



North/West Lower Michigan Synod

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Studying Racial Justice?

As a professor planning preaching courses, I struggled with the same three issues every semester. First, students brought different levels of experience to preaching class. Some students came with backgrounds in speech and drama; other students had never spoken in public. Second, I could not assign everything I thought it would be good for students to read; there was just too much, and I knew students wouldn't read everything I assigned anyway. So what should I assign my students to read? Third, you can't learn to preach by reading. Eventually, you have to write a sermon, step into the pulpit, and open your mouth.

These same three issues come to visit me as I consider how best to respond as a Synod to issues of racial justice. First, some among us have actively engaged the reality of racism for decades; others among us are only beginning to understand that racism is systemic. Second, one book will not serve us all. Third, eventually –urgently– we need to be about more than reading books.

Both Pastor Rosanne Anderson and members of University Lutheran Church speak highly of a program that helped them understand systemic racism. I am working steadily to provide this kind of training and experience in every conference in our Synod. We are looking for the right people to do the training and, regrettably, it appears we need to wait until people can come together in person.

It is important that we wait actively. We have shared a variety of resources on our website (<https://www.mittensynod.org/racial-justice-resources/>) to assist in learning about and taking action against racial injustice. We have also received recommendations for three books that individuals could read and groups could study and discuss. The books are Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race (Debbie Irving); White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism (Robin D'Angelo); and Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US (Lenny Duncan). I find myself thinking about these books as introductory, intermediate, and advanced studies, probably because linear progression is a way I learn.

Since October, I have studied the Holy Spirit. I started with articles and ended with complex volumes of theology. I then wrote a book chapter on the Holy Spirit. I even wrote a book chapter on the Holy Spirit's role in preaching. In a few months, I went from not knowing much to learning a lot to doing more than reading. I invite you, individually and in groups, to be on such a journey as we confront racial injustice. Even as I extend the invitation, I am quick to add that lives precious to Jesus depend upon our participating in this reconciling work of God in Jesus Christ.

Peace,

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

Racial Justice

Thanks to all those who participated in the recent **Learning With the Bishop** 3-week seminar entitled "A Racial Justice Primer: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." Many participants expressed their gratitude for the experience as their understanding and awareness of systemic racism and white supremacy was broadened. After the seminar was completed, the participants spent several weeks discussing the book [Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race](#) by Debbie Irving.

New Learning Opportunity

Beginning on Tuesday, August 4, we invite all those interested in addressing racial justice to join in a Zoom discussion of the book [White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#) by Robin Diangelo. We will gather on the four Tuesdays of August from 1:00-2:00 p.m. The book is available in print, kindle and audiobook forms from Amazon. We will discuss the first three chapters of the book on August 1.

Register Now: <https://bit.ly/2Zn5pXK>

Rev. Rosanne M. Anderson
Assistant to the Bishop

Bringing Polarities into Balance: Virtual Autumn Leadership Event

October 26-27, 2020

It is difficult to move forward faithfully when life seems to be reduced to one choice between opposing sides. Living in between pre-COVID and post-COVID times (called liminal space), has polarized people more than ever and continues to deepen the divide in society itself. One way forward is to learn to balance opposites in healthy ways for ourselves, our churches, and our society. This retreat will teach tools to manage polarities and open paths for the future that create a variety of choices. Leading to a faith-grounded sanity necessary for a thriving church and its surrounding communities. Living with and more often than or gives us new perspectives for the emerging future; we can move between opposites without compromising our values, while at the same time widening our scope of possibilities.

Rostered Ministers in the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, and Northern Great Lakes Synod are invited to attend this two day virtual learning event featuring presentations from Lisa Withrow. This event will take place via Zoom on October 26-27, 2020.

Lisa Withrow is an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church, a former professor of church leadership, and currently serves as a coach and consultant for churches, non-profits, and small businesses in the areas of leadership and team development, strategic visioning, and conflict management.

Thanks to a generous gift to the Bishop's Teaching Fund from Jim and Christine Allen, we are able to offer this learning event for a \$5.00 registration fee. To attend, submit the registration form and payment by Monday, October 19, 2020. Registered participants will be emailed a link to the Zoom meeting the evening before the event. This event is planned to be highly participatory, making recording it unworkable.

Register Now: <https://bit.ly/32cmup9>

*During
This Time*

Mission in the Mitten

This series on Mission in the Mitten explores how pastors around the Synod are growing and adapting to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Read the latest installment featuring Rev. Jennifer Michael: <https://bit.ly/3fuhuQH>

Making a Difference

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls his disciples and all listeners to be salt, light, and leaven. Jesus calls us to make a difference. To make a difference in our families, communities, and in the world. In early March as the COVID-19 Pandemic began to creep its way across the country, everything began to shut down. We were ordered to shelter in place. Businesses closed and in-person worship services ceased. But many congregations didn't stop being "the church". These congregations kept being salt, light, and leaven to their communities and kept making a difference.

