

May 2019

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IN TOUCH

A publication of the Michigan District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
The Lutheran Witness Michigan District, LCMS Supplement



HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

The Importance of Speaking the Truth in Love by Todd Jones

Introduction

In Ephesians 4, St. Paul puts “speaking the truth in love” (vs.15) at the center of practices that contribute to the maturation of a congregation. John Maxwell talks about leadership as influence, and that’s certainly true. However, there is a powerful dynamic beneath that definition. Leadership is influence; influence is about relationship. Great leaders are relational leaders. This is what Jesus modeled and commended in His ministry. Over the three years that Jesus ministered in the Gospels, he was building relationships. He built relationships with the 12 disciples, the 70 followers, and the countless many that formed the crowd.

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Leadership is Rooted in Relationship

Relationships are a critical fact of being a disciple of Jesus. Remember the teachers of the law that tried to trick Jesus with the question, “*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?*” Remember Jesus’ answer in Matthew 22:36ff? To paraphrase, “*Love the Lord your God’ is the greatest and the second is like it, Love your neighbor as yourself.*” There is a tremendous amount of truth in these verses, but don’t miss the point that both commandments reinforce the importance of relationships. Later Jesus said, “*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*” (John 13:35). Notice he didn’t say, “If you build beautiful buildings.” He didn’t say, “If you have a tight, systematic theology.” He didn’t say, “If you have a unified tradition and practice.” Jesus said, “*If you love one another, the world will know you are my disciples.*” Relationship is the lifeblood of the church. It is the lifeblood of leadership. Leadership is influence, but there is no influence apart from healthy relationships.

Relationships and Toxic Triangulation

The relational dynamic of triangulation is a significant challenge to healthy relationships and effective leadership in congregations and schools. Triangulation occurs where there is conflict between two individuals or two groups of individuals. Rather than those two parties resolving the conflict together, one (or both) of them goes to a third party to solicit support and build a coalition and/or undermine the credibility of the other person. Triangulation is common in the church. It is common in the business world. It is common in the home.

For example, a brother and sister are having a fight over a toy. The fight has escalated from verbal to physical but still isn’t getting resolved. So, one of the children goes to mom to bring her in as a referee. Of course, the child frames the context of the situation in such a way that she believes mom will rule in her favor. The child will tell mom about how badly her brother is behaving—how wickedly and unfairly he is treating her. The child who went to solicit support from mom was practicing triangulation. She was trying to strengthen her position in the conflict by bringing in a third party. Essentially, she wanted mom to do the heavy lifting and fight the battle for her. Children learn triangulation early. We’ve all honed the skill over our lifetime.

Triangulation in the Church

Let’s move from theoretical examples to realities experienced in many churches.

Example #1- The pastor and the board of elders are arguing over an individual to be removed from membership. This individual hasn’t been in church for twenty years. However, the pastor is in favor of showing some leniency. He would like to continue the process attempting reconciliation. The elders have been struggling with this individual for years and have reached the point of action. No agreement is reached at the meeting. However, after the meeting the pastor goes out to visit some families that know the individual under discussion. He shares the proposed action of the Elders, hoping that, by sharing his concern with them, they will call the elders and persuade them to change their mind. As soon as the pastor sidestepped the elders and went to the other families, he was guilty of triangulation. His triangulation not only undermined his credibility but also damaged his relationship with the elders.

Example #2- A youth director has decided to raise some money so the youth group can go on a mission trip. Somebody isn’t happy about the fact they’re raising money to go to the mission destination selected by the group. He thinks the money should be raised and spent for a different mission or to send kids to the church camp. The concerned individual goes to the pastor or to the church council and shares his concern. In that moment of choosing to go to the pastor or the church council and not the youth worker, that individual creates a triangulation situation.

Relationship
is the *lifeblood*
of the church.

The Problem with Triangulation

What’s wrong with triangulation? **First**, it is not consistent with Jesus’ teachings. Do you remember the man who tried to bring Jesus into his conflict with his brother? It’s in *Luke 12:13–14*: “*Teacher, tell my brother*

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A Historic Merger Under the Shadow of the Cross



On December 3, 2017, two Detroit churches, formerly known as Berea and Greenfield Peace, merged and formed Faith Lutheran Church, served by Pastor Brian Dupre (*“When Contraction Leads to Expansion” Michigan In Touch*, September 2018/blog michigandistrict.org/healthy-congregations/when-contraction-leads-to-expansion/).

In the meantime, another church—St. Paul, Farmington Hills—was seeking a way forward. They were being served by an Intentional Interim Pastor, Rev. Gary Siefert, and worked through a three-day intensive strategic planning process with their CMMF, Rev. Dr. Rob Kasper. *“From that, they realized that they needed to focus not on survival, but on getting into their community, yet they were hampered by nagging debt and an inward focus. With their school partnership (Concordia Lutheran School in association with Hosanna/Tabor) and facility expenses, they were seeking a way forward to be able to call a pastor. They needed a sustainable model,”* explains Kasper.

At the same time, Faith, Detroit was looking for a permanent location to call home as a congregation. Pastors Siefert and Dupre met and began to have conversations about their respective congregations’ challenges. Over several months, various groups of lay leaders met to discuss the possibility of working together. The question has always

been, *“How can we best expand God’s Kingdom impact in our community through His church?”* After much discussion and prayer, they decided to join forces and become a more effective instrument in God’s hand with a sustainable model for ministry.

