



North/West Lower Michigan Synod

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Bread for the Journey

I believe most church leaders felt like Elijah the prophet sometime in these past two years. Elijah did as God commanded and defeated the prophets of Baal. But rather than repentance, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel sent a message to Elijah threatening to kill him by this time tomorrow. And Elijah found himself fleeing for his life. And similarly, many church leaders resisted the prophets of division, politicization, and immediate gratification to keep God's people safe from COVID-19 and have found themselves fleeing for their spiritual, professional, and relational, if not their physical, lives.

"[Elijah] himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, 'Get up and eat.' He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.' He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God" (1 Kings 19:4-8).

My hope as I begin to plan our Synod Assembly is that we can find ways to be angels for one another during those times when we are in a wilderness place, sitting under a solitary broom tree, asking to die rather than to face one more day of a conflicted church and ministry.

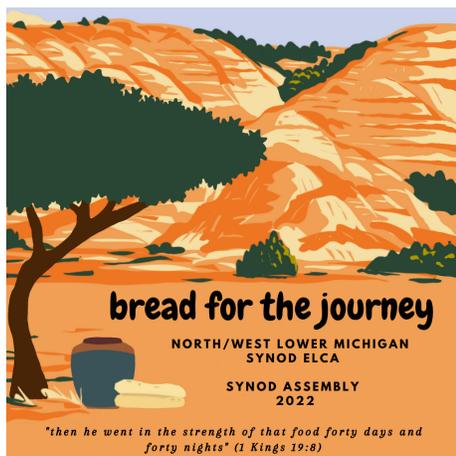
The patristic scholar and sacramental theologian in me sees baptism and Eucharist in the bread and water the angel serves Elijah. Sitting under my solitary broom tree, I long for something more. In John's Gospel, Jesus calls himself the bread of life and says that he will give living water (6:25-59; 7:37-39). So let the bread and water that the angel served Elijah be nothing other than Jesus himself for us. My prayer is that we will be able to go from the Assembly "in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God."

So 1 Kings 19:8 is the theme of our no longer than six-hour virtual assembly. We will elect members to the Consultation Committee and Synod Council. We will consider resolutions. We will vote on compensation guidelines and a budget. And I expect angels to serve up Jesus so that, in his strength, we might continue our journey to the mountain of God. I have some hunches on how this might happen. If you have hunches, please send them my way. I cannot guarantee we will implement them but we will prayerfully consider them.

Fleeing for our lives to the mountain of God in the strength of Christ sounds to me like the journey of faith. We cannot change the journey. But we can strive to make sure there are angels nearby when people seek escape under a broom tree. Second only to praying that the internet does not go down, this is my prayer for our assembly.

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

North/West Lower Michigan Synod 2022 Synod Assembly



After much prayer, conversation, and discernment from many perspectives, the North/West Lower Michigan Synod's Conference Deans and Executive Committee unanimously recommended and the members of Synod Council present at the February 2022 meeting unanimously decided that the 2022 Synod Assembly will be held virtually on Saturday, May 14, 2022 via Zoom.

This year's Synod Assembly will be centered on the theme "Bread for the Journey" (1 Kings 19:8). Similar to last year, the 2022 Synod Assembly will be primarily business focused. Therefore, only voting members will be able to register for and participate via Zoom. All non-voting members and visitors will be invited to watch the Synod Assembly via livestream on YouTube.

Additional resources will be posted on the Synod Assembly page of the Synod website: <https://mittensynod.org/events/assembly>

Registration

Registration is now open! Given the nature of this year's Synod Assembly, only voting members will be able to register. All non-voting members and visitors will be invited to watch the Synod Assembly via livestream on YouTube.

Given the technological nature of this Synod Assembly, voting members should be comfortable using computers, mobile devices, and/or tablets, learning and using applications, and accessing information from websites. Additionally, each voting member will need their own email address and voting device (smartphone or tablet). They will also need access to a computer to participate in the Zoom meeting. It is recommended that voting members use a computer to host the Zoom meeting and use a smartphone or tablet as their voting device.

