod Constitution and replace with the following new Continuing Resolution:

S7.22.A23 All retired rostered ministers of this synod as well as rostered ministers on leave from call and those granted disability status, who are registered to attend the Synod Assembly, shall be voting members of the Assembly as long as the registered distribution of voting members is consistent with *S7.21

Pr. Dennis Smith / Second Ms. Chamberlain

Adopted

Motion SC23.03.05.

To change roster status from “Active” to “Retired” for Pr. Rosanne Anderson, effective May 1, 2023.

Bishop Satterlee / Second Pr. Smith

Adopted

Motion SC23.03.06.

Call the Rev. Bruce Thorsen as transitional pastor for Faith – Okemos for a period of up to two years, contingent on a formal request to the Bishop from the congregation.

Bishop Satterlee / Second Pr. Van Valkenburg

Adopted (Abstain: Mr. Weingartner)

Motion SC23.03.07.
Appoint Linda Wicander as chair of the 2023 Synod Nominating Committee. Within this position, she will assemble additional committee members to facilitate the nomination process.
Bp. Satterlee / Second Pr. Smith
Discussion: Synod Council approved a motion at the February 11, 2023 meeting to appoint the Rev. Clay Bates as chair. Since he is on the final nomination ballot for an open position, he cannot serve as chair.
Adopted (Abstain: Ms. Wicander)

Motion SC23.03.08.
Approve the 2023 Slate of Nominees for Synod Positions to move forward to the 2023 Synod Assembly as presented.
Ms. Wicander / Second Ms. Chamberlain
Adopted

Motion SC23.03.09.
Approve the proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure to move forward to the 2023 NWLM Synod Assembly as presented.
Ms. Schlesinger / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

Motion SC23.03.10.
Receive the report of the Treasurer as presented.
Ms. Schlesinger / Second Pr. Smith
Adopted

Motion SC23.03.11.
Amend the N/W Lower MI Synod budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year to move forward to the 2023 Synod Assembly for action as presented.
Ms. Schlesinger / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Discussion: This replaces the original version approved to move forward at the February 2023 meeting. The document was updated to align with final recommendations of the 2024 NWLM Synod Compensation Guidelines (e.g. 6% increase within the base salary model).
Adopted

Motion SC23.03.13.
Adjourn the meeting.
Mr. Trevarthen / Second Ms. Wicander
Adopted

NOTE: During the March 2023 meeting of Synod Council, several motions with regard to synod constitution continuing resolutions were adopted. Subsequent to that meeting a number of minor changes needed to be made to those resolutions and a couple others added. A meeting of the Synod Council was called for April 3, 2023, to deal with those and other matters.

Motion SC23.04.02.
Approve the Synod Council Minutes from March 25, 2023.
Pr. Dennis Smith / Second Mr. Carter
Adopted

Motion SC23.04.03.
Delete Continuing Resolution S7.21.A19 and replace with new Continuing Resolution S7.21.C23 to clarify the number of lay voting members from each congregation that are allowed (minimum and maximum) at each Synod Assembly as presented.
Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Discussion: Updates are made to clarify minimum and maximum number of voting members allowed to register for a Synod Assembly from each congregation - based on baptized membership most recently reported to the ELCA.
Adopted

~~S7.21.A19.~~ (Delete and replace with S7.21.C23.)
~~Additional voting members from congregations shall be apportioned according to the baptized membership on the statistical report for that calendar year (1000-1500: one additional voting member; 1501-2000: two additional voting members; 2001 or more: three additional voting members). These additional voting members shall be equally divided between female and male, except odd-numbered voting members, if any, may be either male or female.~~

S7.21.C23. (New)
Synod Assembly voting members from congregations, other than those permitted by S7.21.A17., shall be apportioned according to the baptized membership on the most recent ELCA statistical report: (fewer than 175, at least one, but not more than 2 lay voting members; 175 – 1000, at least 2, but not more than 2 lay voting members; 1000-1500, at least 2, but not more than 3 lay voting members; 1501-2000, at least 2, but not more than 4 lay voting members; more than 2000, at least 2, but not more than 5 lay voting members). The lay voting members shall, as nearly as possible, be equally divided between women and men.

Motion SC23.04.04.
Approve updates to Continuing Resolution S7.21.A17 related to allowing additional Youth/Young Adult voting members at the Synod Assembly as presented.
Pr. Smith / Second Mr. Weingartner
Discussion: Updates align to language provided in the ELCA model constitution for synod constitutions – i.e., from Young Person to Young Adult; from Female(s) to Woman/Women; from Male(s) to Man/Men.
Adopted

S7.21.A17. (Updates proposed in BLUE)
In order to implement bylaw *S6.04.02., each congregation with fewer than 1000 baptized members may elect one additional Synod Assembly voting member who is a youth or young adult. A congregation with more than 1000 baptized members may elect two additional voting members who are youth or young adults, one of whom shall be a woman and one of whom shall be a man.

