



**North/West Lower
Michigan Synod**

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Resurrection and New Life

“We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.” We confess these words in the Nicene Creed. They remind us that, as people who endeavor to trust the gospel and follow Jesus, expecting resurrection and new life is our stance in the world. In this season of division, when people don't seem to be able to agree on anything, unless they agree on everything, we do well to remain vigilant for signs of resurrection, new life, unity, and hope, especially as we pass from Holy Week to Easter. Paul's words strike me as most relevant: “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8).

As I remain vigilant for signs of resurrection and new life, I yearn for signs of unity. They are hard to come by and they show up in unexpected places. So it happened that, a few weeks ago, I was moved emotionally by presentations that I expected would be dry, technical, and academic. I experienced unity and new life in, of all things, the ecumenical dialogue between the ELCA and the Orthodox churches.

Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue

This Easter, I count as a special grace that Eastern and Western Christians—the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant churches—will all celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord on April 20. Most years, Eastern and Western Christians celebrate Easter on different days primarily because they use different calendars (Julian and Gregorian) to calculate the date of Easter, leading to a 13-day difference in the calendar and a divided witness to the world. [1] This year, however, all of Christianity celebrates Christ's Resurrection on the same day—a sign of unity that might yield new life!

I also count as a special grace that, in this year of the 1700th anniversary of the first Christian Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea, near Constantinople in 325 CE, Lutheran and Orthodox churches issued a statement expressing their shared understanding of the Holy Trinity. [2] Another sign of unity.

For centuries, the Eastern and Western churches have been divided over the “Filioque” (Latin for “and the Son”), a phrase in the third article of the Nicene Creed. The Latin church added this phrase to the Nicene Creed in 1014 CE, so that, in the West, the Nicene Creed states that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son.” This doctrine about the Trinity has been a major point of contention between the Eastern and Western churches.

Rather than moving quickly to our differences, the Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue intentionally honors the unity we share. “A Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on Faith in the Holy Trinity” recognizes that both the ELCA and the Orthodox Church believe in and worship the Holy Trinity by confessing our faith in the Trinity in the words of the Nicene Creed and encountering each of the persons of the Holy Trinity in their distinction from one another and their unity with each other as the one God. It might be fun this Easter season to consider how we experience God – Creator, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit – in our worship.

After celebrating what unites, the statement turns to the historical and theological issues surrounding the “Filioque,” the one point in the Creed on which Lutheran and Orthodox Christians have traditionally disagreed with in regard to faith in the Holy Trinity. First, the statement demonstrates a united understanding of the differences. Lutherans, together with other churches rooted in Latin-speaking Christianity, have traditionally confessed the creedal faith in the Holy Trinity by saying that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son [Filioque].” Moreover, many of the chief teachers of the Lutheran tradition, including Luther himself, vigorously taught this understanding of the Trinity; Lutheran theologians have traditionally defended both the addition of the phrase “and the Son” and the truth of the teaching embodied by this addition. Orthodox Christians have traditionally opposed both the addition of the Filioque clause to the Creed and the teaching that the Spirit proceeds from the Son. I found myself reminded that working to genuinely understand the differences that divide is a sign of unity, resurrection, and new life.

Continued from page 1

Then we arrive at some common ground. The 2024 Lutheran – Orthodox Joint Statement on the Filioque, issued by the international dialogue,^[3] acknowledges that Lutherans, together with many other Western Christians, now widely recognize that the addition of the Filioque ("proceeds from the Father and the Son") to the Nicene Creed, which took place locally by a unilateral action of the Latin Church and without the action of an Ecumenical Council, was illegitimate and contributed to disunity among Christians. Moreover, many Lutherans are now convinced that the original Creed without the Filioque addition could and should be restored in their worship.

