



## North/West Lower Michigan Synod

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## Synod Assembly

Plans are well underway for our 2020 Synod Assembly. In fact, registration is open! We assemble May 14-16 in Mount Pleasant to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in the ELCA and our predecessor church bodies. We gather under the theme, derived from Psalm 68:11, "Great is the Company of Those who Bore the Tidings, Great is the Company of the Women!"

We are excited to welcome three special guests to be with us: Dr. Joy Schroeder of Trinity Lutheran Seminary; The Rev. Claire Burkat, Bishop (retired), Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; and The Rev. Sandra L. Chrostowski, Director of DEM Relationships from our churchwide office. Each will preach and deliver a keynote address.

On Friday evening, we will have a festive service of Holy Communion led entirely by women. All women of our Synod who are pastors and deacons are invited to vest and process. We invite all to worship with us, even if you are not planning on attending the rest of the assembly. A reception will follow the service.

To accommodate Friday evening worship, we have made some changes in the assembly schedule. First, we've included a block of free time before worship so that people can go out to dinner on their own. I received this suggestion for several years and this change allows us to reduce the cost of registration. Second, recognitions and anniversaries, normally held Friday evening after dinner, will occur following lunch on Friday.

Pre-assembly work on your part involves nominations and resolutions. The chairs of the nominations and resolutions committees are preparing materials to assist you, which will be available on the Assembly page of the Synod website. If you are interested in being nominated or have any questions about nominations, please contact Pastor Jessica Hahn, Chair of the Nominations Committee. If you would like to bring a resolution or memorial to our assembly, or if you would like to know the difference between a resolution and a memorial, please contact Pastor Justin Walker, Chair of the Resolutions Committee.

At the end of this month, we will assemble as a church in a different way. In words borrowed from St. Matthew, we will "...go into [our] room, close the door, and pray to [our] Father, who is unseen" (6:6). Lent begins February 26. As I reflect on the start of the verse: "But whenever you pray..." (Matthew 6:6), I have come to appreciate the word "you" as being addressed to both the Christian community, and the individual. Lent is a season in which Christian communities go into the room together and renew their faith together.

So, what are you doing for Lent? More words from Matthew and Jesus: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous" (5:44-45). As I find myself and others exhausted by divisions in our congregations, our church, our government, and our nation, I'm going to spend Lent attending to Jesus' words about loving enemies and praying for persecutors into practice. I invite you to join me. Perhaps we will emerge on Easter better witnesses to the possibility and good news of resurrection.

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



## North/West Lower Michigan Assembly 2020

May 14-16, 2020  
Comfort Inn & Suites, Mt. Pleasant

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will meet in Assembly May 14-16, 2020 at the Comfort Inn and Suites and Conference Center in Mt. Pleasant, MI.

The theme for this year's Assembly is derived from Psalm 68:11: "Great is the Company of the Those who Bore the Tidings, Great is the Company of the Women!"

### Registration

Registration is now open! Early Bird Registration will conclude on April 23rd. The final day to register for the Assembly is May 3rd. Register Now: <https://bit.ly/2wiLygu>

Hotel reservations must be made separately. Contact the Comfort Inn at 989-772-400 or the Fairfield Inn at 989-775-5000. Mention the group name North/West Lower Michigan Synod for a \$99 rate for King or Queen room. Hotel reservations must be made by April 23, 2020 for discount.

### Table Display Registration

Display tables are available to rent for \$55 per table (with elective and one outlet) or \$40 per table (without electric outlet). Table registration forms must be submitted by April 15, 2020.

Register Now: <https://bit.ly/2wiLygu>

### Resolutions and Memorials

The time has come to submit resolutions for consideration at the 2020 Synod Assembly. Resolutions address matters at the synod level or may be formed as requests from synods to the ELCA Church Council or units or offices of the churchwide organization. Memorials address broad policy issues and are passed by the Synod Assembly for consideration by the Churchwide Assembly.

