



**North/West Lower
Michigan Synod**

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Baked Beans

On the Fourth of July, Cathy and I enjoyed a BBQ at our cabin. As I sat eating the baked beans she made from her longstanding recipe, I was reminded that we all have particular recipes and ways of celebrating, interacting, and relating to one another and the world. This reminder was particularly poignant as we celebrate and welcome Pastor Chrisy Bright as Assistant to the Bishop and navigate new relationships in our shared ministry.

Just like our longstanding recipes, we too are shaped by our upbringing, location, family, and other life experiences. At her installation, Pastor Bright identified herself as a child of this synod. She was raised on this synod's "recipes" for being church and ways of relating to one another and the world. Pastor Bright's upbringing and ministry as the dean of the Sunrise Conference afford her our trust and confidence, and, thankfully from my perspective, a healthy and helpful level of candor as she publicly begins her service as Assistant to the Bishop on July 17. Since July 1, Pastor Bright has been onboarding and getting acclimated to her new call. She is taking primary responsibility for the candidacy process and first call theological education and will be working with me on the call process. There are also a number of congregations I would like Pastor Bright to visit, which could take three to four months.

As often happens with longstanding recipes, certain ingredients become unavailable, recipe cards get smudged and hard to read, and as much as we try, we're not able to follow the exact recipe we've always done. Cathy's baked beans changed when we could no longer find Grandma Brown's brand beans and switched to Bush's beans. With the change in beans, Cathy's recipe evolved. The proportions of the brown sugar, bacon, and other seasonings adapted to the new flavors and while it's not the original recipe, the new version is a more sustainable and equally delicious one.

Like Cathy's recipe, our synod staff's recipe will evolve to become something new but equally delicious. As a staff and a synod, we will need to adapt and evolve. We are not simply substituting a new ingredient for an old one. It is unfair to force new and different ingredients into the same old recipe. As we've all experienced in the past few years, things change, old ways of doing things are not always sustainable, and we need to evolve. Pastor Sprang, Pastor Bright, and I will gather together in August to begin to figure out the new recipe for our shared ministry. In the meantime, Pastor Sprang will continue to take Monday as his day off. Pastor Bright will take Friday as her day off. I will continue to reserve the hours from 9 to 11 AM as downtime rather than take a full day off.

The recipe is changing; however, I expect the result will be satisfying and delicious. I bid you Christ's grace, peace, wisdom, courage, and patience as you too, consider, how best to serve up the good news in the places where you live, serve, and worship.

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

Saying Hello

Thank you all for your welcome to the position of Assistant to the Bishop. It is an honor and privilege to serve the Synod in this way. I know many of you a bit and look forward to getting to know you all a bit better. As I settle into this role, Bishop Satterlee, Pastor Sprang, and I, along with the rest of the staff, will be working together to establish new ways of accomplishing our shared ministry. I know we all appreciate your continued prayers as we navigate this transition.

While I know a bit about many of you, I realize you might not know that much about me so I wanted to take this opportunity to share a bit about myself. I grew up on a dairy farm in McBain, MI and was a member of St. John Lutheran in Lake City. Our family unit was my parents, maternal grandfather, and younger brother as well as dogs, cats, pigs, sheep, and lots of cows. At St. John, I was a member of the choir and band, taught Sunday School for the Special Needs and preschool classes, and was on the church council.

I am a second-generation Spartan (Go Green!), graduating in 2000 with a degree in International Relations and Health Studies. I was heavily involved in ministry at University Lutheran, East Lansing. Beyond being a member of several committees and teams, I was a student associate for several years before being asked to be the campus ministry staff person during several years of staff transition.

2004 found me at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, OH. I completed my Clinical Pastoral Education at Overland Park Regional Medical Center in Overland Park, KS and Research Medical Center in Kansas City, MO. My internship was at Augustana Lutheran in Cumberland, WI and Barronett Lutheran in Barronett, WI. It was what was then called a detached site and afforded me the opportunity to preach and lead worship 48 out of 52 weeks of the year, as well as all kinds of other ministry opportunities.

After graduation, I interviewed with several ministry sites in the Synod before the Holy Spirit led me to New Life Lutheran in Spruce, MI where I was blessed to serve as pastor for 14+ years. I also volunteer at Alcona Elementary and am part of the local Habitat for Humanity Board.