This conviction need not contradict the Lutheran Confessions, which commit Lutherans to "the decree of the Council of Nicaea." Article I of the Augsburg Confession commits Lutherans to *the decree*—the text—of Nicaea, which does not include the Filioque. The decree simply says that the Holy Spirit is "the one proceeding from the Father," consistent with John 15:26. On this basis, Lutherans can now acknowledge that the Filioque is not ecumenical dogma, but has the status of a local tradition that is not binding on the universal church.

Orthodox Christians may accept the teaching of the "double procession" of the Spirit from the Father and the Son in the patristic sense that the Spirit is sent from the Father through/and the Son in the mystery of our salvation in Christ. The relation of the Son to the Spirit in the context of salvation is not the same as the relation of the Son to the Spirit in the eternal Trinity, where the Spirit proceeds from the Father. Thus for Orthodox Christians, the dispute over the Filioque can be narrowed down to accepting or rejecting the distinction between how the Trinity as eternally in themselves and how they appear in Christ. In terms of the Trinity Godself, both the Son and the Spirit proceed from the Father. In terms of entering the world for the work of salvation, the Spirit proceeds from the Father through/and the Son.

As I listened to the Lutheran – Orthodox presentation, tried to wrap my mind around it, I felt my body relax, and I wiped away some tears. The Nicene Creed and the Council of Nicaea bring me joy that many people cannot comprehend. Bishops have a special responsibility to care for the apostolic faith and the unity of the Church, which the Nicene Creed has represented for 1700 years. I sometimes get choked up in worship when an assembly says the creed or sings "The Church's One Foundation" so passionately that I can hear the words. Saint Ambrose (d. 397 CE), the fourth century bishop of Milan (the subject of my dissertation and my patron saint), is known for his strong defense of the Nicene Creed and the faith it represents against Arianism, a heresy declaring that Christ is not truly divine but a created being and therefore not entitled to the honor and worship owed to God. Thus, with Luther and many others, I insist that the church and its preachers proclaim Christ as Savior before we make Jesus, a teacher, example, or role model. Finally, I like to dabble in contemplating the Holy Spirit; check out Chapter 2 in *My Burden is Light*. All this is to say that the Lutheran and Orthodox churches coming together in a renewed, common understanding of the faith of Nicaea brings me joy, hope, and strength in these divided times. This is for me a sign of resurrection and new life.

Where Are You Looking?

"We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." Where are you looking? Creeds, councils, and ecumenical dialogues aren't for everyone. So where are you looking for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come? What sign of resurrection and new life speaks to your heart and brings you joy, hope, and strength in these times?

Some experience these signs in nature in ways that, because of my visual limitations, I cannot completely comprehend. Some experience these signs in art. Someone recently told me about driving by their now-closed congregation. I heard in their voice both love and grief as they shared that it was good to see a full parking lot and know that, inside the building, people are gaining reading, language, and math skills that will change the trajectory of their lives. Resurrection. New life. The signs may be hard to find. And they may show up unexpectedly when we remember our stance in the world.

"We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." Remain vigilant until you find resurrection and new life. Then share what you discover or encounter or experience. People need resurrection these days. If you share it with joy, strength, and hope, they will appreciate even ecumenical relationships and Trinitarian theology. Don't worry if finding a sign of resurrection doesn't happen quickly. Beginning Sunday, we have seven weeks to celebrate Easter.

We published the April newsletter on Tuesday of Holy Week. I am praying for the people of our synod this week, especially those who plan and lead worship, that you experience Jesus and the salvation Christ brings in personal and meaningful ways.

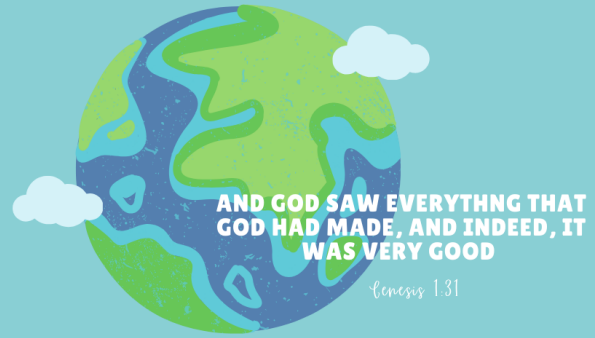
The Rev. Craig Alan Satterlee, Ph.D., Bishop

^[1] <https://bit.ly/43TAN21>

^[2] <https://bit.ly/3Rfs7vf>

^[3] <https://bit.ly/3YpsXta>

Celebrating EARTH DAY & EARTH MONTH



REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Reduce consumption, reuse items and recycle to reduce waste.



In Michigan, you can recycle metals, paper, glass, plastic, and cardboard.

Check with your local recycler about other items such as electronics, clothes, and batteries.

CONSERVE ENERGY

Use LED lightbulbs and turn off the lights when not in use.



Install a programmable thermostat and utilize renewable energy sources when possible.

Use an advanced power strip to manage the energy consumption of household electronics.

USE ECO-FRIENDLY TRANSPORT

Use environmentally friendly transportation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Carpool or take public transportation such as buses or trains.

When possible, walk or bike instead of drive.



EAT SUSTAINABLY

Eat more plants (and less meat).

Buy food that is local and in season.

Reduce food waste by shopping with a list and only getting what you need.



Compost food scraps to improve soil quality, save landfill space and water, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE

Replace plastic products with environmentally friendly alternatives to reduce plastic pollution.

Bring a cloth bag with you when grocery shopping.

Use a reusable water bottle.

Replace plastic straws with silicone or metal ones.



CONSERVE WATER

Conserve water at home to help protect the environment.

Turn off the water while brushing your teeth.

Use water efficient appliances.

Fix leaks like running toilets and dripping faucets.



SHOP SECONDHAND

By buying second-hand, fewer new items are being produced, which results in less water use and reduced waste.

Shop at vintage and thrift shops.

Check local Buy Nothing groups for needed items.



Recycle, donate, or repurpose old items instead of throwing them away.

PLANT TREES

Plant trees to help absorb carbon and maintain ecosystem balance.

Michigan's Department of Natural Resources is working towards a global goal of restoring and growing one trillion trees by 2030.



LUTHERANS RESTORING CREATION

Lutherans Restoring Creation has prepared a sermon for Earth Day from The Rev. Dr. Barbara Rossing. The sermon will relate to the lectionary readings for April 27.

Congregations can register to receive the sermon in advance. The sermon video will be publicly released on YouTube on April 22.

Learn more at lutheransrestoringcreation.org

Renewing Lay Leadership

The North/West Lower Michigan Synod has applied for a grant from Warburg Seminary's CaSTLE Project. The grant will support the Synod's redevelopment of a Lay Leadership training program that is in line with the ELCA's Synodically Authorized Ministry (SAM) requirements and the development of resources for our congregations, especially those in rural and small town settings, to empower and equip lay leaders in caring for their congregations and witnessing in their communities.

Bishop Satterlee and the Synod Staff are excited about this opportunity and its potential to transform congregational ministry and Synodically Authorized Ministry in our synod. The emphasis of The CASTLE Project aligns perfectly with our synod's emphasis of freeing and empowering all the baptized to witness to and share the story of Jesus for no reason other than that it is such good news—and people need good news. The CaSTLE Project's focus on rural and small town congregations is also perfect fit for our synod as we have many congregations in those settings and this would offer additional opportunities for our synod to support their ministry and outreach.

Read full narrative of the program: <https://bit.ly/3G7aQSF>

The CaSTLE Project expects to make funding decisions in June 2025. In the meantime, the North/West Lower Michigan Synod invites lay leaders and rostered ministers to the next You Are Witnesses Retreat on May 9-10, 2025. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/4jMMkVB>

Synod Disaster Response: Winter Storms

On March 30, much of our synod experienced severe winter storms, which led to freezing temperatures, ice, tornadoes, and loss of power. Bishop Satterlee, the Synod Staff, and Pastor Sprang have been in conversation with six congregations in the northern part of our synod to provide support. Pastor Sprang has been working with Lutheran Disaster Response and volunteer agencies across the state on behalf of our synod.