Resolutions and memorials may be submitted by a voting member of the upcoming Synod Assembly, a member of a North/West Lower Michigan Synod Committee, or a member or an agent of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. Each proposed resolution must include the names of at least 25 confirmed members of the Synod who support consideration by the upcoming Synod Assembly.

More information is available on the Synod website: <https://bit.ly/2wiLygu>. Resolutions and memorials must be submitted electronically by March 20, 2020 to [annstavros@mittensynod.org](mailto:annstavros@mittensynod.org).

### Nominations for Synod Council

We are seeking nominations for nine positions on Synod Council for elections at the 2020 Synod Assembly. A list of open positions and information about the responsibilities of Synod Council members are now available on the Synod website: <https://bit.ly/2wiLygu>. The deadline to submit nominations is March 31, 2020.

For more information about Synod Assembly, visit the Assembly page of the Synod website: <https://bit.ly/2If29Ho>

## The Heart of the Church

Jesus' ministry was among people. He visited the synagogue, walked along the beach, interacted with fishermen, went to the community well, gathered people on a hillside, and walked the streets of town after town. Jesus built relationships. I cannot recall a single bible story where Jesus remained inside his office or church building and waited for people to show up.

As I visit congregations, I hear many lamenting that there are no new people, no kids, and no young adults. When I ask what they are doing for evangelism, they either have a blank stare or tell me they contribute to the local food pantry in town. Congregations that are growing tell me they are building relationships inside and especially outside the church. That is the number one way to remain vital and grow.

The ELCA has been working together with many other mainline denominations to see what congregations are doing to remain vital and grow. It is about relationships. Building relationships with people and in those relationships, sharing faith and being invitational. Not invitational just to church, but inviting friends, family, colleagues, classmates, and neighbors into conversations about faith and inviting people into a relationship with Jesus.

One of the chief ways congregations are building relationships is Evangelical Outreach. That is, looking for opportunities to build relationships, talk about faith, and be invitational as the priority in the church's outreach ministry. Giving to a food pantry is a start, an even better idea is to work at the food pantry, get to know the clients, and find ways to sit and listen to them. From there, invite them into a relationship with you, Jesus, and the church. Community meals, clothing giveaways, personal needs pantries, and baby pantries are places where the church can build relationships and invite people.

There is no magic box that congregations can order from Amazon that will magically restore a robust evangelism program to your congregation. It takes listening, innovation, and trial and error to see what your community needs and how the church can show up.

Many will say: "We don't have money for new ideas". Well, we have an answer for that. Many years ago a generous family gave some endowment funds to the Synod so that we could give outreach grants to congregations. Grants range from \$2,000-\$4,000 and are for innovative ideas about how to reach new people, engage the community, and build relationships. Grants are usually not used to fund staff salaries, building renovations, or programs that do not have a relational component.

Download the Grant Application: <https://bit.ly/2Sses6t>

Talk with me if you have an idea!

The Rev. David E. Sprang  
Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission

## St. Croix Mission Trip May 22-30, 2020

Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), a program of Lutheran Social Services of the Virgin Islands is seeking Lutheran construction teams of 10 to 20 members to assist with rebuilding hurricane damaged homes on the island of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. The Rev. David E. Sprang will be leading a group from our Synod May 22-30, 2020 to assist in repairing and replacing roofs. It is best if teams have a mix of a few people with good construction skills; several people who are comfortable with using tools and being on roofs, and volunteers without much construction experience to be helping hands.

If you are interested in joining this group, contact the Rev. David E. Sprang at [revdavidsprang@gmail.com](mailto:revdavidsprang@gmail.com).

Learn More: <https://bit.ly/2vvlNcu>

## Anti-Racism Seminar

### Part One

In recent years, the North/West Lower Michigan Synod has experienced some struggles defining on-going ways to deal with the complexities of racism and racial justice. We are part of a church that is predominately white. We are living at a time in our nation where we are witnessing an alarming resurgence of violence and white supremacy. All of us live in a world in which there are defined systems of privilege that benefit certain groups in society and keep other groups hostage. A question for us as Christians seeking to be faithful witnesses of the Gospel is "how do we become more effective agents of structural change so that the living out of racial justice becomes deeply imprinted upon our hearts and the very nature of our being?"