A New Church Forms

In March, Rev. Brian Dupre (pictured first row center) was installed as the pastor of the newly formed Shadow of the Cross Lutheran Church, a merger of Faith and St. Paul congregations. He marvels at God’s working through seemingly unrelated events to build His kingdom. Dupre has had ties with all three congregations some way or another throughout his life: He had family members

who worked at the school at Berea Lutheran Church in the 1950s and 60s and who were members there. Dupre himself grew up at Greenfield Peace Lutheran Church, but in the course of raising his own family, he attended St. Paul, Farmington Hills with his wife and kids.

Dupre says, *“Little did I know that God would use a person who never aspired to be a pastor, who left Michigan to get away from the cold weather, and who had no experience bringing differing cultures together, to return to this state to do just that, merging all three of these churches. And now this congregation finds itself on the edge of something historic, created by the will of God. All glory, laud and honor to you, Lord of the Church. There is no one more amazed at what You have done than I.”* ■





Open Mic Community Outreach

by Tom Fischer

What can you do to reach your community after you've tried everything ... and nothing seems to work? Get desperate, creative, and on your knees in prayer.

In October 2017, Gethsemane member Matt Drinkard pulled me aside and asked, "*Pastor, let's have an Open Mic at the church.*" "*What's that?*" I asked.

After learning what *Open Mic* is (a live show at a coffeehouse, club, institution, or pub at which audience members who are amateur or professional performers are given the opportunity to perform onstage), I thought, "*Why not?!*" Then, when he said he wanted to do it the same weekend as our Women's Advent by Candlelight, I initially balked. But, recalling my desperation and prayer for something—anything—that would open the doors of our church to the community, I said, "*Go ahead, Matt. Let's do it!*"

And so he did. Initially Matt thought we should set up for 15-20 people in our small Fellowship Area. But, since the sanctuary would already be set up for the Women's Advent by Candlelight on Friday night, we agreed it would be easier to just use the sanctuary to avoid additional setup.

We decided we would conduct Open Mic every first Saturday of the month, from 7-9 p.m. and charge \$3. Sixty-seven people came the first night, including 8 of our members. Serving canned pop and food donated by area restaurants, we were on our way.

To our joyful surprise, nearly every month the crowd grew ... even when we least expected it. Who could have guessed that our record attendance of 108 guests happened on a hot Fourth of July weekend?

In December 2018, we celebrated the beginning of our third year; and we had thought it might only last a month or two!

Since starting Open Mic, Gethsemane will never be the same. God has used it to "tear down the walls" of our church to let the community in ... and urged us to go out into the community. By God's grace, Gethsemane is a community church for—and in—the community.

The Open Mic Transformation

God has used Open Mic to transform our ministry more than any other program or strategy I've encountered. And for this traditional, gentrified, tired, and struggling congregation, it was just what God ordered for us.

In what ways has our Open Mic transformed us? Here are some examples:

- The large and diverse number of visitors stretches Gethsemane to increase our openness to meet and welcome people, as they are, in our community.
- God is showing us *exactly* who is in our community by bringing them to our campus. As we get to know these people, we gain greater recognition of our community's needs.
- As we learn more about our Open Mic-ers, we find ourselves responding by listening to them, praying for them and, most importantly, sharing the Gospel with them.

Hey, Open Mic, Meet The Pastor!

The pastor plays a key role at Open Mic. In the first few months of Open Mic, I struggled with the question, "*What should the pastor do at Open Mic?*"

At first, I thought I should be invisible ... or at least lay low. But as I began to say "Hi" to more and more people, I realized that this was the *perfect* opportunity to take the "first step." No longer was I just my church's pastor; I was

also becoming the *community's* pastor.

And that changes everything!!!

What does the pastor of the Community do at Open Mic?

- Come relaxed, not “official.” Casual attire, please!
- Be prepared to meet and make new friends—and invite them to breakfast or lunch (our treat!)
- Listen, don't talk too much.
- Begin watercooler conversations whenever possible.
- Don't hide the fact that you're the pastor. But don't put it in their face, either.
- Don't get hung up on titles. Many of these people don't get the “pastor” thing ... yet. They will. Be patient.
- Learn to listen, pray, and support this wonderful community of friends through their health, family, and life crises! (We prayed with five Open Mic'ers with cancer last month ... one terminal.)

Open Mic Bears Fruit

There are wonderful signs of Jesus' presence and working through our Open Mic.

After over two years, we are starting to see Open Mic friends worshiping with us and partnering with us at some of our six (and growing) off-site GoodLife senior living ministry sites.

Several Sundays ago, an Open Mic participant volunteered to play bass at one of our off-site worship services. After the service, she said two things. First she said, “*Pastor Tom, I didn't know Lutherans preach Jesus so much.*” As she shared how much she enjoyed playing at our service, she had a big smile and said, “*I think I've found God's calling for me.*”

That's vintage Open Mic fruit. It's the sweet spot of outreach. And, by God's grace, it's becoming increasingly abundant through Gethsemane's Open Mic and GoodLife outreach.

Here are a few other examples of Open Mic fruit:

- An Open Mic attendee going through a difficult divorce has become a regular church attendee because of the friends he has made with our members. His relationship with Jesus has simply come alive!
- Several of our members find themselves praying privately for others as they share their needs. Jesus is *there*.
- I find myself sharing the Gospel of Jesus more in the past months than I have in any other time of my ministry. And so are our members! It's no longer rare for our members to pray with, listen, or witness to others at Open Mic. And, on a continually growing basis, the Gospel of Jesus is beginning to change lives before our very eyes ... right on our campus!
- Attendees keep coming back and repeatedly say, “*I've been to a lot of Open Mics, but this one is special. It's the kindest, most hospitable group I've ever been in.*”

Can God Use Open Mic For Your Ministry?

