

Southeast Michigan Synod • ELCA

Assembly 2023

Conference 3

Pr. Jonathan Heierman - Calvary/Clarkston

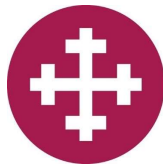
Abiding Presence, Rochester Hills
Beautiful Savior, Bloomfield Hills
Calvary, Clarkston, White Lake & Pontiac

Christ, Waterford
Good Samaritan, Pontiac
King of Kings, Lake Orion
Spirit of Grace Lutheran/Episcopal Community
West Bloomfield
Saint Augustine's House, Oxford

Pr. Sharon Janot, Intern Stephanie Newman
Pr. Nik Schillack
Pr. Jonathan Heierman, Pr. Bob Hegdal, LLM's Dana & Ray Chobot
Pr. Lee Zandstra concludes ministry May 2023
Pr. Jenn Herrmann
Pr. Eric Johnson
Pr. Peggy Rose, interim concludes March 2023
Pr. Joyce Partyka Staib begins April 2023

Some Highlights in Ministry Together this past year:

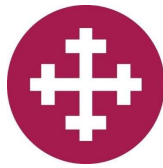
- Our conference has resumed monthly in-person and hybrid lunch gatherings for support, encouragement, and to share updates on our life and ministries.
- We have also been focusing on developing a Conference Mission Strategy to embrace and work on together to increase our collective impact in our conference area. A few years ago, Fr. John Cochran Prior of St. Augustine's House before his death in 2021, challenged us to respond to the reduction of ELCA congregations and presence in our conference area by seeking ways to “take responsibility for ELCA ministry in our region – our ‘conference parish’ of North Oakland County” – and envision new ways of coming together to grow our visibility, impact, and presence focusing particularly on evangelism and discipleship.
- Eric Johnson has been guiding us in a process of intentional discernment of what mission we sense God calling us to focus on as a conference – ways we could fill gaps in ministry as well as what ignites our hearts with passion so that it would move from a good idea to action in light of the Great Commission. This began with brainstorming possibilities resulting in a list of five areas to prayerfully consider: 1) mental health and wellbeing; 2) reviving ELCA campus ministry at Oakland University; 3) expanding ministry in Pontiac; 4) hunger related ministries; and 5) enhancing and expanding online communications. From this list we determined to focus first on developing an ELCA campus ministry at Oakland University. We are now actively seeking connections already existing in our congregations with the university community and how to structure, staff, and fund this effort. Congregations from other conferences in the Synod are invited to join in partnering together with this outreach and community building ministry at Oakland University. We are very excited about this and will share more soon about this developing mission strategy.
- On June 11 of this year Good Samaritan will hold a service of holy closure and formally close as a congregation. The church and property has been sold to another church body and assets allocated. While we are saddened by this development, we are very thankful for the many of years of faithful



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ministry by Good Samaritan and predecessor congregations. Our prayers go with Pastor Jenn Herrmann and the members of Good Samaritan as they take next steps in their ministry and move to new places.

- Pastor Peggy Rose concluded her nearly 3-years of serving as interim pastor at Sprit of Grace, West Bloomfield in March 2023. We thank Peggy for her faithful service during this time of transition and throughout the pandemic. We welcome Pastor Joyce Partyka Staib as she begins serving this Lutheran-Episcopal parish on April 1 during Holy Week.
- Christ Lutheran will bid Godspeed to Pastor Lee Zandstra at the end of May. We will Pastor Lee very much and are thankful for her faithful service which began amid the pandemic and has helped grow the impact of this congregation. A Call Committee has been formed to seek their next pastoral leader.
- St. Augustine's House in Oxford, a unique Lutheran Benedictine Community in our conference area, continues to offer daily Eucharist and offices of prayer, retreats, and more.
- As part of an Anchor Church Covenant, Calvary has been guiding intentional revitalization efforts with Shalom Lutheran in Pinckney. These revitalization efforts are expected to culminate this spring with the anticipated call and ordination of Dan Quagliata to Shalom. This has been a very productive model for helping a congregation get back on its feet and move forward after a period of struggle and crisis. We very much hope other congregations in the Synod can experience the blessing of this model for stabilization and revitalization.
- Currently two Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) are serving in our conference. We hope to add others called to this great ministry of our synod.
- Other ministry highlights:
 - ✓ Abiding Presence in Rochester Hills launched Intergenerational Faith Formation and welcomed the Fed Up Food Truck twice. They are also implementing a marketing plan for outreach to the LGBTQ+ community and early retirees.
 - ✓ Beautiful Savior in Bloomfield Hills has expanded staff to 11 people, started the Beautiful Savior Concert Series, kept a steady online attendance average of 200, and had in-person worship attendance reach pre-pandemic levels.
 - ✓ Calvary continues to develop ministry in Pontiac at its “campus without walls” orchard and park, provide pastoral leadership at Christ the King in Lapeer, distribute food in its parking lot in partnership with Lighthouse, provide tons of fresh produce through the White Lake Community Garden, and has formed a new partnership with Accent Pontiac an after-school music program.
 - ✓ Christ took over management of the Blessings in a Backpack Ministry at Donelson Hills Elementary School to provide food for over 110 kids each weekend, completed a capital appeal for the restoration of their organ, and provided pastoral supervision for a Luther Seminary intern at an offsite placement.
 - ✓ Good Samaritan during the difficult process of closing has continued to offer worship and a food pantry ministry, and has modeled the process of ending well and generously providing for others to continue to grow in ministry into the future.
 - ✓ King of Kings conducted two very successful financial appeals to address recovery from the pandemic’s impact. New ministry teams and committees were launched to fill critical gaps and



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- ✓ they welcomed 12 new members. Pastor Eric Johnson was provided with a nine-week sabbatical during which he wrote a book on the Beatitudes called "Provoke Life: How You Can Help Jesus Changed The World."
- ✓ Spirit of Grace, a model of ecumenical partnership, continues to offer a much-needed Diabetic Food Pantry as well as many other impactful ministries focused on serving their community and offering hospitality.
- These are just a few of the many creative ways that each of our conference congregations and members continue to impact our communities with the Good News of Jesus. There is so much more as we join with the entire Synod to "Rise up to Bear Burdens, Build Bridges, Break Chains and Bring Hope!"

In Christ's Service, Pr. Jonathan Heierman, Conference Dean