Each voting member is **required** to attend a one-hour technology orientation as part of the voting registration process, which will ensure voting members are comfortable and able to participate prior to Synod Assembly.

Please review the registration information prior to completing the registration form:

- **Country Code:** In the address section, remember to complete the country code. For addresses in the United States, the country code is US.
- **Internet Browser:** If you have issues completing the form using Google Chrome, try a different internet browser (Safari, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, etc.)
- **Registering Multiple Voting Members:** If you are registering multiple voting members on one registration form, you will all need to attend the same pre-assembly sessions. If you would like to attend different pre-assembly sessions, please complete a separate registration form for each person.

Registration forms must be completed online and submitted by **April 20, 2022**. There will be **no late registration** and we will **not** be able to process the changing of voting members after this date.

Register now: <https://bit.ly/3jaeZBS>

Pre-Assembly Sessions

As part of registering for Synod Assembly, voting members will sign up for pre-assembly discussion sessions and technology orientations. The pre-assembly discussion sessions are two-hour, optional, informal sessions aimed at providing voting members with an opportunity to discuss resolutions and the budget/compensation guidelines in advance of Synod Assembly.

The technology orientations are one-hour sessions that provide an overview of Zoom basics and training on the voting process in advance of Synod Assembly. Voting members are **required** to attend a technology orientation.

Continued from page 2**Assembly Book**

To be included in the 2022 Synod Assembly Book, all reports must be submitted to Pastor Rosanne Anderson (randerson@mittensynod.org) by March 31, 2022.

Nominations

The Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for Synod Council and the Consultation Committee. All nominations and completed Bio Forms must be submitted by March 31, 2022. The Nomination Slate, Bio Forms, and submission information are available on the Synod website: <https://mittensynod.org/events/assembly>

Resolutions and Memorials

To be considered for the 2022 Synod Assembly, resolutions and memorials must be submitted to the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Resolutions Committee. All resolutions and memorials must be submitted electronically to Ann Stavros at the Synod Office (annstavros@mittensynod.org) by April 8, 2022. Guidelines and resources for submitting resolutions and memorials are available on the Synod website: <https://mittensynod.org/events/assembly>

Video Submissions

Synod ministries, synod tables, and synod committees are welcome to submit a short video to be considered for Synod Assembly. Each group may submit one video that is one-two minutes in length. Videos should feature the work of the ministry, table, or committee. Given the business focus and time considerations of this year's Synod Assembly, submitted videos are not guaranteed to be shown during Synod Assembly. All videos will be released via social media after Synod Assembly. To be considered, all videos must be submitted to Pastor David Sprang (davidsprang@mittensynod.org) by April 8, 2022.

Ministry with Senior Adults

When a congregation is searching for a new pastor, one of the most frequently asked questions during the Call Committee Training for a newly-formed Call Committee is: "How do we get more children in the church?" The small number of children and young adults who are part of a church community is an issue in every denomination. That particular question then leads to a discussion of what it means to provide ministry to those who are already active members of the congregation.

It is not a secret that many congregations in the ELCA, and in our own synod, have a high percentage of members who are senior citizens. And so, I wonder, what does a vibrant, active, life-giving ministry look like for our seniors?

I have been given the gift of a three month sabbatical this coming summer. In addition to spending time in rest and renewal, part of my sabbatical will be spent exploring different areas of ministry. I will be doing some further study in the areas of racial and social justice and I also want to explore some avenues of ministry and outreach to our senior adult members.

And on this topic, I need your help! Prior to June 1, I would like to have a Zoom forum with people who are interested in ministry with senior adults. I especially want to hear from all you fellow seniors out there! Please email me at randerson@mittensynod.org to let me know of your interest and willingness to be part of the conversation. I can also be reached at 517-331-6741 if you prefer to contact me by phone. Once I hear from people, I will coordinate a time when we can meet via Zoom.

Thanks in advance for your willingness to look at the ministry needs of our senior adults!