Perhaps. But whatever God's plan is for your ministry, the most important thing is to be open and flexible to experiment and see what He does! ■

Rev. Tom Fischer is the pastor at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Rochester Hills. For more information on this and other key portions of Gethsemane's GoodLife Community Outreach, please visit GoodLifePartnership.org or contact Pastor Tom Fischer at pastorgolf@gmail.com.



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THE BIG WEEK: Lutherans, Let's *Love* on Detroit!

By Amy Fanta



When you walk through the community on Six Mile and Gratiot in Detroit, you'll find yourself surrounded by desolation and a feeling of despair. If you only take a quick glance, you'll see remnants of what used to be someone's family home; you'll see a neighborhood where full city blocks are without even one house or more burned-out houses than you can count; and you'll see that wildlife has returned and roams freely.

But if you take a moment longer and look just a bit closer, you will see signs of life and the beginning of renewed hope. As a close observer, you will find a few beautiful homes that have been well-cared for and loved for decades. Within those walls, you'll meet wise souls with stories to tell. Resilient community leaders and neighborhood police officers are coming together to make this community a place that people can be proud to call home.

Then, moving to Chalmers Ave, you will come across a unique ministry—Camp Restore Detroit (CRD)—which has settled in as the community's new neighbor. CRD is an urban camp that houses and feeds volunteers and coordinates projects with community leaders—projects that provide hope and restore relationships with one another and Christ. CRD is housed within Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, and it has established a reputation as a center of hope and love, providing willing hands, feet, and hearts for projects and dreams the community thought were impossible—until now.

You are invited to be part of this restoration process. This summer you can help revive the city of Detroit in partnership with CRD and the Michigan District, LCMS. Not only are there opportunities to serve right in your own backyard, but you can also impact several sister LCMS churches in the city of Detroit in the process!

What? THE BIG WEEK: Lutherans, Let's Love on Detroit! June 23–29, 2019. Volunteer opportunities range from blight removal (imagine finding a sidewalk the community did not even know existed!), small home construction with partner families, vacation Bible schools, a sports camp, working at local community centers and within schools, to name just a few. In addition, there will be activities, speakers from the community, as well as a guest speaker, small group time, and a praise team for worship each evening.

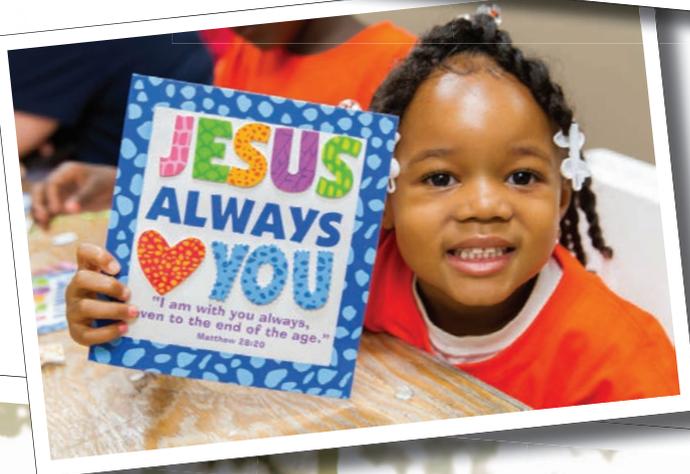
Why? The driving factor in planning this week is the sheer number of volunteers that have been requested from CRD in that timeframe. There will be 3-4 vacation Bible school programs, one sports camp, along with a plethora of blight removal and construction projects. For the VBS

and sports camp alone, 75+ volunteers are needed!

Who? Both day campers (commuters) and overnight campers are welcome! This is a great opportunity for all ages to serve for one or more days or all week! Whatever works for you, we can put you to work! Families with young children are welcome. Children can attend VBS and sports camp while their parents serve!

How? For more information, or to register your interest, visit michigandistrict.org/camprestore. ■

Amy Fanta serves Camp Restore Detroit as its Ministry & Service Coordinator.



Embracing Change

By Kelly Bone

Think of the move from college to your first “real” job. Scary stuff. You are now part of the working world, independent and ready to take on the world, yet still trying to figure it all out and not quite sure of yourself.

And then think of marriage, kids, death of parents, or even a child!

We all encounter major changes in our individual lives and, on top of that, we live in a world that continues to change. Life is never constant but always changing. As exciting, overwhelming, and confusing as life changes can be, we all are in search of a place where we can find hope.

Malachi 3:6 tells us God never changes; “*For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.*” Our heavenly Father knew you from the beginning; He created you and He loves you, yesterday, today, and forever. He is gracious and merciful and we NEED Him every day. He brings hope to our fallen world.

MOST Ministries has been through many changes over the past 30 years—who knew that this ministry, started in 1989, would still be doing the work of God so many years later? There have been many challenges alongside many celebrations of new lives in Christ. Through the years, our faithful Prayer Ambassadors have prayed us through it all. We continue to be blessed by your outpouring of prayers.

As the summer approaches, we can already see changes that are beginning to happen. We seek God for answers to the changes His ministry here at MOST will be going through in the coming years. But we always remember what His Word tells us in *Hebrews 13:8*: “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*” We firmly stand in the hope that comes only from our steadfast Father.

Change is often hard, but we grow in our faith and learn to embrace it. When we trust God’s plan, He transforms us each and every day as His followers. I encourage you to think about the changes God brings into your life—the painful ones and the pleasurable ones: how is He working through those to draw you closer to Him? Is there something He seems to be saying to you, something He wants you to act on?

If you’d like to prayerfully embrace change and step outside of your comfort zone, MOST Ministries is always developing new relationships, new international hosts, and new projects to serve the mission field, share the Gospel, and bring in the harvest. Perhaps you’d like to make one more change this year and serve alongside us?

