



## North/West Lower Michigan Synod

P.O. Box 517  
Dewitt, MI 48820

517-321-5066  
[mittensynod.org](http://mittensynod.org)

## In this Issue:

Save the Date!

A Message from Pastor Anderson and Bishop Satterlee

Revival

2023 Synod Assembly

Upcoming Events

Congregations in Transition

## Save the Date!

This year on March 26, the Fifth Sunday in Lent, we will hear the story of Jesus calling Lazarus out of the tomb. "Lazarus, come out!" As we continue to live through a pandemic, natural disasters, global wars, and other divisions locally and nationally, it can feel overwhelming and tempting to stay in our "tombs." However, like Lazarus, Jesus calls us out of death and back into life. More and more, I hear Jesus saying, "People, come out!" Our synod's calendar certainly reflects this call. I invite you to look ahead with me and, where appropriate, mark your calendars and save the date.

**Chrism Service for Rostered Ministers:** Trinity Lutheran Church, Battle Creek, April 4 at 10:00am. This Holy Week worship service for rostered ministers includes the renewal of ordination promises and the blessing of oil for baptism and healing. The reason I love this service is that I get to preach the gospel to and for those who will lead us through Holy Week, our pastors and deacons. Worship will be followed by lunch. The Kalamazoo Conference invites pastors and deacons throughout our synod to join us. Contact Pastor Kjersten Sullivan ([pastor@tlcbattlecreek.org](mailto:pastor@tlcbattlecreek.org)) if you would like to attend.

**Synod Assembly:** Comfort Inn and Suites, Mt. Pleasant, May 7–9. Our theme is "It's about Jesus!" You will have opportunities to talk with others about Jesus and to hear stories of Jesus. Registration is now open! You can learn more here: <https://mittensynod.org/events/assembly>.

**Autumn Leadership Event:** St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, September 12. "Sharing the Story of Jesus with Youth and Young Adults" is the theme of the 2023 Autumn Leadership Event for Rostered Ministers. The presenter will be Jake Mulder of the Fuller Youth Institute, who is the author of the book *Growing Young*. More information about this event will be shared in the coming months.

**You Are Witnesses of These Things Retreat:** St. Francis Retreat Center, Dewitt, September 17–18. Pastor Sprang and I will lead a retreat planned especially for lay people to discuss the book *You Are Witnesses of These Things: Sharing the Story of Jesus* and to learn how to use it in your congregation. You can learn more and register here: <http://bit.ly/3lxBuBz>.

**My Burden is Light Preaching Retreat:** St. Francis Retreat Center, Dewitt, October 16–18. Join me for a three day retreat to discuss *My Burden is Light: Making Room for Jesus in Preaching*. The retreat is intended for pastors and deacons but all who care about preaching and the gospel are welcome to attend. We will consider how our relationship with Jesus influences preaching and hearing the gospel. You can learn more and register here: <https://bit.ly/3K5z0gc>.

**Small Catechism for Adults:** Beginning October 24. We will offer the second course in our Adult Theological Education Program this fall. Dr. Kit Kleinhans, Dean of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University, will teach Luther's Small Catechism for Adults for six weeks via Zoom. More information on this course will be shared in the coming months.

I am grateful for the grace and privilege of looking ahead. I believe that is the essence of life. I am thankful that Jesus is calling us back into life and pray that you are hearing his voice this Lent.

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

## A Message from Pastor Anderson and Bishop Satterlee

To the members and friends of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Bishop Satterlee has kept me aware of all your prayers and concerns as I was hospitalized in February and continue my recuperation at home. I am deeply grateful.

In early February, I developed severe infections that affected my kidneys and intestinal system, which may have been related to the COVID-19 virus. Treatment for these infections required a six day stay in the hospital. I was then sent home with continuing antibiotics for further recuperation.

After consultation with my primary care physician, my gastro-intestinal physician, and Bishop Satterlee, recuperation from these infections needs to be my sole focus. I am currently on medical leave from the Synod and I have requested that my rostered status be changed to retired when the medical leave ends on April 30, 2023.

I have thoroughly enjoyed these past five years of ministry as Assistant to Bishop Satterlee. My intent was to finish out Bishop Satterlee's current term as bishop and then retire. However, my recent hospitalization and on-going healing process necessitates this earlier retirement.

I am so grateful for the working relationship that I have had with Bishop Satterlee and the rest of the Synod Staff, and the support of Vice President Sandy Schlesinger and the Synod Council. I also have been blessed in my ministry with all the churches and parishioners of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. Thank you all!