The Rev. Rosanne M. Anderson
Assistant to the Bishop & Director of Candidacy

Moving Beyond COVID

The Directors for Evangelical Mission across the ELCA have had several conversations about resources to use as we learn to live and move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. I have been asked by several church leaders for resources that might be helpful and so I share these resources below.

- Take time for a bible study on the exodus story. Focus on Deuteronomy 1:19-33 (the exiles return), Deuteronomy 6-7 (reaffirming being the people of God), Deuteronomy 8 (when you return, don't forget who you are when things get better), and Deuteronomy 10 (the Ten Commandments, which is a covenant reminder of who God's people are and how they live differently).
- *The Innovative Church* by Scott Cormode of Fuller Seminary. This book outlines steps to take in moving the church toward being more innovative. These steps include listening, making spiritual sense of things (including time for lament), changing mental models of the world and church, and reinventing and refining traditional practices for a new era. Innovation is not simply daydreaming. It takes reflecting on the past, dealing with the current reality, and then listening to the Spirit for ways to move forward.
- *When God Speaks Through Change: Preaching in Times of Congregation Transition* by Craig A. Satterlee. At times, a congregational transition looms so large in a sermon that it becomes the lens through which scripture is interpreted, the congregation is addressed, the preacher is heard, and God is experienced. Bishop Satterlee reflects on how to integrate such significant events in a congregation's life into the preaching ministry of the church. Rather than offering a blueprint for preaching, however, he walks along with pastors, seminarians, and other congregational leaders who want to make sure the Gospel, not an agenda, is preached.
- *We Shall be Changed: Questions for the Post Pandemic Church*, edited by Mark Edington, Bishop of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. This book is a series of essays gathered from around the church in the U.S. and Europe. The essays fall into five categories: Distancing and Deepening, Liturgy and Longing, Hard Choices and Helping Hands, Inequality – Marginalization – Renewal, and Challenge and Change.
- *Becoming a Hybrid Church* by Dave Daubert. This book has some very practical lessons for embracing the online and digital world and making it a regular part of the ministry of the church.
- Listening is always vital to the life of a church. One of our congregations that I visited recently was embarking on a time of listening. The church council divided up the membership list and each of them committed to reaching out to 10 church families via phone and listening to them. Guidelines for this One on One Relational Listening are available here: <https://www.mittensynod.org/mission/revive/>
- My colleague Erika Uthe, DEM for the SE Iowa Synod, has taken an evangelism resource and made it into a Lenten Devotion. It is available to download here: <https://bit.ly/3hYx49S>
- The ELCA offers a variety of evangelism resources available at <https://www.elca.org/evangelism>
- Last year, as a part of the ELCA's Open Door Grants, the ELCA created a webpage of ideas that congregations are using to connect or reconnect with their community: <https://bit.ly/3J0F727>
- The North/West Lower Michigan Synod is offering Connect Grants to help congregations develop new ideas and build stronger connections with their communities as they emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3Kue3Zh>

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

Prayers for Ukraine

We join with congregations across the ELCA and ecumenical partners around the world in praying for Ukraine, for peace, and for all creation.

Bishop Craig Satterlee invites you to join him in praying for Ukraine. Watch Now: <https://bit.ly/3i0PhUE>

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, along with ecumenical and inter-religious partners, has issued an interfaith call to peace for Ukraine. Read Now: <https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8131>

ELCA missionaries share a brief update on the refugee situation in Hungary and Central Europe and how the ELCA and Lutheran Church partners in Europe are responding to the situation. Watch Now: <https://bit.ly/3i1xMDr>

Lutheran World Relief is collecting donations to support the people of Ukraine and provide emergency food, clean water, safe shelter, medical supplies, and more. The North/West Lower Michigan Synod has sent \$5,000 to Lutheran World Relief to assist families in Ukraine. Throughout the season of Lent, all donations made to the North/West Lower Michigan's Synod Disaster Relief Fund will be sent to Lutheran World Relief to assist families in Ukraine. Donate Now: <https://www.mittensynod.org/donate/>