For more information and how you can get involved, please visit mostministries.org or contact by phone at 734.994.7909 or email at most@mostministries.org. ■

Kelly Bone is the Business Manager & Volunteer Coordinator for MOST Ministries.

When we trust *God’s plan*, He transforms us each and every day as His followers.

This mother demonstrates to her family how to maintain her new water filter after attending the Health & Hygiene class taught by the MOST Ministries team while serving those displaced by the volcano eruption in Guatemala.





Rev. David A. Davis, Concordia University Ann Arbor's 2019 Outstanding Alumnus

On April 4, 2019, during its regular chapel service, Concordia University Ann Arbor recognized Rev. David A. Davis with the 2019 Outstanding Alumnus Award.

Davis graduated in Concordia's second-ever four-year class in 1979. He earned majors in both Greek and the Humanities and a minor in Earth Science. While at Concordia, "D. Davis" served as president of the Student Senate and was awarded an athletic letter for soccer. It was through their time together at Concordia that Davis convinced Sallie (nee Mertz, A.A. '79) to spend her life with him. Most of his lifelong friendships began at Concordia. After graduation, he matriculated to Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo.

Because Davis' roots in Michigan go back to his ancestors settling in the Saginaw Valley area nearly a decade before the Franconians arrived, he was glad to spend his entire pastoral ministry proclaiming Jesus to people throughout

Michigan. He served congregations in Spring Lake, Trenton, Grand Rapids, and currently serves in Haslett/Lansing. He was instrumental in beginning various new congregations and ministries. He served the Michigan District, LCMS as Chair of the Mission Board and later the Board of Directors. Davis was also a Regional Vice President for four terms. His special interests in ministry, both within the congregations and through his service to the District, were encouraging reading through the Bible annually, developing new Gospel-proclaiming ministries, and promoting congregational life in center city locations.

Davis has built various reading groups inside and outside of the congregation. He has always loved to learn about what people do and how they think about things. For the purpose of mentoring young people and new pastors, he authored a series of essays. For over a decade, Dave and Sallie have hosted an annual gathering of pastors—a "Homemade Pastors' Conference."

Rev. David P. E. Maier, who preached at the chapel service on the occasion of the award presentation, says of Davis: *"He is a true example of a godly family man, sold out to Jesus and His Word, doing it in an organized fashion in terms of bringing people together in administration yet trusting the Lord, seeing serendipity of the Spirit where things and doors open up. Because of his humility, God has used him mightily. He is really the example of a true leader. If leaders have the gift of influence, it has been given to Dave Davis in abundance."*

Davis and his family are lifelong supporters of Concordia. They return regularly for special events. For many years, he brought his confirmation class for an introductory tour of the campus. He and his extended family established a scholarship for education students in memory of his parents, Robert and Anne Davis.

Dave and Sallie raised four daughters. Together, the family enjoys living, serving, and vacationing throughout the State of Michigan. ■

MAY 2019

East Ida Immanuel Expands with Help from CEF



Pastor Curtis Garland and parishoners gather for the dedication of the new kitchen.

“A Church Extension Fund loan was the best option. Not only was the structure of the loan good, but CEF was really easy to work with. Their approval process was very quick.”

– Pastor Curtis Garland
East Ida Immanuel Lutheran
Church, Monroe

When a church has served its members and community for 170 years, you can bet they have a deep understanding of the needs of the congregation. However, knowing what is needed, and having the resources to make the necessary changes, are not always one and the same.

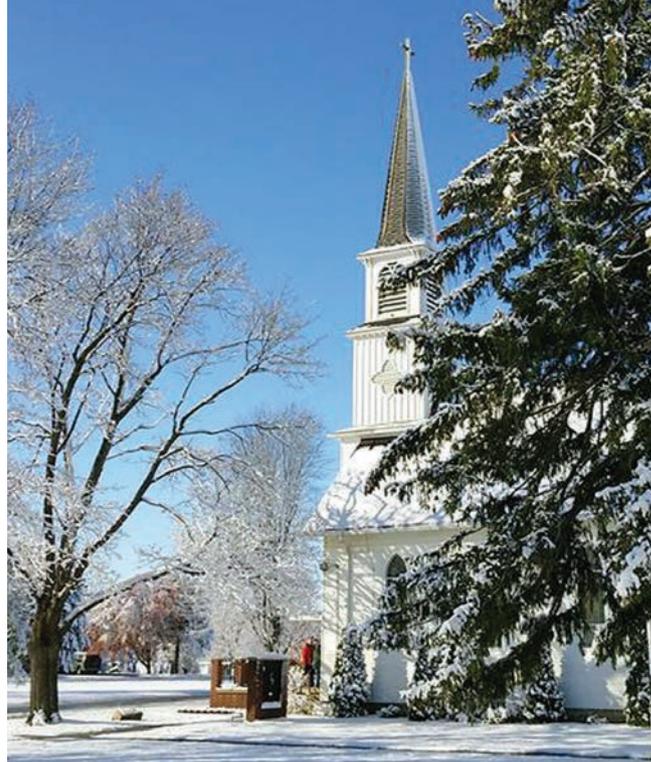
At East Ida Immanuel Lutheran in Monroe, Michigan — which has a proud 170-year history, including the current church building built in 1877 — the need for upgrades was long known.

“I have been the pastor here for two years, and the discussions of modernizing and expanding the kitchen started about eight years before I arrived,” explains Rev. Curtis Garland, noting that putting on dinners for events such as funerals was difficult in the old facility.

“We also wanted to be sure to upgrade everything to meet modern health department codes,” he says.

When the discussions reached the point of taking a congregational vote, things began to move quickly.