I am privileged to be participating in a cohort group entitled "Doing Our Own Work: An Anti-Racism Seminar for White People." It is a program sponsored by Allies for Change. We are spending three weekends, one in January, February and March, exploring the way in which we can challenge the deeply embedded beliefs and structures in our society that perpetuate racism.

The seminar is focusing on the imperative that those of us who are white must do the deep work required to claim and embody an anti-racist identity, understand the privilege we carry, and interrupt racism where we live, work, pray, study and volunteer. Doing Our Own Work is intended to help white people move through places where we often get stuck, so that we can step up with courage, clarity, humility and compassion to participate in movements led by people of color and help move other white people to greater anti-racist awareness and action. Doing Our Own Work is designed as a supplement to, not a substitute for, contexts where people of diverse races discuss and strategize together how racism can be challenged and dismantled.

During our first weekend together in January, we explored the understanding of what it means to be white in America and how the nature of structural power and privilege is often invisible to those who have that power and privilege. As part of focusing on the pervasiveness of racism and privilege, we looked extensively at the historical roots of racism and resistance to racism. We also began to explore the reality that the four levels of racism (personal, interpersonal, institutional, cultural) must be dismantled collectively for our racial justice work to truly be productive.

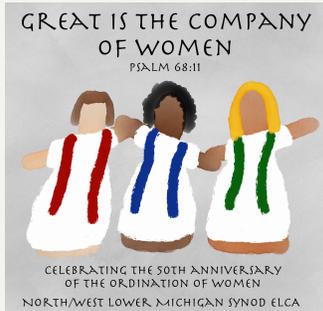
Our cohort group was divided into smaller working groups of five. The working groups are meeting individually for continued study prior to our gathering in February.

In next month's newsletter Part Two will reflect on such areas as becoming trustworthy white allies and how we develop authentic relationships across differences. I will be eager to share new and on-going insights.

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.  
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.  
Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.  
Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.  
(Martin Luther King, Jr.)

The Rev. Rosanne M. Anderson  
Assistant to the Bishop

## Women's Ordination Jubilee 2020



In 2020, the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, as well as the rest of the ELCA, will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women. To recognize this anniversary, our synod will be hosting two events and two projects. The first event will be part of our annual Synod Assembly (May 14-16, 2020) and will feature keynote speakers and worship. The second event (September 19, 2020) will be an education day with Dr. Karoline Lewis, Professor of Homiletics at Luther Seminary and will conclude with a gala dinner.

Learn More: <https://bit.ly/38zQPvA>

The projects include a video that will share the stories of some of the ordained women in our Synod and a digital collection of sermons written by women from across the synod. All rostered women are invited to submit a sermon for publication. The sermons will be based on the Revised Common Lectionary, complementary series for Year B (2020-2021). The goal is to have the broadest diversity of voices across all texts. Texts are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Learn More: <https://bit.ly/37m1kUE>

## No Plastics for Lent

ELCA Young Adults and ELCA Advocacy

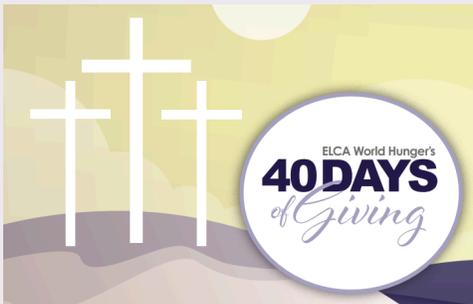
ELCA Young Adults and ELCA Advocacy are giving up plastics (or adopting other sustainability practices) for Lent!

Join us:

1. Use the hashtag #NoPlasticsforLent on social media to show us how care for creation is a part of your Lenten practice.
2. Follow ELCA Young Adults on social media or subscribe to their blog at [elca.org/youngadults](http://elca.org/youngadults) for weekly devotional reflections and discussion starters from young people across the country starting February 17!
3. Invite others to be part of this initiative!