The Lutheran World Federation is accepting donations to support the churches and people of Ukraine, who are fleeing their homes and seeking shelter, basic necessities such as food and water, following Russia's military invasion of the country. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/3CzoB6P>

Lutheran Disaster Response is accompanying our companion churches in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, as well as such ecumenical partners as the Lutheran World Federation and Church World Service, in their humanitarian responses to the crisis. These partners provide refugees with immediate support and supplies such as hygiene supplies, food, medicine, bedding and psychosocial and pastoral care to refugees and internally displaced people, most of whom are women and children. Donate Now: <https://bit.ly/3MHAIHQ>

God Says So!

by Ellie Buggeln, Member of the Environmental Stewardship Task Force

I recently came across a video on Youtube of the Wimbledon Choral Society singing "Look at the World" by John Rutter. The combination of the choir singing and the photos of nature shown in the video created an emotional moment for me. It reminded me of the wonderful gift God has given us and brought me such joy and gratitude. As a response to all the gifts in this world and all that is in it, my hope is that we will take better care of the world.

There has been discussion in my congregation, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, in Holland, Michigan, to form a Creation Care Committee to help show us the reasons why we need to take care of our Earth. We are all familiar with the Creation Story and when we look at Genesis 2:15, it says, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden Eden to work it and take care of it." That gives us the best reason. God Says So! God created humankind to serve and protect the Earth!

If your congregation is interested in starting a Creation Care Committee, resources are available on the Synod's website. The Synod is also offering the John D. Schleicher Care of Creation Grants to assist congregations in responding to climate change as a matter of faith and discipleship. View resources and information: <https://www.mittensynod.org/caring-for-creation-resources/>

You can also reach out the Environmental Stewardship Task Force by contacting Linn Kracht at ldkracht@gmail.com.

Synod Finances

Unrestricted-Undesignated Fund	
Mission Support Revenue	87,160
Other Revenue*	357
Net Assets Released from Restriction	0
Total Revenue	87,516
Churchwide Proportionate Share (50%)	43,671
Other Expenses	64,323
Total Expenses	107,994
Net Change to Fund Balance (Revenue - Expenses)	(20,478)
Beginning Fund Balance	476,577
Ending Fund Balance	456,099
Other Fund Balances	
Unrestricted-Designated	677,093
Temporarily-Restricted Endowment-Related*	993,666
Temporarily-Restricted	306,346
Permanently-Restricted	924,639
Total - All Funds (as of 2/28/22)	3,357,842

*February 28 Endowment Fund Statements were not yet published at the time of this summary.

Categories of Synod Funds

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod has five categories of funds:

1. Unrestricted-Undesignated (aka general or operating) is the fund that corresponds with the budget approved each year by Synod Assembly.
2. Unrestricted-Designated funds include the Synod Endowment Fund and a Cash Flow Reserve as set forth in our constitution. These funds are not at the discretion of donors but are under the authority of Synod Council or the Constitution.
3. Endowment-Related Temporarily-Restricted funds reflect unspent distributions from Endowment Funds and their increase in value over time.
4. Temporarily-Restricted funds have donor restrictions. Once a donor's intended use for a fund had been exhausted, Synod Council may redirect the fund balance to another similar, or timely, purpose.
5. Permanently-Restricted funds represent the initial investment in endowment funds where the donors' instructions were to leave the corpus in place and spend only the distributions and earnings over time. These funds reside with the [ELCA Ministry Growth Fund](#), formerly called the ELCA Foundation Pooled Trust Fund A.

Your congregation may have several funds as well. ELCA Office of the Treasurer Financial Resources for Congregations offer helpful guidance on the management of these funds. If you have questions or want additional information, we welcome your inquiries at finance@mittensynod.org.

Annual Reports

2021 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/38HxIEU>

Form A & C Parochial Reports for congregations are available on the ELCA's website and should be completed as soon as possible. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/3vZY80I>

Synod Staff Sermon Videos

Bishop Satterlee, Pastor Rosanne, and Pastor David are recording video sermons for congregations to use each week.

If you would like to receive these video sermons, please complete the form below. By completing the form, you will be signing up to receive all of the videos, but you can use as few or as many as you would like.