Peace and Prayers,  
Pastor Rosanne Anderson

---

"For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). The time has come for my friend Pastor Rosanne Anderson to retire and begin the next season of her life. The conversation that brought us to this moment was for Pastor Rosanne and for me "a time to weep and a time to laugh" (Ecclesiastes 3:4). I am sad to lose Pastor Rosanne as a colleague and partner in this ministry that she, Pastor David, and I share. I will miss Pastor Rosanne's wisdom, counsel, and daily telephone call with which I begin my workday. I expect our friendship will transcend our working relationship and we will continue to laugh.

Ecclesiastes speaks of "a time to seek and a time to lose" (3:6). With every staff transition, especially this one, I spend time grieving the loss before seeking want and who will best serve our synod. I will not be able to spend this time until after our Synod Assembly. Perhaps it is providential that we anticipated Pastor Rosanne being on sabbatical this summer. In the interim, Pastor Christina Bright will serve as acting Director of Candidacy. Ms. Chelsey Satterlee will assist me with the paperwork associated with the call process. Pastor David and I will be less able to preach and preside, since there are only two of us, and we will need to anticipate emergencies. In keeping with the Synod's policy, committees that depended upon Pastor Rosanne to schedule and host their Zoom meetings will need to make their own arrangements. Committees that identified Pastor Rosanne as their staff liaison should reach out to me with questions or if there is a reason for me to attend their meetings.

Bidding Pastor Rosanne farewell and Godspeed will certainly be "a time to mourn and a time to dance" (3:4). We mourn that she is leaving and dance as we recall what has been. I invited Pastor Rosanne to drop by Synod Assembly so that we can thank her. That will likely be a "game day decision" as it will depend on how she is feeling. If you send notes or cards to the Synod Office, Ms. Ann Stavros will forward them to Pastor Rosanne.

Please pray for Pastor Rosanne and for all of us who are mostly weeping but also laughing, mourning, and not ready to dance. In this time of transition, please be patient with us who are taking up Pastor Rosanne's portion of our common work. Please phone me when you need something or when I have forgotten something. Please forgive me when I get something wrong, respond out of exhaustion, or make a mistake.

I rejoice that my friend Pastor Rosanne heard and is heeding God's call to enter the next season of her life. I pray she grows stronger with each day, spends plenty of time with those she loves, smiles as she recalls the good and faithful work she has done for Christ and the Church, and savors the abundant life we share in Jesus.

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

## Revival

The new movie, *Jesus Revolution*, tells the true story of the rise of the “Jesus People” in the 1970s and its release and reception seems to suggest there might be something brewing these days. There seems to me to be a genuine interest in talking about Jesus, faith, and Christian community.

Many in religious circles have been paying attention to the spontaneous religious revival at Asbury University, a private Christian university in Wilmore, Kentucky. Named for the early American Methodist Bishop Francis Ashbury, a leader in Christian Revival, Ashbury University has itself been a leader in Christian Revival, the latest example being a movement that started last month.

During chapel on February 8, 2023, Rev. Zach Meerkreebs, an assistant soccer coach, preached on Romans 12 saying, “Romans 12. That’s the star, okay? God’s Word and Jesus and the Holy Spirit moving in our midst, that’s what we’re hoping for.” Coach Meerkreebs was sure his message didn’t get through, but around 20 students stayed behind after the service singing and praying. Word spread and by the next Saturday, 3,000 people had joined the event, which has continued.

Across the country, congregations are bringing worship, music, and bible study to pubs, coffee shops, malls, and places where people gather. Instead of staying locked up in their church buildings, they are finding Jesus out in their communities and sharing the story of Jesus with the world. While there is a growing distrust of TV preachers, celebrity revivalists, and millionaire Christian rock groups, there does seem to be a blossoming interest in groups of local people gathering in the community to engage in conversation about Jesus.

This seems like the perfect time, a *kairos* moment, for our synod to be focusing on sharing Jesus and you can see how we’re doing that through our Synod Assembly theme, “It’s About Jesus!”, our new resource *You Are Witnesses of These Things* and its corresponding retreat in September, our Autumn Leadership Event theme, “Sharing the Story of Jesus with Youth and Young Adults,” and the preaching retreat in October based on Bishop Satterlee’s book, *My Burden is Light*. All of these are tools to get us talking about Jesus.

The revival we need is not a new packaged program purchased from “church renewal experts.” It’s not a better sound system, more contemporary music, a five year master plan, or more slick video presentations. It’s about us daring to step out in faith and share Jesus with others. We are in the season of Lent, which is a time of revival and renewal. A time of baptismal renewal. At the close of the baptism service the congregation says: “We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world.” At every baptism, we pledge that not only do we give thanks and praise to God, but our mission is to bring God’s Redeeming Word to others. We do that by talking about Jesus.

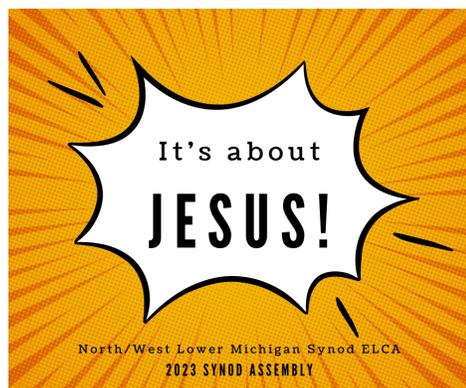
These events happening around us can provide an impetus to start conversations about Jesus:

- What do you think about the movie *Jesus Revolution*?
- Have you heard about the student revival at Asbury University?
- Where have you seen a renewed interest in people talking about Jesus?

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



## North/West Lower Michigan Synod 2023 Synod Assembly



The North/West Lower Michigan Synod's 2023 Synod Assembly will be held May 7-9, 2023 at the Comfort Inn & Suites in Mt. Pleasant under the theme "It's About Jesus!"

This year's Synod Assembly will be held in-person and will not be live-streamed or recorded.

All information pertaining to the 2023 Synod Assembly is available on Assembly page of the Synod's website (<http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP>).

Please check the website regularly as information will updated and added in the coming months.

### Registration

The registration fee includes assembly costs and meals for Sunday - Tuesday. Hotel reservations are separate and must be made directly with the hotel. **Registration for Synod Assembly will close on April 21, 2023.**

- **Early Bird Registration (available March 13 - 31, 2023):**
  - Voting Members (Rostered Ministers and Lay) and Visitors: \$200
  - Retired Rostered Ministers and Rostered Ministers on Disability: \$150
- **Regular Registration (available April 1 - 21, 2023):**
  - Voting Members (Rostered Ministers and Lay): \$225
  - Retired Rostered Ministers and Rostered Ministers on Disability: \$165

All voting members and visitors must register for Synod Assembly in advance using the online registration form. There is no partial day registration. Due to our arrangements with the hotel and concerns about capacity and safety, there will be no late or walk-in registration.

As part of the registration form, you will have the opportunity to register for the Pre-Assembly Discussions and Synod Assembly Workshops. Information about those sessions is available on the website.

Register Now: <https://tithe.ly/event-registration/#/6908387>

### Hotel Reservations

A special group rate of \$99/night is available at the Comfort Inn and Suites and the Fairfield Inn. Hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel. **All hotel reservations must be made by April 21, 2023.**

- **Comfort Inn and Suites**
  - Phone: 989-772-4000, Group Name: North/West Lower Michigan ELCA
  - Book Online: <https://bit.ly/404Ag8j>
- **Fairfield Inn**
  - Phone: 989-775-5000, Group Name: North/West Lower Michigan ELCA
  - Book Online: <https://bit.ly/404Ag8j>

### Assembly Book

The Assembly Book will again be a series of pdf documents published on the Synod website. **All materials for the Assembly Book must be submitted to Rebecca Bossenbroek ([finance@mittensynod.org](mailto:finance@mittensynod.org)) by 5pm on March 15, 2023.** Submission guidelines and requirements are available on the website.

### Resolutions and Memorials

To be considered for the 2023 Synod Assembly, all resolutions and memorials must be submitted to the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Resolutions Committee in advance of the Synod Assembly. **All resolutions and memorials must be submitted by 5pm on March 15, 2023 to Ann Stavros ([annstavros@mittensynod.org](mailto:annstavros@mittensynod.org)).** Guidelines and requirements for submitting a resolution or memorial are available on the website.

