



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

Dear Friends in Christ,

Today, Governor Whitmer signed an executive order directing Michiganders to stay at home unless they are members of the critical infrastructure workforce, performing tasks necessary to their health, such as going to the hospital or grocery store, or exercising. If going outside for one of these reasons, people are directed to remain at least six feet from one another. This order begins tomorrow, March 24, and lasts for at least three weeks.

Given this order, I, again, implore congregations to suspend all in-person worship services and weekly in-person gatherings until May 10. This includes weddings, funerals, memorial services, non-emergency baptisms, and Holy Week and Easter services. I do not have the authority to suspend in-person worship in our congregations; however, the ELCA and I do not support civil disobedience and congregations who choose to continue in-person worship will need to help me understand their decision.

Many of our congregations are already using online streaming and video services for worship services, Sunday school, and other gatherings. As we move forward, we invite you to use each other as resources and reach out if you need assistance. We have also compiled additional [resources on our website](#).

As we adjust to this new way of living, know that you are surrounded by God's love and held in my prayers.

God, our peace and our strength, we pray for our nation and the world as we face new uncertainties around coronavirus. Protect the most vulnerable among us, especially all who are currently sick or in isolation. Grant wisdom, patience, and clarity to health care workers, especially as their work caring for others puts them at great risk. Guide us as we consider how best to prepare and respond in our families, congregations, workplaces, and communities. Give us courage to face these days not with fear but with compassion, concern, and acts of service, trusting that you abide with us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

-ELCA Prayers for Times of Public Health Concerns

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

Information & Resources

Take One Daily with Bishop Satterlee

- Everyday Bishop Satterlee is offering a greeting and prayer at 4pm ET.
- Watch today's message discussing Gov. Whitmer's Executive Order.
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#) to see all the videos.

Upcoming Synod Events

- **March 19-20:** Lenten Preaching Retreat - *Cancelled*
- **April 23:** Synod Boundaries Workshop - *Cancelled*
- **May 14-16:** Synod Assembly - *Cancelled*
- Registration fees for these events are in the process of being refunded. If you submitted a credit card payment, it will be refunded to your card. If you submitted a check, you will be issued a refund check. Please allow 2-3 weeks for processing.
- For Synod Assembly, all hotel rooms at the Comfort Inn & Suites and the Fairfield Inn have been automatically cancelled. If you booked at another hotel, please verify the status of your room directly with your hotel. If you have any questions about refunds, please contact Ann Stavros at annstavros@mittensynod.org.

Opportunities for Online Worship

- Many congregations are hosting weekly worship via live stream on Facebook. Check with your congregation or [follow us](#) for more information.
- Bishop Satterlee will be preaching for Psalm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter on his [YouTube channel](#). We will announce when the videos are posted.
- If you are looking to stream your worship service, [view additional resources](#).

Maintaining Congregational Stewardship

During this time, please be mindful of your ongoing stewardship with your congregation. Remember that day-to-day operation of our churches often relies on the ongoing gifts from the congregation.

- Consider setting up automatic withdrawals to be sent to the church.
- Consider using an online donation system.
- Consider mailing in your donations (being mindful of your procedures for money-handling).
- If you are looking to set up online giving, the ELCA has a [list of preferred vendors](#).

Resources for Outreach Ministries

Based on current CDC Guidelines, we recommend:

- No more than ten people gathered for preparation or distribution at any time.
- Avoid the use of the church building for food preparation or distribution.
- Distribution should be "curb-side" only.
- Consider delivering goods, rather than having a central point of group distribution.

COVID-19 Updates and Resources

We will continue to post updates and resources on the [Coronavirus Resources page of our website](#).