As the pandemic continued, Lutheran Disaster Response made funds available and the ELCA established the COVID-19 Response Fund, thinking they would collect a few hundred thousand dollars to send to congregations stepping up to help their communities. As of this writing, over \$1.5 million has been collected.

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod applied for funds to support our congregations in their work from both the ELCA COVID-19 Fund and Lutheran Disaster Response. We have received \$17,500 from the COVID-19 Fund and \$20,000 from Lutheran Disaster Response. We quickly established a grant application and have received 20 applications from congregations stepping up to help their communities during this pandemic. So far, we have distributed \$23,500.

Here are more stories from congregations who are serving their communities in extra ways:

- Faith, Grand Rapids participates in a community food bank on the north side that fed 1,773 clients in the past three months.
- Hope, Rhodes has sponsored an emergency food truck distribution from the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan for the flood victims on the east side of Gladwin County isolated by the wash out of bridges.
- Messiah, Bay City is assisting the Red Cross is preparing meals for those in temporary housing because of flooding.



From May 1 through June 30, congregations in the Mitten Synod assisted an average of **820 people per week** and provided an extra **1,457 volunteer hours per week**.

As we continue to live through this pandemic, we are still making a difference as a church. We are also wearing masks, practicing social distancing, worshiping online, in parking lots, church lawns, and picnic pavilions. We do this to protect our neighbors and communities and to keep the virus from spreading. We are salt and light to our communities! We are the face of Jesus to our neighbors!

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

Introducing Women Clergy: Shout Out!

This new series on Mission in the Mitten raises up the women clergy of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod.

Read the first installment: <https://bit.ly/2WlUxaV>

MISSION IN THE MITTEN

**WOMEN
CLERGY:
SHOUT OUT!**

Synod Disaster Response: Mid-Michigan Flooding

The Mid-Michigan Flood Disaster Response is now moving into Long Range Recovery. Midland, Gladwin, and Saginaw counties have all set up their Long Range Recovery Groups. Most of the damage is located in Gladwin and Midland counties. The muck out in these areas has been completed, temporary shelters are closing, and Flood Resource centers are being consolidated. Most homes have received mold remediation spray and many are working on their own to rebuild.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief is taking the lead in Gladwin, Midland, and Saginaw Counties. Case managers will begin soon as the rebuilding process begins. The Synod congregations in the area are working to support flood victims in a variety of ways including home repairs, emergency food, and cooperating with other congregations to assist those in need. Information about scheduling work groups to come in from outside the area to assist in rebuilding will be available soon.

Additional updates can be found on the Synod website: <https://bit.ly/32gq9SV>

We are continuing to collect funds for recovery efforts through the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Disaster Relief Fund. Donations to this fund are being used to supply food and building materials.

Donate: <https://mittensynod.org/donate>

Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry Virtual Fall Events

The Writings - September 18-19, 2020

Professor George Heider

The third major section of the Jewish Scriptures (after the Torah and the Prophets) is "the Writings", a grab-bag of books that either didn't fit logically into the first two categories (like "wisdom literature") or were likely among the last written. Yet in this bag are some of the most important books in the Christian Old Testament (like Psalms) and some of the most beloved (like Ruth and Esther). We will look at a section of these books and consider their impact on both the Jewish and Christian traditions.

The Gospel of Mark - October 9-10, 2020

Professor Wally Taylor

In the Gospel of Mark, we are always "on the way". But on the way to where? We will explore that question as we survey the gospel and its major themes: good news, kingdom of God, Son of God, passion predictions, misunderstanding disciples, status degradation, and the cross.

Community Catalyst Training - Part I - October 3, 2020 - Part II - October 31, 2020

Pastor David Sprang

Jesus did his ministry in the community. He went to the synagogue on Sabbath, but most of the time he was out with people. And for much of that time, it was people on the margins, people left out, and people shunned. The church as Community Catalyst is learning how to listen to the community, accompany them on their road of life, and help them in need. It means being Jesus' hands and feet in the neighborhood that hears the church bells. This course will encourage congregational leaders to engage their community, give some tools to help listen, and help the congregation use its assets to become stronger partners with its neighbors.

The Gospel of Matthew - November 6-7, 2020

Professor Wally Taylor

In the Gospel of Matthew, we meet a Jesus who is the great teacher. We will delve into his teachings in the Sermon on the Mount and study who Jesus calls us to be as disciples. We will also see how Matthew connects Jesus with the past (chapters 1-2) and the future (chapter 28).