<b>Synod Finances</b>		
	<b>February</b>	<b>Year to Date</b>
<b>Unrestricted-Undesignated Fund</b>		
Mission Support Revenue*	102,511	102,511
Other Revenue	1,227	1,227
Net Assets Released from Restriction	0	0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>103,738</b>	<b>103,738</b>
Churchwide Proportionate Share (50%)	51,256	51,256
Other Expenses	55,709	55,790
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>106,965</b>	<b>106,965</b>
Net Change to Fund Balance (Revenue - Expenses)	(3,227)	(3,227)
Beginning Fund Balance	481,178	481,178
Ending Fund Balance	477,951	477,951
<b>Other Fund Balances</b>		
Unrestricted-Designated		616,230
Temporarily-Restricted Endowment-Related*		753,082
Temporarily-Restricted		316,097
Permanently-Restricted		1,002,547
<b>Total - All Funds (as of 2/28/23)</b>		<b>3,165,907</b>

\*February 28 Endowment Fund Account Statements were not available at the time of publishing this summary. The amount shown here reflects balances as of 1/31/23.

## 2023 Statements of Intent

Thank you to the congregations who have sent in their 2023 Statements of Intent! This form is available on the Synod's website under "Resources for Congregations." A direct link is available here: <https://bit.ly/3ZpUZ6z>. Completed forms should be emailed to [finance@mittensynod.org](mailto:finance@mittensynod.org).

As a reminder, the Synod Office's mailing address is:

North/West Lower Michigan Synod ELCA  
P.O. Box 517  
Dewitt, MI 48820

All mail and checks will reach us sooner if they come directly to our current mailing address rather than through the USPS forwarding service.

## The Discipline of Lent and Earth's Climate Crisis

Bishop Emeritus John Schleicher, Member of the Environmental Stewardship Task Force

In just a couple of weeks the Church Council of the ELCA will consider for adoption the newest Social Message of this Church: *Earth's Climate Crisis*. At Faith Lutheran in Okemos, where Phylis and I are members, we recently spent a number of Sundays studying a draft of this deeply insightful and hopeful social message together with *Awakening God's Call to Earthkeeping*, written by Kim Winchell. Kim is now a retired deacon, who for a time served in our synod to keep before us the urgent call to pray and work for the healing of our wounded planet. I encourage you to watch for and read with care this forthcoming social message (we hope to have copies available at Synod Assembly) and to visit or revisit Kim's thoughtful work.

Enabled and graced by the Spirit, the disciplines of Lent - repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love - wonderfully provide an intensive, holistic way for us to walk with Jesus through suffering and death and resurrection for sake of the world God so loves. So deeply loved, we, week after week, and day after day, repent. In the Ash Wednesday liturgy we asked God to accept our repentance "for our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us." Then on Maundy Thursday we will hear these or similar precious words: "God's forgiveness and the power of his Spirit to amend our lives continue with us because of his love for in Jesus, our Savior."

In our study at Faith we read together these words:

*As God's [beloved] people we are called to confess*

- *Our failure to consider the interests of future generations*
- *Our disregard for the victims of environmental injustice.*
- *Our insufficient concern for the welfare of other species facing extinction.*
- *Our personal complicity through high-carbon lifestyles.*
- *Our dismissive disdain for those with whom we disagree.*

We acknowledged that sin is both personal and communal, the latter meaning that we, sinful beings, create structures, organizations, and societies that perpetuate "structural" sin, sometimes unintentionally (more on this in a future article). Much to think about as we strive to be faithful.

*Strengthen us, Gracious Lord, in the discipline of Lent and in our journey with Jesus in suffering and dying and rising, for the sake of the world.*

## Annual Reports - Rostered Ministers and Congregations

### Rostered Ministers

2022 Annual Rostered Minister Report forms are available! All rostered ministers are expected to complete and return a report to Bishop Satterlee at [bishopcraigsatterlee@mittensynod.org](mailto:bishopcraigsatterlee@mittensynod.org). To complete the annual report form, you must save the pdf document to your computer before typing into it.

Download forms: <https://bit.ly/38HxIEU>

### Congregations (Form A & C)

The ELCA's annual congregation report is due March 15, 2023! Each year, the ELCA asks congregations to provide information about their people and activities. This information contributes to a greater knowledge of overall trends in the ELCA. This year, information for these forms will also be used to determine the number of voting members for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly so please make sure to submit your report! Forms were sent via mail in January and are also available online.

Learn more: <http://bit.ly/404dPjp>

## Publicly Engaged Church

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod's Publicly Engaged Church Table recommends the ELCA Social Statements as teaching and policy documents that provide broad frameworks to assist us in thinking about and discussing social issues in the context of faith and life. In the coming months, we will be highlighting each of the ELCA's social statements for discussion.