## 40 Days of Giving: ELCA World Hunger



The ELCA World Hunger's 40 Day's of Giving will continue this Lent! Together we'll experience how the grace of Christ moves us to engage in transformative works of love around the world through ELCA World Hunger as God calls us into the ministry of hope, liberation, and restoration.

This year, ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving will focus on hope. Resource packets have been mailed to congregations. Additional packets can be ordered or downloaded from the ELCA website.

Learn More: <https://community.elca.org/40days>

### Synod Finances as of January 31, 2020

	Current Year		Prior Year	
	January	Year to Date	January	Year to Date
Revenue				
Mission Support*	148,158	1,360,354	107,636	1,370,371
Other	9,432	144,228	32,159	160,194
Total	157,590	1,504,582	139,795	1,530,565
Expenses				
Churchwide Proportionate Share	74,079	680,177	53,818	684,664
Other	55,714	857,234	80,571	928,305
Total	129,793	1,537,411	134,389	1,612,969
Net Assets Released from Restriction	81,028	81,028	0	1,497
Net Change to Fund Balance	108,825	48,199	5,406	(80,907)

\* reflects contributions received in the synod office through 2/6/20 AND labelled Jan 2020 or earlier.

### Annual Reports for Rostered Ministers

The 2019 Annual Rostered Minister Report forms are now available!

All rostered ministers are expected to complete and return a report to Bishop Satterlee.

Learn More: <https://bit.ly/37nQPA8>

### "Rekindle the Gift within You": Rostered Ministers Gathering

All ELCA Rostered Ministers are invited to the ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering July 20-23, 2020 in Phoenix, AZ.

Let this gathering be an opportunity to remember, reclaim, rekindle, and revive yourself. Gathering with colleagues from across the church for fellowship, renewal, continuing education, worship, and more!

Registration is now open!

Learn More: [elca.org/rmg](http://elca.org/rmg)

### Earth Day 2020

This year, Earth Day turns 50! Although only one calendar day is devoted to celebrating the common home God entrusted to us, congregations across the country are working to restore and protect earthly gifts throughout the year. Find out how you can affirm your care for the earth and night and take steps to incorporate creation care into the identity of and mission of your congregation.

Learn More: <https://bit.ly/2SErGM4>

### Upcoming Events

March 1-4	Silent Directed Retreat	Dewitt, M	Learn More: <a href="https://bit.ly/2OVuvrn">https://bit.ly/2OVuvrn</a>
March 6-7	Region 6 Discernment Retreat	Bowling Green, OH	Learn More: <a href="https://bit.ly/2HlDIoF">https://bit.ly/2HlDIoF</a>
March 13-14	ELMM Retreat: Assisting Minister		Learn More: <a href="http://elmm.org">elmm.org</a>
March 19-20	Lenten Retreat: Reflections on Preaching	Dewitt, MI	Learn More: <a href="https://bit.ly/38tMuwH">https://bit.ly/38tMuwH</a>

## 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/Interviewing	<b>Stony Lake Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Sarah Samuelson, Dean</b>
Hope/Marlette (part-time)	Supply Pastors/CALL ACCEPTED: Rev. Neil Brady (NWOH)	<b>Sunrise Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean</b>
		Peace/Gaylord	Supply Pastors/Interviewing
<b>Capital Area Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean</b>	<b>Traverse Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Scott Torkko, Dean</b>
Calvary/Lansing (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	Messiah/Roscommon	Supply Pastors/CALL ACCEPTED: Rev. Jeff Bonn, Installation 3/15/20
St. Paul/East Lansing	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	St. Paul/Reed City	Matt Deames, Intentional Interim/Interviewing
Grace/Lansing	John Schleicher, Contract Pastor/Interviewing		
Peace/Charlotte	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP		
<b>Greater Grand Rapids Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean</b>		
Bread of Life/Hudsonville	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP		