



North/West Lower Michigan Synod

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Assisting Minister Training

I am excited that, as a Living Stone initiative and as part of our Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry program, Pastor Rachel Laughlin and I will lead a two-part training for assisting ministers on February 7 and March 13. We will review the theology of assisting ministers and provide practical training in fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted to assisting ministers in worship. So that those who train to be assisting ministers will have the opportunity to serve in their congregations, we encourage those interested to have a conversation with their pastor and for pastors to encourage people they believe have gifts for this ministry. I encourage people to participate in this workshop even if they are not part of the entire ELMC program. For further details and to register for the retreat, visit <https://www.elmm.org>. You may direct questions about the program to Rebecca Bossenbroek at administrator@elmm.org.

Why are we doing this? Martin Luther understood baptism as initiating all Christians into the "priesthood of all believers," and inaugurating each Christian's ministry to the community and the community's ministry to that person. Luther believed that by virtue of baptism, all Christians are called to minister to one another in whatever station they might find themselves placed. Through baptism, all became priests and assumed a priestly role in church and society.

In worship, or, in Luther's words, at Mass, Christians are not spectators who passively participate but play their own priestly role through active participation. Luther therefore intended that lay people commune frequently as priests, who communed and received both elements weekly or even daily. Luther also understood that, for people to actively participate, worship must be accessible to them. The vernacular or language of ordinary people allowed people to pray together so all could hear and speak as one body. Luther also employed music as a means by which all could exercise their priestly ministry. He considered music one of God's greatest gifts.

In keeping with this baptismal theology, Luther initially insisted that ordained ministry is purely functional, "for whoever comes out of the water of baptism can boast that he is already a consecrated priest, bishop and pope, although of course it is not seemly that just anybody should exercise such office...There is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, ... except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status."¹ Later on, Luther was more inclined to stress ordained ministry as Christ's gift and legacy to his Church. Luther came to regard ordination as part of the divine order. "The public ministry of the Word," he wrote, "ought to be established by holy ordination as the highest and greatest of the functions of the church."² Nevertheless, ordained ministry should never supplant or replace ministry that rightly belongs to the baptized.

Celebrating the priesthood of all believers, Lutheran worship books since Lutheran Book of Worship designate certain parts of the service to an assisting minister or assisting ministers. These responsibilities include leading the kyrie hymn of praise, reading the Old Testament and epistle and leading the psalm, setting and clearing the table at Communion, and leading the offertory and post communion prayers and the dismissal. Most important from my perspective, as the pastor prepares and delivers the sermon, an assisting minister prepares and delivers the prayers of the people. An assisting minister preparing the prayers with the same care of the pastors are expected to prepare their sermons might very well change the church and the world. I hope to see many at this very exciting workshop!

Holding you in prayer,
The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop

¹ Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nations, Luther's Works, 44:128-129.

² Martin Luther, "Concerning the Ministry, 1523," Luther's Works, 40: 11.

Mission Partners

The Rev. David E. Sprang, Director of Evangelical Mission

Mission Partners are congregations which are new mission starts, developing worshiping communities, Campus Ministries, or congregations in some renewal/vitality process with the synod and the ELCA where they need extra support. Existing congregations can partner with these new or renewing mission congregations to lend support. Mission Partner congregations primarily show support by giving one time, or monthly financial gifts (many use noisy offerings). In addition, mission partners show support by:

- Exchanging visits and/or the pastors exchanging pulpits
- Doing acts of service together
- Sending letters and prayers of support

There could be other creative and innovative ways that congregations are Mission Partners. Mission Partners are an outward sign of the synod working together to be the body of Christ in our region.

2020 Mission Partners

- Trinity, Battle Creek – Strategic Congregation – providing support to one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city.
- Zion, Saginaw – Ministry in Poverty – working on becoming a multicultural neighborhood church caring for the forgotten in Saginaw.
- Harbor of Grace (formerly Our Savior's, St. Luke, Immanuel, Samuel), Muskegon – Consolidating Congregations – four congregations joining together to be the ELCA presence in the midst of the city's revitalization.
- Sudanese Christ Lutheran Community, Wyoming, MI – Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community – mission community serving the South Sudanese community in Grand Rapids.
- St. Matthew, Bridgeport – Step Up – seeking to move back to full time ministry from part time and serve rural areas outside Saginaw.
- All Saints, Mason – specific outreach to Millennials and young families.
- University Lutheran, East Lansing – Michigan State University Lutheran Campus Ministry – One Community
- Immanuel, Mt. Pleasant – Central Michigan University Lutheran Campus Ministry
- Matrix – Western Michigan Lutheran Campus Ministry – Trinity Lutheran and Lutheran Church of the Savior, Kalamazoo, Prince of Peace, Portage, and Trinity and St. Peter, Battle Creek.

Lenten Retreat: Reflecting on Preaching

March 19-20, 2020, 12pm to 12pm
St. Francis Retreat Center, Dewitt, MI

Take a day this Lent to step back from the demanding vocation that is preaching to reflect on the art and the craft of proclaiming the gospel. Dr. Craig A. Satterlee will make presentations and invite conversation on homiletic method, the Holy Spirit and preaching, pondering scripture, crafting the sermon, delivery, and a theology of preaching.

The retreat includes the celebration of the Eucharist with a sermon for the coming Sunday and opportunity for fellowship. The retreat is open to all who preach: pastors, deacons, seminarians, and lay preachers; however, this retreat does not authorize or qualify anyone to preach. You will not be expected to preach as part of this retreat.

Thanks to a generous gift to the Bishop's Teaching Fund from Saint Peter Lutheran Church in Battle Creek, we are able to offer this opportunity to 15 participants for \$40 each, which includes room and meals. If registration exceeds 15, we will seek additional funding to maintain the same rate.

Register Now: <https://bit.ly/2NmTZx4>

Registration must be submitted by March 13, 2020.

The Rev. Dr. Craig A. Satterlee is Bishop of North/West Lower Michigan Synod, Distinguished Affiliated Professor of Homiletics at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and Visiting Associate Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Anticipatory Communities

The Environmental Stewardship Task Force

In his book [Earth Honoring Faith](#), ethicist Larry Rasmussen speaks about the importance of faith communities in building a sustainable planet. Faith communities can be "anticipatory communities," communities of moral formation that are seeking to live out the change that is needed in our world. In the words of Gandhi: we must be the change we seek if we expect change to happen.

Rasmussen says: "Prophetic symbols and practices, even modest ones move people in a direction that lets them embrace bigger changes when the moment is ripe and options are forced. Small changes are often the leaven of a better order. They are like water softening up compacted soil, allowing new seeds to grow. Consider climate change. Hoisting solar panels to rooftops here and there, starting community gardens, and reforesting floodplains, one community at a time, will not do what only bioregional, national, and international legislations and law enforcement can. Beijing, Washington, Moscow and the U.N. count more for this than my neighborhood. Yet, there's no such thing as a useless community garden, a useless photo-voltaic system, or a useless forest as preparation for systemic change."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently said that unless the world cuts carbon emissions by half by 2030 there will be dire consequences for our planet. In light of this our work to conserve energy, recycle and compost, change our lifestyles bit by bit, our community gardens, congregational green teams—these things may seem very small. But anticipatory communities are and will be of vital importance in the great work that lies ahead of us.

Erick Johnson
Environmental Stewardship Task Force

Synod Finances as of December 31, 2019

	Current Year		Prior Year	
	December	Year to Date	December	Year to Date
Revenue				
Mission Support*	103,647	1,212,196	141,115	1,262,851
Other	3,783	133,545	11,199	126,256
Total	107,430	1,345,741	152,314	1,389,107
Expenses				
Churchwide Proportionate Share	51,823	606,098	70,499	630,846
Other	66,314	799,747	62,313	849,434
Total	118,137	1,405,845	132,812	1,480,280
Net Assets Released from Restriction	0	0	0	1,497
Net Change to Fund Balance	(10,707)	(60,104)	19,502	(89,676)

* reflects contributions received in the synod office through 12/20/19. Synod office was closed 12/23/19-1/3/20

Note: Contributions received through 1/31/20 will be reflected on the 4th Quarter Giving Statements.

ELMM Assisting Minister Training

Session I: February 7-8, 2020
 Session II: March 13-14, 2020

Equipping Leaders for Mission and Ministry announces Assisting Minister Training with Bishop Satterlee. Luther believed and Lutherans confess that all the baptized exercise an active, even "priestly" role in worship. So recent Lutheran worship books provide an assisting minister role with responsibilities assigned to a member of the congregation on behalf of the entire assembly.

This course provides the theology behind the role of assisting minister and gives participants an opportunity to learn the appropriate skills, including setting and clearing the table, writing the intercessory prayers, and other responsibilities of the assisting minister.

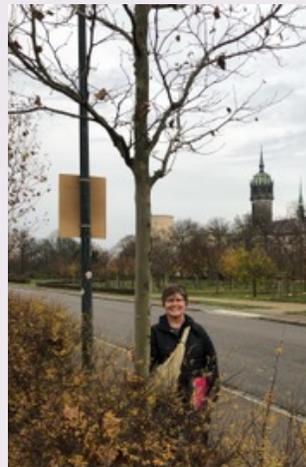
Learn More: <https://www.elmm.org>

Visiting Luthergarten

During her recent visit to Wittenberg, Germany, Rev. Joan Oleson was delighted to see the Luthergarten commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. As she explains: "It was an inspiration to see trees planted by partners from all over the world and so many denominations. And, of course it was great to see our own synod's planting standing tall and strong."

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod became involved with this project when Bishop Satterlee sponsored a tree in the name of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. In 2016, Rev. David Sprang traveled to Germany on behalf of the Synod to help plant the tree.

Learn More: <https://bit.ly/30jittw4>



Upcoming Events

January 31- February 3	Extravaganza 2020	Anaheim, CA	Learn More: https://bit.ly/2ruaiOq
February 7-8	ELMM Retreat: Assisting Minister Training		Learn More: elmm.org
February 11-13	Ignite the Church Conference	Orlando, FL	Learn More: https://bit.ly/2NDce1C

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 Priddy, Dean
Faith/Saginaw	Supply Pastors/Interviewing		
Hope/Marlette (part-time)	Supply Pastors/ Congregational Vote January 26	Stony Lake Conference	Rev. Sarah Samuelson, Dean
Capital Area Conference	Rev. Gary Bunge, Dean	Sunrise Conference	Rev. Chrisy Bright, Dean
Calvary/Lansing (part-time)	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	Peace/Gaylord	Supply Pastors/Awaiting Additional Candidates
St. Paul/East Lansing	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP		
Grace/Lansing	John Schleicher, Contract Pastor/Interviewing	Traverse Conference	Rev. Scott Torkko, Dean
Peace/Charlotte	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP	Messiah/Roscommon	Supply Pastors/Interviewing
		St. Paul/Reed City	Matt Deames, Intentional Interim/Awaiting a Candidate
Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Rev. Julie Schneider-Thomas, Dean		
Peace/Holland (part-time)	CALL ACCEPTED: Rev. Clay Bates, Installation January 19		
Bread of Life/Hudsonville	Supply Pastors/Preparing MSP		