This month, we lift up the ELCA's social statement on Economic Life, which conveys ELCA teaching that economic activity is a means through which God's will is served for the thriving and well-being of humankind and the care of the earth. It recognizes that even though sin distorts human activity, we are called to practice economic activity justly and with special concern for those who live in poverty.

Read Now: <http://bit.ly/3L3SMsZ>

## Stories of Faith in Action

Across the ELCA we are connected through the stories we tell, the stories we hear and the stories we experience in ministry with, among and for one another. Our church has stories that span the country and the globe. By engaging with these stories, we become connected to those people and places, not physically present yet still responding to God's call to serve. The ELCA is excited to announce the new Stories of Faith in Action website.

Read now: <https://www.livinglutheran.org/sofia/>

## ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering

Rostered Ministers in the ELCA are invited to join colleagues July 17-20, 2023 under the theme of "Rekindle the gift within you" (2 Timothy 1:6).

This gathering is an opportunity for rostered ministers to remember, reclaim, rekindle and revive themselves. Gathering with colleagues from across the church for fellowship, renewal, continuing education, worship, bible study and refreshment for their spirits.

Learn more at <https://www.elca.org/rmg>

## Trinity Seminary Visit Days

Trinity Lutheran Seminary will be hosting visit days for prospective students to explore seminary, ask questions, and connect with the community and discern how God is calling you to explore your Call.

The Spring Trinity Lutheran Seminary Visit Days will be in-person on March 27 and March 28 (select one day).

During this event, prospective students will have the opportunity to meet faculty, staff, and current seminarians, visit a current seminary class, attend Chapel, have lunch with faculty, staff and current seminary students, learn about financial aid and scholarships, and tour the seminary and library.

Learn more and register:

<https://apply.capital.edu/register/VisitTrinity>

## Upcoming Events

March 15	Deadline: Congregation Reports (Form A & C)	
March 15	Deadline: Resolutions and Memorials for Synod Assembly	Learn more: <a href="http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP">http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP</a>
March 15	Deadline: Reports for Assembly Book	Learn more: <a href="http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP">http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP</a>
March 27	Trinity Lutheran Seminary Visit Days	Learn more: <a href="http://bit.ly/3JCW5WW">http://bit.ly/3JCW5WW</a>
April 4	Chrism Mass for Rostered Ministers	Learn more: <a href="http://bit.ly/3l8rxTu">http://bit.ly/3l8rxTu</a>
April 7	Good Friday	
April 9	Easter	
April 21	Deadline: Synod Assembly Registration and Hotel Reservations	Learn more: <a href="http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP">http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP</a>
May 7-9	2023 Synod Assembly	Learn more: <a href="http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP">http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP</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>
Messiah/Bay City	Pastor Dan Stonebeck, Interim / Preparing MSP
St. Matthew/Bridgeport (Part-Time)	Supply Pastors / Preparing MSP
Zion/Freeland	Pastor Andreas Teich, Interim / Interviewing
Trinity/Midland	Pastor Dennis Smith, Specialized Supply Pastor / Interviewing
Faith/Saginaw	Pastor Sue Hand, Stated Supply / Interviewing
Our Savior/Saginaw (Part-Time)	Pastor Andreas Teich, Interim / Interviewing
Resurrection/Saginaw (Part-Time)	Seeking a partnership or quarter to third time pastor

<b>Capital Area Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean</b>
Trinity/Hillsdale	Supply Pastors / Interviewing
Faith/Okemos	Pastor Ellen Schoepf retiring. Last Sunday April 30.

<b>Greater Grand Rapids Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean</b>
Zion/Woodland (Part-Time)	Pastor Rebecca Ebb- Speese retiring. Last Sunday June 18.

<b>Kalamazoo Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Joan Oleson, Dean</b>
-----------------------------	-------------------------------

<b>Stony Lake Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Sarah Samuelson, Dean</b>
Edgewood/Fruitport	Pastor Len Dahlgren retiring. Last Sunday May 29 / Congregational Vote May 7.
Harbor of Grace/Muskegon	Pastor Jack Ferra, Interim / Preparing MSP

<b>Sunrise Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean</b>
St. Paul/Alpena	Seeking a part-time assistant pastor

<b>Traverse Conference</b>	<b>Rev. Jonathan Reid, Dean</b>
Feast of Victory/Acme (Part-Time)	Pastor Ruth Overdier, Stated Supply / Interviewing
St. Paul/Reed City	Supply Pastors / Preparing MSP