All events will be held via Zoom. Learn More and Register: <https://elmm.org>

Synod Finances as of June 30, 2020

	Current Year		Prior Year	
	June	Year to Date	June	Year to Date
Revenue				
Mission Support	121,704	492,182	99,646	569,380
Other	7,853	33,883	2,877	96,252
Total	129,557	526,065	102,523	665,632
Expenses				
Churchwide Proportionate Share	60,852	246,091	49,823	284,690
Other	52,558	300,908	75,466	407,948
Total	113,410	546,999	125,289	692,638
Net Assets Released from Restriction	0	0	0	0
Net Change to Fund Balance	16,147	(20,934)	(22,766)	(27,006)

ELCA Growing Young

The ELCA Faith Formation Team and the Fuller Youth Institute are hosting the 2020 ELCA Growing Young Train the Trainer Virtual Gathering on August 10-11, 2020. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/3fwRpRa>

U.S. Army Chaplain Recruiting Webinar

On July 17 at 10:30am ET, U.S. Army North Central Chaplain Recruiting will be hosting a live webinar for those interested in becoming an Army Chaplain. The webinar will answer questions about Army Chaplaincy, the requirements and the process. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/38WPgeQ>

Synod Staff Video Sermons for Weekly Worship

For the foreseeable future, Bishop Satterlee, Pastor Rosanne Anderson, and Pastor David Sprang will be recording sermons for congregations to use as part of their weekly virtual worship services.

Rostered Ministers are invited to sign up to receive the sermons in advance. Sermon videos will be emailed each Wednesday afternoon.

The sermons will be publicly released via our YouTube channel on Sunday afternoons.

Rostered Minister Sign-Up:
<https://forms.gle/EHikg4HYPuY7r1do6>

If you have additional questions, contact:
communications@mittensynod.org

Watch Sermon Videos:
<https://bit.ly/2LsuSHN>

Coronavirus Resources

We continue to post updates and resources pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic on our website.

New resources include information about the state recommendations for school reopening, mask wearing, and things congregational leaders should consider as they think about reopening and returning to church buildings.

Learn More:
<https://bit.ly/2MPx4to>

Upcoming Events

July 17	U.S. Army Chaplain Recruiting Webinar	Online	Learn More: https://bit.ly/38WPgeQ
July 18	Preparing for Sunday School Zoom Conversation with Bishop Satterlee	Zoom	Learn More: https://bit.ly/32faFlu
August 1	generosity365 Stewardship Event	Online	Learn More: https://bit.ly/2CwcyMu
August 4	Racial Justice Book Discussion	Zoom	Learn More: https://bit.ly/38U9fLg
August 10-11	ELCA Growing Young Webinar	Online	Learn More: https://bit.ly/3fwRpRa

Due to the current government restrictions and recommendations on in-person gatherings, many upcoming events have been cancelled or postponed. Please check with the event's organizer for more information.

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.

Bay Conference	Rev. Emily Olsen, Dean	Kalamazoo Conference	Rev. Kjersten Sullivan, Dean
Hope/Marlette (part-time)	CALL ACCEPTED: Rev. Neil Brady (NWOH). Installation TBD.	St. John/Baroda	Rev. James Morgan, Stated Supply/Determining Pastoral Needs
Capital Area Conference	Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean	Stony Lake Conference	Rev. Sarah Samuelson, Dean
Calvary/Lansing (part-time)	Pastoral Team: Rev. John Schleicher, Rev. Rick McKenzie, Rev. Jim Couser/Preparing MSP	Sunrise Conference	Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean
St. Paul/East Lansing	CONTRACT ACCEPTED: Rev. Carl Ballard/Congregational Vote TBD.	Peace/Gaylord	Contracted with Episcopal Priest in Gaylord/Interviewing
Grace/Lansing	CALL ACCEPTED: Rev. Christin Fawcett. Installation TBD.	Traverse Conference	Rev. Scott Torkko, Dean
Peace/Charlotte	Supply Pastors/Interviewing	Messiah/Roscommon	CALL ACCEPTED: Rev. Jeff Bonn, Installation TBD.
All Saints/Mason	Re-organizing	St. Paul/Reed City	Rev. Matt Deames, Intentional Interim/CALL ACCEPTED: Rev. Kara Shaw (A-OK), Transitional Pastor. Congregational Vote TBD.
Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean	Augustana/Tustin	Supply Pastors/Awaiting a Candidate
Bread of Life/Hudsonville	Katherine Van Valkenburg, Transitional Pastor. Ordination 7/25. Congregational Vote TBD.		
Bethlehem/Grand Rapids	Rev. Karsten Voskuil (RCA), Service of Invitation to Extended Service TBD.		