

The purpose of the Center for Mission & Ministry is to be a catalyst for growth and renewal, connection and collaboration.

Its ministry is informed by five vision elements:

It is part of a campus

one of three inter-connected buildings and three inter-related communities.

It is distinctive

a Lutheran presence devoted to ecumenical and interfaith partnerships.

It is focused

on building community, discerning vocations, and promoting earthkeeping.

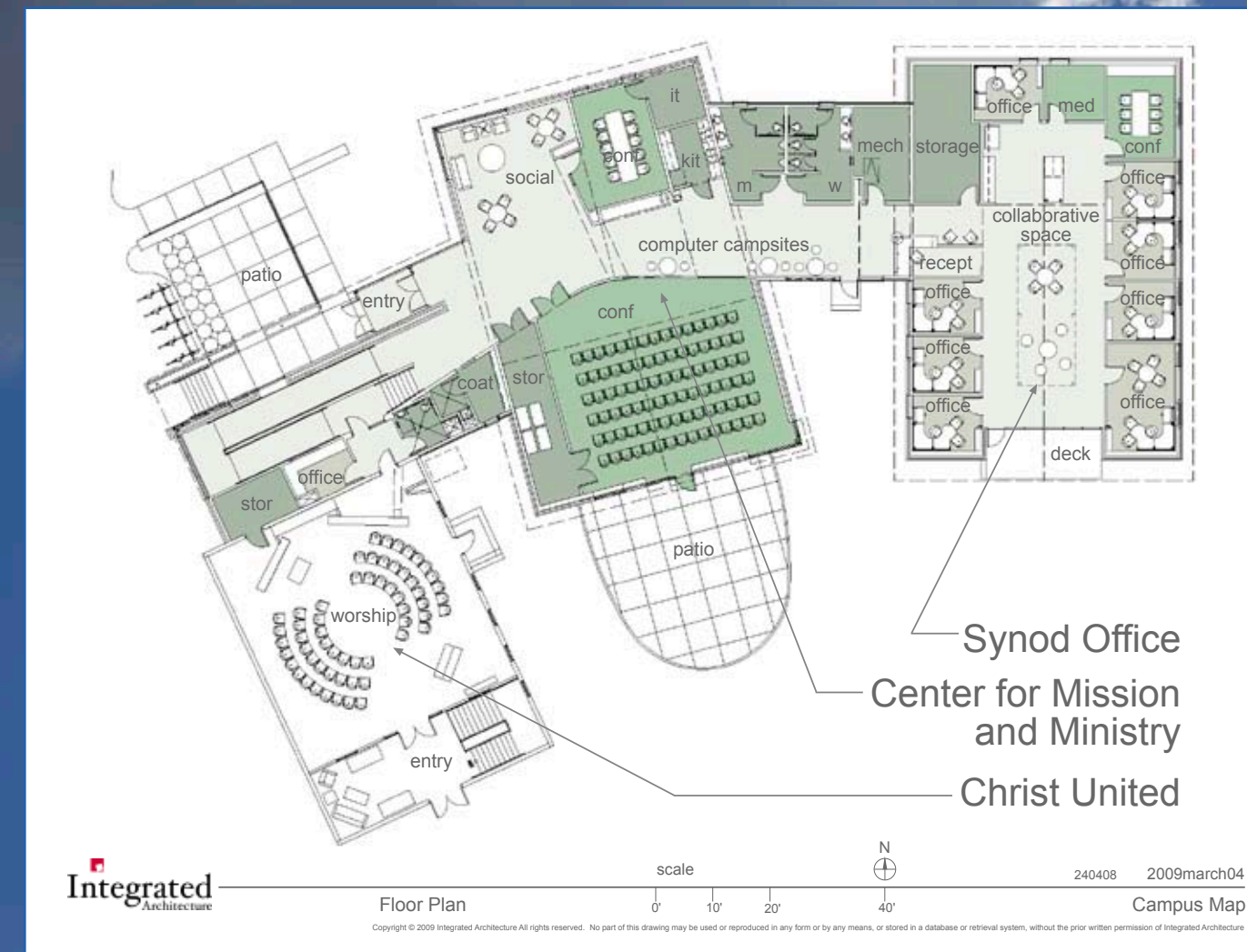
It is equipped

with appropriate technology and effective, flexible gathering spaces.