Our synod's Executive Committee has designated \$5,000 from our Synod Disaster Relief Fund to assist those who have been affected by the storms. These funds are being used for food pantries, generator fuel, and other needs.

If your congregation has been affected and needs support, please reach out to Pastor Sprang at revdsprang@gmail.com. The State of Michigan has also provided a website with resources for those affected: <https://bit.ly/4cw5RqL>.

St. Paul in Alpena is hosting volunteer groups. Grace in Alpena, Cross of Christ in Petoskey, St. James in Rogers City, St. Matthew in Heron, and Peace in Gaylord are all assisting those who need food and generator fuel. Pastor Sprang has also been providing pastoral care at the Emergency Shelter in Gaylord. The National Guard has arrived in the area and is providing extra help.



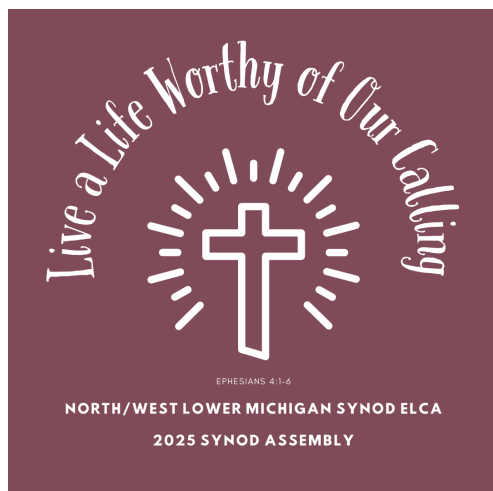
Additional updates from Pastor Sprang are available in the Synod's Facebook Group: <https://bit.ly/42DyEGl>

If you would like to donate to the Synod Disaster Relief Fund, please visit <https://www.mittensynod.org/donate/>. Click "Give" and choose "NWLM Synod Disaster Relief" from the dropdown menu.

We thank you for your generosity as it allows us to quickly responded to those in need!



Live a Life Worthy of Our Calling: 2025 Synod Assembly



The 2025 North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly will be held in-person on May 18-20, 2025 at the Comfort Inn & Suites in Mt. Pleasant.

All information is available on the Synod's website: <http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP>. Please check the website regularly as resources will be added. All questions should be emailed to assembly@mittensynod.org.

In the coming weeks, information will be emailed to those registered for Synod Assembly. Please check your spam folders regularly as we have heard from some that synod emails are getting caught in spam filters.

Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- April 23: Registration Closes
- April 28: Assembly Book Published Online
- May 13: Pre-Assembly Discussion on Resolutions/Memorials
- May 14: Pre-Assembly Discussion on Budget/Compensation Guidelines
- May 15: Pre-Assembly Discussion on Parliamentary Procedure/Voting/Bishop Election

Registration Closes April 23!

All voting members and visitors must register for Synod Assembly in advance using the online registration form. Registration costs, common questions about the registration form, and hotel information is available on the website.

Code of Conduct for Synod Events

Synod Council created and approved a Code of Conduct for Synod Events in February 2025. It includes Synod Council meetings, Synod Assemblies, Synod Conference gatherings, Synod Training Events, and other meetings and events organized or co-hosted by the Synod or its representatives. All voting members and visitors are expected to review and agree to upload this Code of Conduct. It is included in the registration form and is also available online: <https://bit.ly/4hT7QXq>

Synod Assembly Scavenger Hunt

Similar to one at the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering, voting members and visitors will be able to participate in a digital scavenger hunt during Synod Assembly! The scavenger hunt will be available through Eventzee, a free mobile application. We encourage voting members and visitors to download the application and set up an account prior to Synod Assembly. We recommend playing on a team! Only one account is needed for a team so if you're playing on a team with other members of your congregation, just have one person create an account. Scavenger Hunt tasks will go live on May 16! View Joining Instructions: <https://bit.ly/3EH3Riz>

Assembly Book

The Assembly Book (a series of pdf documents) will be published on the Synod website on April 28. All voting members and visitors are strongly encouraged to read the Assembly Book **prior** to Synod Assembly. Any updates to the Assembly Book will be posted on the Synod website. In line with "Care for Creation" principles, printed copies of the Assembly Book will not be available onsite. If you would like a printed copy, please print one and bring it with you.