These days, my family consists of my younger brother (Bear), sister-in-law (Rebecca), and their children (Ethan, Jessica, Katelynn, and Olivia), who still live in the McBain area. I love spending birthdays and holidays with them and try to get to events the kids participate in too.

So that's a little bit about me. I'm excited to learn more about you as I settle into this role, begin to visit congregations, and continue to build relationships in this synod and beyond. I hope you all are having a good summer. May God continue to use our hands, feet, hearts, minds, and voices to do God's work in the world.

Peace,
Pastor Chrisy Bright, Assistant to the Bishop

My Burden is Light Preaching Retreat

"Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30.

Join Bishop Satterlee for a preaching retreat centered on his new book, *My Burden is Light: Making Room for Jesus in Preaching*. This retreat is an opportunity to discuss the book and to intentionally reflect on both our preaching and our relationship with Jesus. Like the book, the retreat's primary audience is pastors and deacons, but lay preachers and listeners who care about preaching are also welcome to attend. This retreat will be held in-person at the St. Francis Retreat Center in Dewitt, MI from October 16-18, 2023.

Learn More and Register: <http://bit.ly/3K5z0gc>

Making "God's work. Our hands." Evangelistic

On September 10, 2023, many folks across the ELCA will wear their "God's work. Our hands." t-shirts out into the public arena as they serve others. It's a noble endeavor to serve the community. Many will hope that others will read their t-shirts and know who it is that is doing the work and will understand why they do it. But we need to do more. We need to tell them. We need to tell them that it's Jesus who empowers us and gives us Good News.

What If? What if we ask them about their lives? What if we listen to their stories, learn about their faith, their joys, and sorrows? What if we share our stories about who we are and why we serve? What if we ask them about Jesus?

- Where have you seen Jesus at work in the community?
- What has Jesus been poking you to do?
- How has Jesus given you hope?

When Jesus sends the disciples out for the first time in Matthew 10 he says: "Go to the lost sheep and tell them 'The Kingdom of God has come near.'" Think about ways that your congregation's "God's work. Our hands." project will let people know "the Kingdom of God has come near."



Here is a beginning list of ideas – and I hope you might add to it:

- Take worship to where you are serving – a nursing home, park, with first responders, etc.
- Listen to the people being served – listen to joys and sorrows, laments, and struggles
- Bless people – find ways to pronounce a blessing upon the people being served and pray for them
- Invite friends or other family members to serve with you
- Ask those being served or those serving with you: What can we pray for?
- Hold a Welcome Event after "God's work. Our hands." Sunday and invite all the people you encountered to come to the event
- Ask people to tell you their faith journey story – find ways to invite them into further conversations
- Recruit a listening team to accompany workers so some are working/serving and others are listening to those being served
- Ask those being served what they think are things the church should be doing to help the community or what are important community needs
- Do something to honor law enforcement, first responders, health care providers, and others that serve in the community
- Share stories of Jesus together
- Invite people to church activities

Invite folks into conversation. Listen to their stories. Talk about Jesus. Invite them to worship or activities the church sponsors. Be transformed!

Pastor David Sprang
Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission

You Are Witnesses of These Things Retreat

Join Pastor David E. Sprang and Bishop Craig Alan Satterlee for a retreat centered on the book *You Are Witnesses of These Things: Sharing the Story of Jesus*. This retreat is an opportunity to experience the joy and fun in sharing the story of Jesus for no reason other than Jesus is such life-giving good news. The retreat's primary audience is lay people, but pastors and deacons are also welcome to attend. This retreat will be held in-person at the St. Francis Retreat Center in Dewitt, MI from September 17–18, 2023.

Learn More and Register: <http://bit.ly/3IxBuBz>.

Environmental Stewardship Task Force

John Burow, Member of the Environmental Stewardship Task Force

This prayer was shared at our recent Environmental Stewardship Task Force meeting. With it comes an invitation to join in our efforts on behalf of God's good creation and of our shared future. If you'd like more information about environmental stewardship or would like to be more involved in caring for creation, reach out to the North/West Lower Michigan Synod's Environmental Stewardship Task Force's chair Linn Kracht at ldkracht@gmail.com.

I Dare

—prayer written by Holly-Anna Petersen

Lord Creator

In your love, I dare..