It is a grass-roots movement

of, by, and for pastors on behalf of their congregations.

CENTER FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY CAMPUS PLAN



*Christ reconnect us,
using us gently*

Making Us One

CAMPUS VIEW FROM THE SOUTH



Making Us One



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

North/West Lower Michigan Synod ELCA
801 S. Waverly Road, Suite 201
Lansing, MI 48917

CAMPUS VIEW FROM THE NORTHWEST



A VISION

In the hallway between the Center for Mission and Ministry and the synod offices a lay leader from Rogers City spends a few minutes between sessions with her laptop, blogging with her friends back home. She shares with them the life-changing implications of the prophetic word in the book of Amos for her and for the little city she has called home for much of her life. She is in the second year of the Lay Ministry Training Program, this weekend spending hours in prayer and study with an Old Testament professor from Trinity Seminary and about 30 other LMTP candidates.

Life in Rogers City, as in much of Michigan, is more fragile than ever she can remember: jobs increasingly scarce, too many young people drawn to other parts of the country, retired people more frugal as their investments tumble in an enduring recession. It is hard to imagine how this northeastern part of the "mitten" could ever again thrive. Yet, as in most of Michigan, it is beautiful here. Nearly everywhere are precious views of water, of fertile fields and orchards, of second or third-growth forests. Despite the effects of recent economic challenges, hundreds of people in and around this northern community still have hopes and dreams.

Embraced by a hope that she recognizes can only come from a Word that ignores none of the realities of injustice, unrighteousness, poverty, false gods, personal and communal death, she heads home, and wonders how God will use her to bring hope to her congregation and community. She knows that God will not let her go and is deeply comforted by that. She knows that she

will not and cannot work alone. Her time at the synod "campus" reminded her that nearly all our work in Jesus' name will be ecumenical, sometimes interfaith. Always it will be relational, always be about taking time to ask, "To whom is God calling me today?" She knows that she and her congregation are not defined by the losses and impending threats all around, but by the cross and the resurrection.

Add 51,000 baptized members to this lay leader, 128 congregations to the one congregation she calls home, 235 rostered leaders, and countless numbers from our ecumenical and interfaith partners in the Lower Peninsula. These are the leaders who will know this "campus" as a welcome place, a place for the kindling of hope, where new configurations are created, all discerning in prayerful conversation with one another the emerging shapes of their callings. We have this dream of God in Christ "making us one," God using this gracious and green campus as a catalyst for bold and enduring hope.

We are praying that 100% of the members of this synod will support this deepened way for us to be together and to do together. We believe there are 1111 of us who can pledge \$1,800 or more between now and November 1. We hope that every contributing member of our congregations will see the vision of **Making Us One** and give, regardless of the amount. **Making Us One** is about Jesus' prayer for us. It is about hope for our congregations, our communities, and for the Earth. It is about us, so deeply loved and forever marked with the cross of Christ.

Bishop John David Schleicher

A PLAN

The offices of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod will be relocating from rented space in Lansing to a new campus being constructed in DeWitt on the site of Christ United, a federated congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan. A centerpiece of the ministry of the synod is the Center for Mission & Ministry, which will be housed in its own building on the campus, situated strategically between Christ United and the synod office. It is estimated that the overhead for both the Center and the offices will be roughly half of the current cost for rented space.

The relocation has been in development for nearly six years, aided by \$500,000 raised in the synod's first capital campaign, **To Whom Shall We Go**, and by the extant partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan. The diocese has leased three acres of the land on which Christ United is located to the synod for ninety-nine years at \$1 per year. The combination of initial funding and the support of the Episcopal Diocese have allowed the synod to proceed with building plans. Following an affirmation of the decision to relocate at the synod assembly in 2008, planning for the facility moved forward aggressively. One outcome of that planning was a clarified vision for the Center, a new synod initiative intended to strengthen the capacity of the synod and its congregations to be in mission and ministry throughout the state.