“Once we decided to move forward, we looked at financing options,” Pastor Garland says. “It became evident that a Church Extension Fund loan was the best option. Not only was the structure of the loan good, but CEF was



Phase two of the project included a complete re-siding of the church, which was built in 1877.

really easy to work with. Their approval process was very quick, and they approved us for more money than what we needed for the kitchen itself. That extra money will help us with the rest of the remodeling project.”

In total, the project will include the new wing that houses the kitchen, as well as a renovation and remodel of the old kitchen space to create much-needed conference and meeting rooms.

The first phase of the project, which was the construction of the new wing to house the kitchen, began in October of 2017 and was dedicated in February of last year. The new space features an open layout with plenty of counter space, as well as commercial grade appliances — refrigerator, stove and hood, and Immanuel’s first-ever dishwasher, which has received a thumbs up from all users. There also is an island work area and roll-up doors that allow the kitchen crew to close themselves off during prep and cleanup and open the doors to serve food.

“The feedback has been great,” Pastor Garland notes. “Everyone is happy with the amount of space we now have, and how easy it is to clean because of the quartz countertops and vinyl flooring — and the dishwasher is very much appreciated.”

Work on the second phase of the project is ongoing and is expected to be completed in short order, according to Pastor Garland. Once the construction activities have wrapped up, the church will undertake landscaping chores and re-do the walkways.

Pastor Garland pointed out that many in the congregation lent a hand to help with the project, and noted that Terry Gautz, who headed the effort, Terry Sieberth, who served as the contractor, and Butch Eipperle, who performed the prep work, were particularly vital to the effort.

He also thanked CEF for their support throughout the process of applying for the loan and completing the project — a faithful ministry that goes beyond what any other lending institution would or could do.



Church Extension Fund • Michigan District of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod
3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-3098 • www.mi-cef.org
Offices: 800-242-3944

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LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

Annual LLL Men's Retreat at Camp Arcadia

The 74th annual Arcadia LLL Men's Retreat will take place on the shores of Lake Michigan at Camp Arcadia on September 5–8, 2019.

The featured speaker will be Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, Executive Director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty located in Washington, D.C. Seltz is the LCMS representative on the ongoing battle for religious freedom in our country. Dr. Seltz served as the Speaker of The Lutheran Hour® radio program from 2011 to 2017. Before joining LHM, he served as Director of the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center, professor of Theology, and overseer of the master's program in Theology and Culture at Concordia University Irvine. With over 75 pastors in the urban mission field during his tenure, his work prepared leaders from various cultures to launch ministries in a variety of cultural settings, including Vietnamese, Korean, Spanish, Indonesian, Indian, and African-American.

Prior to his work at Concordia, Dr. Seltz was the Executive Director of Life's Journey Ministries, an urban, not-for-profit evangelism ministry in Manhattan, New York. He was also the founding pastor of the first



new Lutheran mission start in more than 40 years in New York City (Church For All Nations-LCMS); he started a mission church in Dallas, Texas, and served as pastor of a large congregation in Tampa, Fla.

During the retreat, Dr. Seltz will share with participants how we can put our temporal liberties to work for our eternal liberty in Christ.

Retreat activities begin on Thursday evening with a welcome reception/beer tasting event. Weekend activities include a golf tournament and softball game on Saturday. Cost of the retreat is \$230/person and includes all lodging, meals, and activities. For more information, or to register, visit camp-arcadia.com or call 231.889.4361.

LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE

How are MOTHERS impacted by your Mites? The Luke Project 52 Mother & Baby Clinic knows.

Check out The Luke Project 52 web site.



To make a mites donation, send to Sandy Maya, Districtic Financial Secretary, 6600 Constitution Blvd. #402, Portage, MI 48024.

Visit the LWML Michigan District web site for information about us. <https://lwmlmichigan.org/>



This project was the recipient of a grant from the **Michigan District LWML** at our State Convention in 2018.

Low income mothers in need of quality prenatal care learn how to care for themselves and their growing babies.

The Luke Clinic is staffed by fully trained nurse midwives, doctors, and experienced mother-baby registered nurses who will share the love of Christ with the quality care they provide.



Michigan District

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
People of Hope ... Vigorously Making Known the Love of Christ

“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14 ESV).

Spring, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

NEWS FLASH: Summer is just a few weeks away! With that in mind, I am again privileged to write to you about our upcoming summer urban Sports Camps/Vacation Bible School (VBS) programs. We at the Michigan District, LCMS have been offering these camps to urban children for the past six summers and, with God’s continuing grace and your ongoing generosity, several more camps will be offered again this summer.

Before telling you about the upcoming camps, please allow me a moment to reminisce. Some of my most memorable summer memories as a child occurred while in Confirmation Camp (Camp Pioneer), and while participating in summer camps. I regularly attended “cross country sports camp”, and I always attended VBS when younger. I imagine many of you did as well and, like me, you have fond memories from those joyous times. (I pray so.)

Our goal through our summer camps is to provide these same kinds of experiences for children who may not otherwise have such an opportunity.

What we strive to do through our Acts 2 Enterprise (A2E) urban summer camp programs is to provide a week-long camp experience that encompasses **both** sports and VBS. Rev. Christopher Bodley introduced this concept over six years ago when he joined the Michigan District staff as a missionary at large to the city of Detroit.

Our camps are remarkable because they are offered at absolutely no charge for any child who attends. Yes, completely free of charge! With the army of volunteers at each camp, children participants receive food, snacks, and beverages each day of the camp. In addition, all supplies, sports equipment, VBS materials, t-shirts, and even transportation, if necessary, are provided.