I dare to feel the pain of your creation, groaning as in the pains of childbirth - and not turn away. I dare to open my heart, my hands and my mind and listen to you grieving for all you have made. I dare to accept my role in undoing your world and ask you to hold me as I weep for my regrets.

Lord Creator

In your love, I dare..

I dare to accept that a complacency in token gestures and sticking plaster solutions is making the crisis worse. I dare to look beyond what I am told is possible and begin to prophetically demand what is needed. I dare to step into your love that casts out fear - to find you in the gritty truth outside of my comfort zone.

Lord Creator

In your love, I dare..

I dare to acknowledge where I hold power and privilege and challenge myself to use it.

I dare to witness the bravery of my brothers and sisters around the world, who are already losing their lives pushing to protect this world that sustains us.

I dare to feel the fear of doubt and uncertainty running through my veins, and choose to take meaningful action anyway.

Lord Creator

In your love, I dare..

I dare to know that when I share in your body and your blood, it binds me to your life of sacrifice. I dare to join you on the streets, as you turn over the tables and take a stand alongside the needy. I dare to walk in your ferocious love - a love deemed so threatening to the oppressive powers that they had you executed.

Lord Creator

In your love, I dare..

I Dare was originally published on the website for Christian Climate Action and is used with permission. View original: <https://christianclimateaction.org/resources/liturgies-and-prayers/>

ELCA Stewardship Webinar: "Stewardship When Economics Are Uncertain"

The economy has been unpredictable as we slowly emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Unemployment remains low, yet interest rates have jumped considerably, and with three very public bank failures this year, people are being more cautious with their resources. How can we talk about stewardship and money in a way that is honest and honors uncertain economic times?

On August 21, the ELCA in partnership with the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving, will host a webinar geared toward helping leaders talk openly, honestly and inspirationally about stewardship and generosity, even in uncertain times. The webinar will be held via Zoom from 7-8pm ET and will be led by the Rev. Meredith McNabb and the Rev. Tim Brown.

Join webinar: **Zoom Link** (active on August 21) or visit <https://zoom.us/join> and enter Meeting ID: 835 7971 8246
Password: 000320. One tap mobile: +13017158592,,83579718246# US (Washington DC)

Synod Finances		
	June	Year to Date
Unrestricted-Undesignated Fund		
Mission Support Revenue	88,838	502,604
Other Revenue	10,845	78,445
Total Revenue	99,683	581,048
Churchwide Proportionate Share (50%)	44,419	251,302
Other Expenses	50,958	321,303
Total Expenses	95,377	572,605
Net Change to Fund Balance (Revenue - Expenses)	4,306	8,443
Beginning Fund Balance	513,463	509,326
Ending Fund Balance	517,769	517,769
Other Fund Balances		
Unrestricted-Designated		602,810
Temporarily-Restricted Endowment-Related*		726,480
Temporarily-Restricted		313,956
Permanently-Restricted		1,002,547
Total - All Funds (as of 5/31/23)		3,163,563

*June 30 Endowment Fund Account Statements were not available at the time of publishing this summary. The amount shown here reflects balances as of 5/31/23.

ELCA Financial Resources

When congregation treasurers, financial administrators or bookkeepers reach out to the synod office with questions, we frequently refer them to the wealth of resources provided by ELCA Churchwide's Office of the Treasurer.

To review and download these resources, visit <https://elca.org>, click on Resources, then select Financial, then Congregations. A direct link is provided here: <https://elca.org/Resources/Financial#FinanceC>

ELCA Mission Support Memo

The ELCA's Mission Support Team shares the June ELCA Mission Support Memo, which offers stories of digging in the dirt with garden ministries.

It is a joy knowing Mission Support is at work across our church: serving with each other, growing leaders, vitalizing ministry, and engaging us all in our local communities, national church, and global work.

Read Now: <https://bit.ly/3rmAECJ>

Autumn Leadership Event

The Autumn Leadership Event for Rostered Ministers will be held September 12, 2023 at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids.

The theme of the event is "Sharing the Story of Jesus with Youth and Young Adults" and will feature presentations from The Rev. Jake Mulder from the Fuller Youth Institute and co-author of the book *Growing Young*.