Check-In at Synod Assembly

In 2023, Synod Council approved a number of Continuing Resolutions regarding the registration and credentials process for Synod Assemblies (See April 2023 Bishop's Newsletter: <https://bit.ly/42SBuVb>). Given these Continuing Resolutions, the Credentials Committee will determine the required lay voting membership based on the voting membership of those registered by the stated registration deadline. Further, the Credentials Committee will determine the presence of a quorum for conducting business in a way such as the showing of identification tags.

Therefore, in order to vote at the 2025 Synod Assembly, voting members must register by the registration deadline of April 23 and pick up of their credentials (identification tag and voting cards) from the Assembly Desk at the Comfort Inn & Suites prior to the session they wish to vote at. The Assembly Desk hours are available in the draft agenda currently available on the website and will also be included in the agenda in the Assembly Book.

Building Up

In 1988-1989 my family and I lived in Heidelberg, West Germany, while I was a Fulbright Professor at the University of Heidelberg. We split our family worship time between our neighborhood German congregation and the U.S. Army base's Lutheran chapel, where the chaplain spoke to us one Sunday about the civilian congregation he had served before entering the Army. The congregation was in a small, Midwestern town (not in Michigan, but it easily could have been!). The town was like many small towns: every person in the community was assigned a certain role—including the man who served as the town's scoundrel. He was the person few people would talk to but everyone talked about. When the pastor began his ministry, he noticed that the man never showed up at church but regularly entered the town bar. On occasion, the pastor would stop at the bar and talk with the man. After a year of such discussions the pastor invited the man to worship. Nothing happened, but in a few weeks on a bright, sunny spring day the man walked into the sanctuary for worship. The first person who saw him hissed, "And what are you doing here?" Out the door he went, never to return.

It took over a year for the pastor and the Spirit to build up the man enough that he felt he could enter the church in search of grace. It took six words to tear down all that care-filled and loving building.

I am profoundly concerned about the language of tearing down that is so prevalent in our country right now, including in the church. My major uneasiness in these reflections is the church, because I fear we at times have forgotten how to talk with each other, how to disagree with each other, how to be in the same congregation or synod with each other.

When I search for guidance, I often turn to the Apostle Paul, in part because I find him to be very much down-to-earth, very practical, and very realistic while at the same time operating with a larger vision of what God is doing in the world.

When writing to the early congregation in Corinth, Paul is addressing believers who disagree over many issues, both in terms of practice and in terms of what they believe. We have twenty centuries of lived Christian experience to draw upon in such disagreements, but they had only a few years. Part of Paul's genius is providing them—and us—with guidelines. In a discussion of whether believers could participate in the many non-Christian festivals around them while still believing in Jesus, Paul writes,

"All things are permitted," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are permitted," but not all things build up. (1 Corinthians 10:23)

"Build up," of course, is a construction term. It is formed around the word *oikos*, which means *house* or *household*. The verbal form means to construct a building. In 3:9 he uses the noun from the same family:

For we are God's coworkers, working together; you are God's field, God's building. (1 Corinthians 3:9)

Paul is about body-building: namely, building the body of Christ, which is the church, as well as building the individual bodies of those who believe in Jesus as the Christ. And so he can compliment and exhort believers in the northern Greek city of Thessalonica:

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

And a fundamental way that such building up occurs is through love.

Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. (1 Corinthians 8:1)

Knowledge, in this case, refers not so much to formal study or academic ability, but the kind of knowledge that may at one level be correct, but that is used to gain an advantage over another. So rather than building up, this kind of knowledge is interested in "one-upping" the other, using intellectual abilities, including theological abilities, to tear someone else down. But love, says Paul, builds up. The word for love here is the Greek word *agapē*, which is the kind of love that is directed to the other and the needs of the other rather than toward one's self. It is the sort of love we see in Jesus.

Paul develops similar themes in Romans 14-15, where he is dealing with divisions between Judean believers and Gentile believers over which holy days to celebrate, which food to eat or not eat, and which liquids to drink or not drink. In admonishing the Romans how to negotiate those differences he tells them that

Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. (Romans 15:2)

And why should they do that?

For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." (Romans 15:3; the quotation is from Psalm 68:10 in the Greek Old Testament)

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The basis for not pleasing ourselves and for building up the other is Christ. He is the model of the one who bears insults and punishment, not to please himself but to serve others. In his ministry, therefore, Paul can affirm that

Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up. (2 Corinthians 12:19)

Practically speaking, that means for Paul:

Do not seek your own advantage but that of the other. (1 Corinthians 10:24)^[1]

As we continue to live our lives as followers of Jesus in our families, in our work relationships, in our congregational life; and as we look toward our upcoming synod assembly and, later in the year, our churchwide assembly, how does God call us to live our lives in building up each other individually and in that way building up the church? Based on Paul, here are several suggestions for gifts we might ask God to grant us. I am sure you will have others.

a) Ask for the ability to be constructive, not destructive.

When writing on the Eighth Commandment In *The Large Catechism*, Luther states that “It is a particularly fine, noble virtue to put the best construction on all we may hear about our neighbors (as long as it is not an evil that is publicly known), ...”^[2]

Over against that, as we have seen, it is much easier to tear down than to build up.

b) Ask for the ability to seek the advantage (or good) of other people rather than of ourselves.

In his discussion of the Ninth and Tenth Commandments, Luther observes “that God does not want you to deprive your neighbors of anything that is theirs, so that they suffer loss while you satisfy your greed.”^[3] The same observation holds, of course, for what we say about others with our tongues or our keyboard strokes.

c) Ask for the ability to please others.

We need to be careful with this language, borrowed from Paul. The apostle is not directing us to be “people-pleasers” in the negative sense of the term. The Greek term for *please* (*areskō*) signals meeting the needs of others in a way that gives them worth and dignity.^[4] To do that requires that those who are giving, who are “pleasing” others, have their own self-worth as baptized children of God.

d) Ask for the strength to pray for others.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, twentieth century German theologian and martyr, identifies the centrality of prayer in our life together as believers. “A Christian fellowship lives and exists by the intercession of its members for one another, or it collapses. I can no longer condemn or hate a brother [or sister] for whom I pray, no matter how much trouble he [or she] causes me. ... Intercession is also a daily service we owe to God and our brother [and sister].”^[5]

e) Ask for the spiritual depth to carry the burdens of others.

“Bear one another’s burdens,” Paul counsels believers (Galatians 6:2)—and not in order to secretly thrill at their struggles or failures, not to judge them, but to share the load of guilt, regret, and sorrow that dogs every halting step of our lives. And the way we can do that is to be strengthened by what God has already done for us. Bonhoeffer explores the heavy burden we carry, but reminds us that in the cross of Jesus, “God took men [humankind] upon Himself [God’s Self] and they weighted Him [God] to the ground, but God remained with them and they with God.”^[6] In light of that we pray for the spiritual muscle-tone to remain with others.

My father was a plumbing, heating, and air-conditioning estimator. I grew up in the construction industry and worked holidays and summers at the shop. Building, I learned, requires constant planning, careful attention to detail, and ongoing maintenance. So does building up people and thus building up the church. That is our call in a world of conflict, gaslighting, backbiting, and falsehood, as God calls us into our next conversation, our next meeting, our next discussion about synodical matters and personnel, our next exchange regarding the Churchwide assembly and officers, that we build up rather than tear down. Or, as Paul concludes,

Let us then pursue what makes for peace, and for mutual upbuilding. (Romans 14:19)

Rev. Walter F. Taylor, Jr., Ph.D.