The army of volunteers I mentioned work very closely with small groups of children to introduce them to a variety of sports experiences—some very typical like soccer and basketball; some that may be entirely new experiences, such as golf, cheerleading, and lacrosse. **Each great day of camp ends with a VBS component, a precious time with the children, teaching them about Jesus and His unending love for them and their families. The camp wraps up with a celebration party for campers and families.**

Please prayerfully consider continuing to financially support this vital ministry to a very special group of God’s children. If you have not supported this ministry in the past, this is a great year to begin.

The cost to sponsor one child continues to be \$55. Two children is \$110; \$550 sponsors ten children; and \$1,100 sponsors twenty. Please sponsor as many children as you are able, and in doing so, help the pastors and volunteers make a difference in the lives of hundreds of children this summer, and in some cases, by God’s grace, an eternal difference for them and their families.

Please kindly respond soon on the response form below. If you are interested in being a volunteer for one or more of the sports camps, please check the box on the response form and we will be in touch with you.

Thank you again for your prayerful consideration and generous response as you help to make our 2019 camps program a reality, making the words of Mark 10:14 ring true for many children. Please know you are a wonderful blessing to those who will attend a camp.

In shared service and love for those who are least among us,

Rev. David P. E. Maier
 Rev. Dr. David P. E. Maier, President
 Michigan District, LCMS



P.S. As Sports Camp/VBS gifts are received, if the A2E ministry is blessed to receive sponsorships that exceed the number needed to sponsor every child, any exceeding funds will go towards the general support of the A2E urban ministry.



Yes, President Maier, I would like to support the A2E Summer Camp Ministry through the Here We Stand Campaign!

Enclosed is my tax deductible gift of \$55 x _____ (# of sponsored children) = \$ _____ Other _____

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Congregation/City _____

Please make checks payable to Michigan District, LCMS or provide credit card information below. Return completed form and check (if applicable) in the enclosed envelope.

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____
 (MasterCard, Visa, Discover, American Express, Diners Club)

Billing Address (if different from above) _____

Cardholder’s Name (as it appears on the card) _____

Signature _____ Date _____
By signing this form, the card holder is authorizing the Michigan District, LCMS to debit their card.

Return to: Attn: Development Department
 Michigan District, LCMS
 3773 Geddes Road
 Ann Arbor, MI 48105

I would like to serve as a Camp Missionary; please contact me.

Reformation 500 ... Walk, Run, Bike Kicks Off in May

Are you looking for that right opportunity to participate in the *Here We Stand* campaign, raise some funds for your church, school, or even your specific classroom, **AND** get healthier at the same time? Perhaps the *Reformation 500 ... Walk, Run, Bike* event is what you are looking for.

What is *Reformation 500 ... Walk, Run, Bike*? The event is a five-month exercise-based initiative which begins May 1 and concludes September 30. You, or a team of friends, fellow members of your congregation, staff, or a group of teachers may do this together over the entire five months or for as long as you would like to participate.

How does it work? You (or your team) are encouraged to walk, run, or ride your bike for a total of 500 miles during the period of time you choose to participate. If 500 miles is too little, please feel free to do as many miles as you can. If 500 miles is too many, simply do as many miles as you are able. In any case, challenge yourself to make an improvement in your health.

How does the event benefit *Here We Stand* and my church or school? This is what makes this event unique. Each participant is asked to collect pledges and/or cash gifts in support of their efforts to maximize miles during the five months of the event. As in years past, these collected monies will be divided evenly between the *Here We Stand* campaign and the ministry you designate as a beneficiary.

What's the process? The participation form can be found at herewestand.michigandistrict.org/thereformation500. You can also call Linda Ekong in the Development Department at 734.213.4265 and she will email or mail a form to you. Then start walking, running, or biking and collecting pledges and cash gifts. After the completion of your efforts, simply calculate your total miles, collect your pledges and cash gifts (checks made out to Michigan District, LCMS) and mail them to the Michigan District office. Upon receipt of your monies, one half will be put into the *Here We Stand* campaign, and the other half will be sent where you designate on the form. It's that simple.

Have fun and a wonderful summer of exercising, and in doing so, helping to make a positive difference in the *Here We Stand* campaign, in your church or school, and in your own health. If you have questions, please



call Linda at the number above or email her at linda.ekong@michigandistrict.org.

Also remember the **Here We Ride** event in Bay City on August 3. This event also divides all funds evenly between *Here We Stand* and the ministry you designate. Plus ... the miles you ride in this event count towards the miles you accumulate in the Reformation 500! For more information, visit herewestand.michigandistrict/hereweride.

Here We Stand

Campaign Goal: \$10 million

Campaign Progress: \$6.0 million
(as of April 11, 2019)

Participating Congregations: 146

Individual Contributors: 1,203

Bible verse: Psalm 71:17-18
"O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come."

herewestand.michigandistrict.org

Special Recognition

Welcome Pastor Khumalo

Nearly 200 people gathered at Our Savior, Lansing, for a multi-cultural celebration and prayer that was quite unprecedented. Rev. Mandla J. Khumalo, pastor and bishop of St. Peter Confessional Lutheran Church, Middelburg, South Africa, has been invited by the Michigan District, LCMS as a visiting missionary and evangelist for a two-year stay. He, his wife Lindiwe, and grandson Nklage (nickname NK) have moved to Lansing, where they will be sharing the Gospel and traveling around the state. Pastor Khumalo's message is one that encourages evangelism, racial reconciliation through the power of the Gospel, and furthering the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations.

Pastor Khumalo studied at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Ind. After his ordination, he founded St. Peter Confessional Lutheran Church in Mhluzi, Middelburg, South Africa. Today, St. Peter has a worship attendance of nearly 1,000 each weekend and has 10 satellite congregations and preaching stations. The church also operates a Lutheran preschool and grade school which has over 600 students.