Motion SC23.04.05.
Approve updates to Continuing Resolution S7.21.A23 related to determination of the Layperson distribution at each Synod Assembly as presented.
Pr. Smith / Second Pr. Van Valkenburg
Discussion: An earlier version of this Continuing Resolution was previously approved at the March 2023 Synod Council meeting via Motion SC23.03.02. Updates align to language provided in the ELCA model constitution for synod constitutions – i.e., 60% of the voting membership must be laypersons; from rostered clergy to rostered ministers.
Adopted

S7.21.A23. (Updates proposed in BLUE)
Based on the voting membership of the Synod Assembly per *S7.21., duly registered by the stated registration deadline, the Credentials Committee of the Synod Assembly shall determine whether the required distribution of lay voting membership is achieved for the duration of the Assembly in accordance with *S6.04. If at least 60 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly are not laypersons, the presiding officer of the Assembly, in consultation with the Synod Council Executive Committee, may remove some or all of the registered, rostered ministers who are retired, on leave from call, and/or those granted disability status from the voting membership of the Assembly. If these adjustments result in a failure to meet the quorum requirement of S7.14., the voting membership of the Synod Assembly present may adjourn the meeting to another time and place in accordance with S7.14.01.

Motion SC23.04.06.
Approve updates to Continuing Resolution S7.21.B23 related to Quorum updates at the Synod Assembly as presented.
Pr. Smith / Second Ms. Chamberlain
Discussion: An earlier version of this Continuing Resolution was previously approved in the March 2023 meeting via Motion SC23.03.03. Updates added to clarify timing of quorum verifications and terminology according to Robert's Rules – i.e., "meeting" vs. "plenary"; the entire Assembly is a "session".
Adopted

S7.21.B23. (Updates Proposed in BLUE)
The Credentials Committee of the Synod Assembly shall determine the presence of a quorum for conducting business at appropriate times within the initial and each adjourned meeting (i.e., plenary) within the overall Synod Assembly which is defined as a "session" within Robert's Rules. Such determination may be accomplished by a simple showing of identification tags or electronic check-in.

Motion SC23.04.07.
Approve new Continuing Resolution S7.23.A23 as presented.
Pr. Smith / Second Pr. Kate Van Valkenburg
Discussion: Approval results in removal of a similar "rule" from the Synod Assembly Rules of Organization & Procedure moving forward.
Adopted

S7.23.A23.
Permission is granted for the Synod Attorney to have voice but not vote at the Synod Assembly to support proceedings and to provide clarification as needed relative to the governing documents and policies of the synod as requested by the Synod Assembly Chair, the Synod Bishop or Synod Vice President as per S7.23.

Motion SC23.04.08.
Approve new Continuing Resolution S7.26.A23 as presented.
Pr. Smith / Second Ms. Chamberlain
Discussion: Approval results in removal of a similar "rule" from the Synod Assembly Rules of Organization & Procedure moving forward.
Adopted

S7.26.A23.
Permission is granted for up to two lay persons, one a woman and the other a man, from Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities to have full voice and vote in all Synod Assembly proceedings.

Motion SC23.04.09.
Approve new Continuing Resolution S7.27.A23 as presented.
Pr. Smith / Second Pr. Van Valkenburg
Discussion: Approval results in removal of a similar "rule" from the Synod Assembly Rules of Organization & Procedure moving forward.
Adopted

S7.27.A23.
A Minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and who is serving a congregation of this synod by "Invitation to Special Service" during the period of the Synod Assembly shall have the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly.

Motion SC23.04.10.
Approve the final set of proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure to move forward to the 2023 NWLM Synod Assembly as presented.
Ms. Schlesinger / Second Mr. Trevarthen
Adopted

ROSTERED MINISTER ANNIVERSARIES

15 Years

- Dana Hendershot
- Jeff Bonn
- Teresa Foster

35 Years

- David Hueter
- Douglas Ogden
- Michael Conklin

50 Years

- Wilson Fleming

60 Years

- Paul Kehnle
- Rodney Hill

65 Years

- Rodney Hokenson

CONGREGATION ANNIVERSARIES

25 years

- Bread of Life, Hudsonville
- Good Shepherd, Holland
- Christ United, Dewitt

125 years

- St Paul, Greenville

150 years

- Bethlehem, Grand Rapids
- Settlement, Gowen
- Grace, Alpena
- St Peter, Unionville