Ernest W. and Edith S. Ogram Professor Emeritus of New Testament Studies
Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University

^[1] For other passages on *building up*, please see 1 Corinthians 8:10 (NRSVue: *encouraged*), 14:3-5, 14:12, 14:17, 14:26; 2 Corinthians 10:8, 13:10; Ephesians 4:12, 16, 29.

^[2] *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 424.

^[3] *The Book of Concord*, 427.

^[4] “ἀρέσκω,” (*areskō*), in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (3rd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 129.

^[5] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 86.

^[6] Bonhoeffer, 100.

Synod Financial Summary - February 2025

Financial Position Indicators			2/28/25		2/29/24			
Cash (Comerica and MIF Checking)			259,221		298,326			
Investments (CDs and Money Market Account)			630,184		614,038			
Cash Flow Reserve Fund (NTE 16% of subsequent year budgeted expenses)			222,171		200,710			
Book Net Worth (Fund Balance - All Funds)			3,479,818		3,322,797			
Unrestricted-Undesignated Fund Activity (General Operating Fund)								
	Current Year				Prior Year			
	February		Year to Date		February		Year to Date	
	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>
Mission Support Revenue (50% goes to ELCA Churchwide)	97,445	100,000	97,445	100,000	104,610	101,079	104,610	101,079
Synod Assembly Revenue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Revenue	16,594	19,309	16,594	19,309	4,626	2,769	4,626	2,769
Total Revenue	114,039	119,309	114,039	119,309	109,235	103,848	109,235	103,848
Churchwide Proportionate Share (50%)	48,722	50,000	48,722	50,000	52,340	50,540	52,340	50,540
Synod Assembly Expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Expenses	55,244	72,384	55,244	72,384	58,325	60,602	58,325	60,602
Total Expenses	103,966	122,384	103,966	122,384	110,664	111,142	110,664	111,142
Net Change to Fund Balance (Revenue less Expenses)	10,073	(3,075)	10,073	(3,075)	(1,429)	(7,294)	(1,429)	(7,294)
Transfers as directed by Synod Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beginning Fund Balance	108,597		108,597		146,740		146,740	
Ending Fund Balance at 2/28/25 & 2/29/24	118,669		118,669		145,311		145,311	
Other Fund Balances								
Unrestricted-Designated*			1,039,636		999,547			
Temporarily-Restricted Endowment-Related**			987,188		831,966			
Temporarily-Restricted			298,777		310,426			
Permanently-Restricted			1,035,547		1,035,547			
Total Fund Balances at 2/28/25 & 2/29/24			3,479,818		3,322,797			

*Includes Synod Endowment Fund, Cash Flow Reserve, Synod Staff Support Fund

**Reflects unrealized gains/losses on investments and unspent distributions

Tax Exemption Certificates

Occasionally we hear from congregations asking to use the synod's certificate of federal tax exemption. Churchwide legal counsel explains that each congregation has their own certificate that includes their name and unique EIN.

If your congregation is seeking this information, email the Churchwide Office of the Secretary at 501c3@elca.org with your congregation's legal name (as it appears on your articles of incorporation), full street address, and EIN and they will provide you with your certificate.

Trinity Lutheran Seminary: The Last Lectures

Join Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University in celebrating the contributions of their esteemed colleagues, The Rev. Dr. Kathryn A. Kleinhans, The Rev. Dr. E. Wray Bryant, and The Rev. Dr. Joy A. Schroeder, upon their retirement.

The celebration will be on May 6 at 1:00pm in the Gloria Dei Worship Center. A reception will be held in Le Sage at 3:30pm.

Seminary Scholarship Applications

If you are in the candidacy process to become a rostered minister in the ELCA and are a member of a congregation in the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, we have scholarship opportunities available!