In March, the service of welcome and blessing was held

at Our Savior, Lansing. Rev. Zerit Yohannes (St. Luke, Lansing) preached the sermon and President David Maier gave the blessing and welcome on behalf of the Michigan District, LCMS. Special music was provided by musicians of Our Savior as well as the Congolese Choir of Lansing. About half of those gathered were from the Lutheran Sudanese, Congolese, and other African immigrant groups in the area.

A member of Our Savior commented, *"I remember the days when we used to send missionaries TO Africa."* That's exactly right. We are the mission field now. And we have much to learn from our brothers and sisters in Christ in places where Christianity is growing exponentially.

Pastor Khumalo will be traveling to churches, schools, and conferences around the state and even around the country. If you would like to invite Pastor Khumalo to speak at your church or school, please contact Linda Glenn at llglenn@icloud.com.

May God bless the ministry of Pastor Khumalo among us as the Lord spurs us all on to greater missionary zeal and a fervent desire to proclaim Christ to all nations!



In February, Rev. Mark R. Doede (pictured front row center) was installed as pastor at Huntington Woods Lutheran Church in Huntington Woods.

CLW Celebrates Women of the Year



Photo courtesy of CLW

In March, the Council of Lutheran Women (CLW) Annual Luncheon was held at Burton Manor in Livonia. Forty-eight Women of the Year were honored from member congregations and inter-congregational organizations. The guest speaker for this year's event was Gayle Sommerfeld, founder of MOST Ministries. Sommerfeld shared the path that led her to found the organization that provides short-term mission opportunities.

The event also provided an opportunity for an ingathering of items needed to support inter-congregational organizations in the metropolitan area. Proceeds from the event fund the CLW scholarship fund for students at synodical seminaries and two memorial scholarships for Concordia University Ann Arbor.

For more information about CLW and the missions it supports, please visit clwmichigan.com.



Joyfulness is contagious—just look at the 11 new member's smiling faces as they completed an Adult Information Class and became members of Resurrection, Sand Lake in November 2018.



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The Importance of Speaking the Truth in Love

continued from page 2

to divide the inheritance with me.” Remember what Jesus said, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?”

Jesus would have nothing to do with this man’s attempt to draw Him into the argument. Another example would be the woman caught in adultery. The Pharisees tried to draw Jesus in, but he threw the case back at them. “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her” (John 8:7b). Jesus teaches a clear, consistent message when it comes to conflict—resolve the matter with the person that has offended you.



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Resolve
the matter with
the person that
has offended you.

Second, triangulation is wrong because it changes the way we perceive others. In the examples above, the families are likely to think less of their elders as a result of the pastor’s visit. The pastor or church council are going to have concerns about the youth worker as a result of the disgruntled member taking the complaint to them rather than talking to the youth worker. In their attempts to get others to join them in the conflict, those who solicit the help of others sow seeds of discontent or distrust.

Third, triangulation is wrong because it makes the third party feel obligated to do that which should only be done

by the two conflicted parties. When we are pulled into the conflict, we feel obligated to respond. Unfortunately, our response is rarely focused on the true conflict, but on the distorted perception of the conflict presented by the one creating the triangle. Not only does this introduce confusion, it escalates the conflict. Rather than bringing peace, our efforts to mediate become biased and conflict spreads further into the church. The divide between the two parties will grow.

Fourth, triangulation is wrong because it undermines trust. If we cannot trust each other enough to speak the truth without having the other party form sides for an all-out assault, we really don’t have a base for a relationship. If the only way we have to resolve an issue is for one side or the other to gather a goon squad to come after the other side, we cannot have a foundation for healthy conflict resolution.

A Healthy Response to Triangulation

So, what do you do when someone comes to you to “share a concern?” The best thing to do, the healthiest thing to do, is to immediately stop the conversation and offer to go with that individual directly to the person with whom they have conflict so the issue can be discussed. Sometimes that’s not practical; and sometimes the other individual is not willing. The best thing you can do in those situations is prevent the conversation from continuing. If you allow the person to share their concern, the conflict will get into your head and change your perception of the other party. Even if you don’t want that to happen, it will. Your thought process, your outlook and perspective will be changed by those words. The best thing you can do is to stop the conversation before it happens.

It can be difficult. Often, we are not aware that we are being pulled into a triangle until it has already happened. Here are some early warning signs that you’re getting sucked into triangulation:

- When the individual begins a conversation with a statement like, “*Sometimes I just get so frustrated at...*” Or “*I’m having a real problem with _____; perhaps you can give me some advice.*”
- When you sense the purpose of the conversation is to get you to agree with one position in an ongoing conflict.

- When the conversation implies the need for your active participation and engagement or response.
- When your urge to rescue and solve the problem goes into high gear.
- When someone comes up to you and begins to pull you into the conflict, the best thing to do is shut it down right away. However, what happens if, after the fact, you realize that you've been suckered into a situation of triangulation? You've got a couple of options. First, you can go to the individual that brought the situation up and acknowledge that you realize you became part of the triangle and that's not healthy. You can tell them that they will have to go directly to the individual with whom they have an issue to seek resolution. Second, you could call the individual and tell them that you recognize that you've become part of an unhealthy situation of triangulation and that you will certainly be glad to listen while both parties discuss their differences, but that you will not be part of the conversation.