Video links will be emailed out the Wednesday before each Sunday. Sermon videos will be released to the general public on Sundays at 12pm.

If you have additional questions, please email communications@mittensynod.org.

Sermon Video Sign-up: <https://bit.ly/3FguJR2>

COVID-19 Resources

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has updated their masking guidance. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/35J4XJH>

Vaccination continues to be the most important public health action to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone aged 5 and older is eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Currently, everyone aged 12 and older is eligible for a booster. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/3iDnU3V>

We continue to post updates and resources pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic on our website. View all resources: <http://bit.ly/3rL2fsF>

Connect Grants

The Connect Grant is an effort to support mission in the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. Modeled after the ELCA's Open Door Grants, Connect Grants are to be used to help congregations develop new ideas and build stronger connections with their communities as they emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/3t40QQZ>

To apply for a Connect Grant, applicants must submit a written grant proposal along with a proposed budget for the project. View Grant Proposal Instructions: <https://bit.ly/3vrw8TH>

Upcoming Events

March 21	United Campus Christian Fellowship Open House	Learn More: https://bit.ly/3pXeVxP
April 20	Synod Assembly Registration Deadline	Learn More: https://bit.ly/3i5KAbO
April 23	Holle Speaker Series: Rev. Jim Antal	Learn More: https://bit.ly/3t3Te15
April 25-27	Institute of Liturgical Studies	Learn More: https://bit.ly/35U8QLD
April 25-27	Ecumenical Advocacy Days	Learn More: https://bit.ly/3tSYmnM
April 30	The End of Youth Ministry? with Dr. Andrew Root	Learn More: https://bit.ly/3I4HI9K



Women's History Month

WE CELEBRATE AND GIVE THANKS FOR THE ACHIEVEMENTS, INFLUENCE, LEADERSHIP, STORIES, GIFTS AND FAITHFUL WITNESS OF WOMEN IN OUR CHURCH AND SOCIETY THROUGHOUT HISTORY.

WE ALSO PRAY FOR WOMEN WHO SUFFER INJUSTICE, DEMEANING STEREOTYPES, VIOLENCE AND POVERTY, THAT THEY WILL CLING TO HOPE AND BE DELIVERED FROM THEIR SUFFERING AND PERSECUTION TO LIVE FREELY AND BOLDLY AS LOVED AND VALUED CHILDREN OF GOD.

ELCA PRAYER VENTURES

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	
Faith/Saginaw	Pastor John Soyster, Interim / Seeking candidates		
Capital Area Conference		Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean	
Christ United/Dewitt (Part-Time)	Episcopal Diocese of Michigan taking the lead in the call process / Interviewing		
All Saints/Mason (Part-Time)	Pastor Erick Johnson, Stated Supply / Seeking candidates		
Trinity/Hillsdale	Pastor Dennis Smith, Interim / Preparing MSP		
Christ/Michigan Center	Pastor Michael Anderson, Stated Supply		
Greater Grand Rapids Conference		Rev. Julie Schneider- Thomas, Dean	
Christ/Wyoming	Pastor Polly Standley, Interim / Interviewing		
St. Luke/Grand Rapids	Pastor Galen Knutson, Intentional Interim; Pastor Marcia Schultz, Pastoral Care		
Kalamazoo Conference		Rev. Joan Oleson, Dean	
St. John/Baroda (Part-Time)	Pastor Vicky Blough, Stated Supply / Seeking candidates		
Hope/Plainwell (Part-Time)	Pastor Julie Winklepleck, Stated Supply / Interviewing		
St. Peter/Battle Creek	Pastor Cheryl Johnson and Pastor Michael Anton, Stated Supply / Preparing MSP		
Messiah/Constantine (Part-Time)	Supply Pastors		
Stony Lake Conference		Rev. Sarah Samuelson, Dean	
Sunrise Conference		Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean	
St. Paul/Alpena	Seeking a part-time assistant pastor		
Traverse Conference		Rev. Jonathan Reid, Dean	