The Autumn Leadership Event will be held from 9:00am - 5:00pm. The day will include worship, lunch, and three presentations. The registration fee is \$30 and includes lunch and snacks.

All registration forms must be completed online and submitted by September 6, 2023.

Learn More and Register: <https://bit.ly/3PWdCKA>

2024 ELCA Youth Gathering

The 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering will be held July 16-20, 2024 in New Orleans under the theme, "Created to Be." It will also include MYLE, tABLE, and Young Adult gatherings.

The ELCA Gathering Team has recently released The Getting Ready Materials, which are a curriculum designed to get your group together and talking about the daily themes of the Gathering.

Learn more: <https://elca.org/gathering>

As you plan for the 2024 Gathering, Pastor Dan Schewe, our synod's ELCA Youth Gathering Champion, is available to answer questions. Email Pastor Dan at mittensynodgathering2024@gmail.com.



During July, we celebrate Disability Pride Month, commemorating the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act and celebrating the disability community.

Learn more about Disability Pride and what it means for so many people: <https://bit.ly/46OAnsw>

Learn the meaning behind the design and colors of the Disability Pride flag: <https://bit.ly/46Z0iOz>

Watch Bishop Satterlee's Keynote Address on Welcoming Persons who Live with Disabilities: <https://youtu.be/A0e8TWU14Ao>

If you're interested in learning more about how your congregation can welcome and partner with persons living with disabilities in your community, reach out to our synod's Disability Ministries Task Force: <https://bit.ly/3XQmru4>

Adult Theological Education

Our second Adult Theological Education course, Luther's Small Catechism for Adults, will begin October 24, 2023 and will run for six weeks. This course will be led by Dr. Kit Kleinhans, Dean of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University, and will be held via Zoom.

Registration information is coming soon!

Upcoming Events

July 17-20	ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering	Learn more: https://elca.org/rmg
September 10	"God's work. Our hands." Sunday	Learn more: https://elca.org/dayofservice
September 12	Autumn Leadership Event for Rostered Ministers	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3PWdCKA
September 17-18	<i>You Are Witnesses of These Things</i> Retreat	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3lxBuBz
October 16-18	<i>My Burden is Light</i> Preaching Retreat	Learn more: http://bit.ly/3K5z0gc
October 23 - 26	Ecumenical Community of Michigan Retreat	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3XTMGjs
October 24	Adult Theological Education: Small Catechism	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3rnwR8l

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. Joan Oleson, Dean	
Messiah/Bay City	Pastor Dan Stonebeck, Interim / Interviewing	Prince of Peace/Portage	Seeking to call a deacon / Seeking Candidates
St. Matthew/Bridgeport (Part-Time)	Pastor Andreas Teich, Stated Supply / Call Process suspended until January 2024	Stony Lake Conference Rev. Sarah Samuelson, Dean	
Trinity/Midland	CALL ACCEPTED: Pastor Jeff Gramza (NWOH); Installation October 22	Harbor of Grace/Muskegon	Pastor Jack Ferra, Interim / Preparing MSP
Resurrection/Saginaw (Part-Time)	Pastor Andreas Teich, Stated Supply / Seeking a partnership or quarter to third time pastor	Sunrise Conference Rev. Chrissy Bright, Dean	
Capital Area Conference Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean		New Life/Alcona County	Supply Pastors / Preparing MSP
University/East Lansing	Pastor Gary Bunge retiring September 30	St. Paul/Alpena	Seeking a part-time assistant pastor
Faith/Okemos	CALL ACCEPTED: Pastor Bruce Thorsen, Transitional Pastor; Installation November 11	Traverse Conference Rev. Jonathan Reid, Dean	
Greater Grand Rapids Conference Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean		Feast of Victory/Acme (Part-Time)	Pastor Ruth Overdier, Stated Supply / CALL ACCEPTED: Pastor Haley Vay Beaman; Installation November 19
St. Luke/Grand Rapids	Pastor Galen Knutson, Intentional Interim / Interviewing	St. Paul/Reed City	Pastor Marcy Miller, Stated Supply / Seeking Candidates
Trinity/Grand Rapids	Pastor Bob Linstrom retiring November 2023		
Bread of Life/Hudsonville	Pastor Kate Van Valkenburg last Sunday August 6		
Zion/Woodland (Part-Time)	Supply Pastors/Seeking Candidates		