Challenging Cases of Triangulation

What about a person sharing a concern about the pastor or an elected official, or someone sharing a concern about a staff member and you are their supervisor? First, it goes without saying that, if you suspect someone's behavior is hurting another individual, you should report it to the pastor or elders. Yes, it is a form of triangulation, but the need to be proactive supersedes the need to avoid triangulation. In your reporting, you can minimize the damage of triangulation by reporting only that which you know rather than adding commentary. In all other cases, whether it is a staff position or a member of the church, triangulation is never healthy. Don't encourage or reward triangulation. There may come a time, as a supervisor, that you need to intercede and intervene in a conflict. Do so only after the two parties have exhausted their attempts to bring about resolution.

If someone begins to complain to you about a person—let's say Bill, whom you supervise—your response is to stop the conversation and ask them, “*Have you talked to Bill?*” If the person bringing the complaint has not talked with Bill, then challenge them to come back to visit with you after they've had a chance to talk. If the person says they have talked to Bill, ask them, “*What did he say?*”

Then invite them to go with you as you let the two of them discuss the issue between them. Again, you should not be a part of the conversation, just a listening party. Your job is to facilitate the healing process, not solve their problem.

Conclusion

Good leadership is founded on strong relationships. Healthy relationships are predicated on the assumption that we love each other enough to speak the truth in love. It may be difficult and uncomfortable, but for the sake of healthy relationships and the health of our ministries, recognize those moments when you are trying to draw others into a conflict that you have with another person and prayerfully, lovingly, seek reconciliation. When others seek to involve you in their conflicts, resist the temptation to fix the problem. In so doing, we protect our ministries from the disease of conflict. ■

Rev. Dr. Todd Jones serves as Assistant to the President - Mission Education and Support for the Michigan District, LCMS.

When others seek to involve you in their conflicts, *resist* the temptation to fix the problem.

Calls and Roster Update

ORDAINED

Calls Accepted

Rev. Paul Arndt (Sterling Heights) to Missionary at Large, East Bethlehem, Detroit
Mr. Robert Auxter (Monroe) to SMP Colloquy Grace, Monroe
Rev. Richard Collin (Ewart) IIP St. John, Ludington
Mr. Michael DeVries (Clarkston) to SMP Colloquy St. Trinity, Clarkston
Rev. Brian Dupre (Farmington Hills) to Shadow of the Cross, Farmington Hills
Mr. Robert Geisler (Davison) to SMP Colloquy Trinity, Davison
Mr. Jack Langfeldt (Battle Creek) to SMP Colloquy St. Mark, Battle Creek
Rev. Robert Nelson (Commerce Twp.) to LCMS Board of International Missions, MO active duty Chaplain, USAF
Rev. Glenn Schaeffer (Edmonton, AB, Canada) to St. James, Grand Rapids

Change of Status

Rev. Frank Graves (Grand Rapids) to Emeritus
Rev. Paul Hinz (Saginaw) to Emeritus
Rev. Larry Loree Sr. (Pigeon) to Emeritus

Called Home

Rev. Wilton Fluegge (Sterling Heights)

COMMISSIONED

Calls Accepted

Dent, Andrea (Trinity, Jackson) to St. Paul, Bay City
Donal, Karyn (St. Paul's, Farmington Hills) to Shadow of the Cross, Farmington Hills
Dykema, Courtney (Concordia, Ann Arbor) to St. John, New Boston
Harbaugh, Kara (Our Savior, Grand Rapids) to Our Savior, Grand Rapids
Kayser, Doris (Candidate) to Messiah, Grand Rapids
Pett, Royden (Concordia, Ann Arbor) to Peace, Saginaw

Change of Status

Koch, Matthew (St. Paul Community, Pontiac) to Candidate

Transferred Into District

Claus, Donna (Indiana District) as Emeritus
Claus, Kenneth (Indiana District) as Emeritus
Riske, Elizabeth (Pacific Southwest District) as Candidate

Reigned from Roster

Harris, Dawn

Removed from Roster

Evola, Julia
Gleim, Laura
Kudray, Andrew
Myers, Michael
Seguin, Kathleen



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Calendar of Events

MAY

- 2 Supervising Pastor/Deacon & MAP Conference
Faith, Grand Blanc
- 4 Seasons of Change Meeting
District Office, Ann Arbor
- 7–8 South & East Pastors' Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 8 Joint Lutheran Schools Celebration
Saginaw Valley University
- 8–9 Circuit Visitors' Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 12 Mothers' Day
- 13–14 West Pastors' Conference
DoubleTree by Hilton, Grand Rapids
- 15–16 Intentional Interim Ministry Continuing Educ.
Conference
Michindoh, Hillsdale
- 18 Regional Track Meets
- 20–22 North & East Pastors' Conference
Little Bear East/Breakers Resort, St. Ignace
- 27 Memorial Day
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 29 Board of Directors' Meeting
Concordia University Ann Arbor
- 5/31–6/2 Jr. High Gathering
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth

JUNE

- 1 State Track Meet
Frankenmuth High School
- 6 Ascension Day
- 9 **Here We Stand** Worship Service
Michigan International Speedway, Brooklyn
- 13-14 Teacher Supervision Training
Concordia University Ann Arbor
- 15 Synod Pre-Convention Delegate Meeting
St. Luke, Haslett
- 16 Fathers' Day
- 17-19 Future Lutheran Administrators -- Midwest
Educators
Concordia University Ann Arbor
- 23-29 THE BIG WEEK at Camp Restore - Detroit
Mount Calvary, Detroit
- 24–28 A2E Sports Camp East
Messmer Park, Detroit

JULY

- 4-5 Independence Day
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 11–14 National Youth Gathering
Minneapolis, Minn.
- 20-25 LCMS Synodical Convention
Tampa, Florida
- 21-25 Special Friends Camp
Camp Copneconic, Fenton
- 24–26 The Summit Worship Arts Conference
Shepherd of the Lakes, Brighton

For more detailed information, visit michigandistrict.org/events.