Scholarships are available to help defray tuition and non-tuition expenses. Applications are available on the synod website. Completed applications should be emailed to Pastor Julie Bailey, chair of the Seminary Scholarship Committee by September 1, 2025. If you have any questions, reach out to Pastor Bailey. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/4jthGAh>

Check Your Spam Folders!

Over the past few weeks, we've received reports that emails from the Synod are getting caught in spam filters, being marked as junk, or are not being delivered at all. Spam filters and firewalls are very strong now, can be triggered by a long list of variables, and adapt to user behavior. Our Communications Director takes steps behind the scenes to avoid spam filters, but because there is a component tied to email recipient behavior, having synod emails go to spam is not something the Synod Office can completely control. However, by working together, we can help mitigate the amount of emails being sent to spam!

Synod email communications primarily come from the communications@mittensynod.org email address. Whether an email was sent via our email program (e.g. Weekly Updates, Bishop's Newsletter) or directly from our synod's Communications Director, if you have previously marked an email from that address as spam, repeatedly deleted emails from that address without opening them, blocked the sender or domain, or previously unsubscribed from the synod's email list, it's more likely that synod emails sent to you will end up in spam or be blocked by firewalls.

While we feel all of our communications are important, in the coming weeks information pertaining to Synod Assembly will be emailed out from either communications@mittensynod.org or assembly@mittensynod.org. Please add these email addresses to your safe sender list and check your spam folder so you don't miss anything!



The Synod Office will be closed on April 18 in observance of Good Friday. We wish you a blessed Holy Week and a joyous Easter!

Upcoming Events

April 22	End Gun Violence Michigan Lobby Day	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3DB4utQ
April 23	Synod Assembly Registration Deadline	Learn more: http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP
April 26	2025 Spring WELCA Gathering	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3R23stQ
April 28	Synod Assembly Book Published Online	Learn more: http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP
May 6	Trinity Lutheran Seminary: The Last Lectures	Learn more: https://bit.ly/3RcniCR
May 8	ELCA Webinar: Why People Give	Learn more: https://bit.ly/4csodbX
May 9-10	You Are Witnesses Retreat	Learn more: https://bit.ly/4jMMkVB
May 13-15	Pre-Assembly Discussion Sessions	Learn more: http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP
May 18-20	2025 Synod Assembly	Learn more: http://bit.ly/3E6VYzP

Congregations in Transition

Note: This list contains congregations that are actively in the call process. Congregations are included on the list when the called rostered minister completes their ministry in the congregation. Thus, congregations in which the rostered minister has resigned but is still serving are not listed here. Additionally, calls are not listed as accepted until Bishop Satterlee signs the Letter of Call.

Bay Conference	Pastor Emily Olsen-Brandt, Dean	Kalamazoo Conference	Pastor Travis Wilson, Dean
		Trinity/Battle Creek	Pastor Cheryl Johnson, Stated Supply
Capital Area Conference	Pastor Neil Brady, Dean	Messiah/Constantine	Pastor Tom Pederson, Stated Supply / Seeking Candidates
Grace/Lansing	Pastor Brian Schneider-Thomas, Interim / Preparing MSP	St. John/Three Rivers	Pastor Victoria Blough, Interim
Greater Grand Rapids Conference	Pastor Julie Schneider-Thomas, Pastor Kate Van Valkenburg, Co-Deans	Stony Lake Conference	Pastor Sarah Samuelson, Dean
Mamrelund/Kent City	Pastor Robert Johnson, Part-Time Interim / Seeking Candidates	Sunrise Conference	Pastor Megan Crouch, Dean
Two Churches/Kentwood	Episcopal Church taking lead in transition / Preparing MSP	New Life/Alcona County	Supply Pastors / Seeking Candidates
Zion/Woodland	Supply Pastors / Seeking Candidates	St. Paul/Alpena	Seeking a part-time assistant pastor
		Traverse Conference	Pastor Jonathan Reid, Dean