



## North/West Lower Michigan Synod

2900 N. Waverly Rd.  
Lansing, MI 48906

517-321-5066

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## We Are All Shepherds

As I submit this newsletter article, I anticipate the arrival of 40 rostered ministers and friends at the Lansing office for Christmas worship, lunch, and the installation of Pastor Rosanne Anderson as Assistant to the Bishop. I am praying that the weather cooperates so everyone can come; by the time you read this article, you will know how effective my prayers are. If you were on hand for the celebration on Wednesday, you need not read further because you heard what I have to say in greater detail.

I am nervous about people regarding pastors, deacons, and bishops— and especially me—as shepherds. I hear Jeremiah prophesying, “Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord” (23:2). I’m mindful that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11-18), and that I am a hired hand who has once or twice run away when the wolf comes. Then, this Christmas, because of Pastor Rosanne’s installation, I re-met the shepherds in Luke’s account of Jesus’ birth. And it occurred to me that we are all shepherds.

As Luke tells the story, the shepherds receive enormous good news that God has done and is doing something great. They head off to check it out and, when they find that what they’ve been told is true, they inform the holy family—Mary and Joseph. They tell the very people who received God’s promise that God has and is fulfilling it. Mary must’ve needed to hear it, because Luke tells us she pondered the shepherds’ words in her heart.

Telling people who have received God’s promise that God has and is fulfilling it is so very different from convincing and converting; it is celebrating and ensuring. It is what our children do in their Christmas plays. They tell us, who have received God’s promise, that God is and will fulfill God’s promise. All of us who have been born into the life of Christ through baptism can tell someone who has received God’s promise that God has and is keeping it. In this way, we are all shepherds.

In the 10 days remaining in Advent, perhaps we might ask God to send an angel to reveal to us the one to whom God would have us declare this good news of great joy this Christmas. “God is keeping God’s promise to you, and here is how I see it.” As much as we might want it to be in the glorious appearance of a multitude of the heavenly host, I suspect we will have better luck looking in places like swaddling clothes and a manger. God keeping God’s promise in the ordinariness of life is the good news of Christmas. Telling people when we see it is the joy of being a shepherd. In Christ, we are all shepherds.

Merry Christmas!

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

### Synod Finances as of November 30, 2019

	Current Year		Prior Year	
	November	Year to Date	November	Year to Date
<b>Revenue</b>				
Mission Support	89,262	1,108,550	113,852	1,120,695
Other	4,122	129,762	9,180	115,880
<b>Total</b>	<b>93,384</b>	<b>1,238,312</b>	<b>123,032</b>	<b>1,236,575</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Churchwide Proportionate Share	44,631	554,275	56,909	560,347
Other	67,084	733,433	75,014	787,646
<b>Total</b>	<b>111,715</b>	<b>1,287,708</b>	<b>131,923</b>	<b>1,347,993</b>
<b>Net Assets Released from Restriction</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>1,497</b>
<b>Net Change to Fund Balance</b>	<b>(18,331)</b>	<b>(49,396)</b>	<b>(8,550)</b>	<b>(109,921)</b>

### ELMM Assisting Minister Training

Session I: February 7-8, 2020  
Session II: March 13-14, 2020

Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry announces Assisting Minister Training with Bishop Satterlee. Luther believed and Lutherans confess that all the baptized exercise an active, even "priestly" role in worship.

This course provides the theology behind the role of assisting minister and gives participants an opportunity to learn the appropriate skills, including setting and clearing the table, writing the intercessory prayers, and other responsibilities of the assisting minister.

Learn More: <https://www.elmm.org>

### Tips for Church Lawns from the Environmental Stewardship Task Force

December may seem like the wrong time to worry about caring for your church's lawn but it is the time that planning takes place. So here are a few ideas that might grow on you!

1. Consider an electric mower. 800 million gallons of gas are used to run lawn mowers each year. Gas-powered mowers emit 11 times more pollution than a new car. Push mowers would be even better. Keep blades sharp on whatever mower you use.
2. Leave the grass 3 1/2 inches tall. More photosynthesis makes for healthier plants that are less susceptible to disease and have less need for chemicals.
3. Plan less grass. An outdoor activity area might get neighbors involved.
4. Don't bag clippings. Use them as mulch. This keeps clippings out of landfills and helps fertilize.
5. Plant trees. They clean air and absorb CO2 to combat global warming.
6. Choose native plant species. They resist many diseases and provide habitat for wildlife and pollinators needed for food crops and fruit trees.
7. Get or make a bat house. Bats eat mosquitos. Find plans at [nwf.org](http://nwf.org)
8. Use a rain gauge and aim for 1 inch of rain or watering a week. Water deeply but infrequently. Use a low angle sprinkler, not an oscillating type to cut evaporation.

### Upcoming Events

January 31- February 3	Extravaganza 2020	Anaheim, CA	Learn More: <a href="https://bit.ly/2ruaiQk">https://bit.ly/2ruaiQk</a>
February 7-8	ELMM Retreat: Assisting Minister Training		Learn More: <a href="http://elmm.org">elmm.org</a>
February 11-13	Ignite the Church Conference	Orlando, FL	Learn More: <a href="https://bit.ly/2NDce1C">https://bit.ly/2NDce1C</a>

**The Synod Office will be closed December 24, 2019 to January 2, 2020. We wish you a joyous Christmas and a blessed New Year!**

## Congregations in Transition

Note: We include congregations on the public list when the called pastor or rostered leader completes her or his ministry in the congregation. Thus, congregations in which the pastor has resigned but is still serving are not listed here. We also do not post calls that are accepted until Bishop Satterlee signs the Letter of Call.

<b>Bay Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Emily Olsen, Dean</b>	<b>Kalamazoo Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Kjersten Priddy, Dean</b>
Faith/Saginaw	Supply Pastors/Awaiting Additional Candidate	<b>Stony Lake Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Sarah Samuelson, Dean</b>
Hope/Marlette (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Interviewing	<b>Sunrise Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean</b>
<b>Capital Area Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean</b>	Peace/Gaylord	Supply Pastors/Awaiting Additional Candidates
Calvary/Lansing (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	<b>Traverse Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Scott Torkko, Dean</b>
St. Paul/East Lansing	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	Messiah/Roscommon	Seeking Regular Supply Pastor
Grace/Lansing	John Schleicher, Contract Pastor/Awaiting Candidate/Exploring Mission Partnership		
Peace/Charlotte	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP		
<b>Greater Grand Rapids Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean</b>		
Peace/Holland (part-time)	Clay Bates, Contracted through December/Congregational Meeting 12/15		
Bread of Life/Hudsonville	Paul Krupinski retiring Dec. 29		