Another outcome was the launching of a new \$2 million capital campaign to support the relocation,

Making Us One. In partnership with Christ United, a federated congregation with a history of commitment to ecumenical ministry, and the synod office, working to unite the work of the church in North/West Lower Michigan through relationships with every congregation and pastor, the new Center for Mission & Ministry and its synod-supported Facilitator will focus on leadership development, continuing education, and faith formation for pastors and lay people of all ages throughout the synod. It will expand on current and develop new partnerships with Protestant, Roman Catholic, Muslim and Jewish faith communities. Over time, it will share what it learns with other synods of the ELCA and partner churches. It will fulfill its mission to be a catalyst for energizing the church.

In summary, the ministry plan of the Center for Mission & Ministry is effectively expressed in a stanza from the hymn "Touch the Earth Lightly" from which we derive the theme of the capital campaign:

*God of all living, God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,
teach us, deflect us,
Christ reconnect us, using us gently,
and making us one.*

"Touch the Earth Lightly" ELW 739

A COLLABORATION IN MISSION & MINISTRY

This is a new moment for all of us. Called to express our desire for oneness in the Body of Christ, to live in the intimacy of the God who has called us by name, we embark on a new phase of "Making Us One." The vision for the Center for Mission & Ministry invites us to join in a common quest to deepen our connection with God, others and our earth. I believe that at the core of our being we all share a common reality: the presence, love and guidance of our Indwelling God. Given that connection, we are invited to open ourselves to the wonder of God's invitation to us through this new work of the synod. And so, in collaboration with numerous individuals we are now in a position to begin planning for the years ahead.

As the new Center Facilitator let me share with you a sampling of some possibilities.

- Leadership track for Contemplative Pastors available on-site and on-line
- Workshop for Pastors and Lay Leaders: Lowering Anxiety: Systems Theory and Centering Prayer
- On-going Covenant Groups
- Affinity Groups - Wisdom Circles
- 10th Anniversary Celebration of the Lutheran-Catholic Joint Statement on Justification
- Faith Formation Program for Integration of Social Justice and Global Spirituality
- Spiritual Retreats: Refreshing the Soul & Quieting the Mind – a day or a weekend with overnights at St. Francis Retreat Center
- Workshop and Reflection Day for Raising Awareness and Practice of Earthkeeping
- On-going Spiritual Formation Program for group prayer/study/exchange based on the spiritual classical writings & insights that a variety of Christian traditions has to offer
- Receptive Ecumenism: Learning from One Another – an introduction
- A Dialogue Day: Learning From Muslim Spirituality
- On-line daily prayer in the way of Luther's "Four-Stranded Garland" and the ancient practice of Lectio Divina
- Martin Luther and the Mystics: a study of those spiritual masters who influenced Luther's spirituality and with whom he had a special spiritual affinity
- Practical Spirituality: Johann Arndt (1555-1621) German Lutheran Mystic and "Prophet of Interior Protestantism" and a look at the spiritual masters who inspired him - such as Bernard of Clairvaux, John Tauler and Thomas à Kempis – a 4-part series presented by different area scholars
- In the Steps of Martin Luther – a Study Tour and Pilgrimage to Germany -- Fall 2010
- A referral process for finding an individual spiritual director and/or participating in group spiritual direction
- An Institute of Spiritual Guidance for formation and formal preparation of Spiritual Directors

As we await the new facility we hope to make use of both Christ United Church and St. Francis Retreat Center for programs and services. At the same time, it is my hope and intention to see that some of the programs created are done in such a fashion that they become "portable" so as to be offered off-site for local congregations and/or Conferences – the details of which are being worked out for 2009-2010 implementation. This might also provide for participation from other local denominations depending on the event planned.

May the Spirit continue to guide and inspire the work of our hands/hearts/minds for collaboration in mission and ministry.

Nancy Brousseau, OP, Facilitator for the Center for Mission & Ministry



Making Us One

