

October 2019

# michigan

## IN TOUCH

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

### HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

## The Touch of Christ

Rev. Dr. David P. E. Maier

If someone were to do a documentary on your hands, what would they see? What would the inferences of the documentary make clear?

At first, of course, we would see an infant's fist. Then a close-up of a tiny hand wrapped around mommy's finger. Then what? Perhaps holding onto a chair as you learned to stand, or maybe handling a spoon as you learned to eat. Not far into the docu-

*continued on page 2*

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## michigan

IN TOUCH

Rev. Dr. David P. E. Maier, President  
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## Table of Contents

|    |                         |
|----|-------------------------|
| 1  | Healthy Congregations   |
| 4  | Great Commission        |
| 5  | Great Compassion        |
| 8  | Church Extension Fund   |
| 10 | LLL, LWML               |
| 11 | Annual Report           |
| 13 | Here We Stand           |
| 14 | Special Recognition     |
| 16 | Calls and Roster Update |
| 16 | Calendar of Events      |

The same hand  
can *help* or hurt,  
*encourage* or  
discourage,  
*help* someone  
*up* or push  
someone down.

*continued from page 1*

mentary, we would see your hand showing affection, reaching up to touch your father's cheek, or reaching out to pet a puppy or a kitten.

It wouldn't be too long before we'd see the hand exhibiting aggression: grabbing a toy or pushing baby brother away. All of us learn early that the hand is suited for more than just basic "provision." It's suited well for expression. (I certainly can't talk without using my hands).

The same hand can help or hurt, encourage or discourage, help someone up or push someone down.

As the documentary continued there would undoubtedly be times when you'd be proud of some of your hand's 'moments'. Maybe the moment you put a ring on her finger, the moment you doctored a wound, the moment that you folded your hands in prayer, or the moment that you wiped the perspiration from the brow of someone in a hospital bed. Yes, you'd be proud of some moments—but wouldn't each of us be embarrassed about other moments?

There have been times when our hands have been more accusing than encouraging, more abusive than helpful. Leave them unbridled and unmanaged and hands, like the tongue, can be weapons of destruction and lust (cf. *James 3*).

But let them be submitted to God Himself—washed by the blood of Jesus, warmed by His presence and touch, inspired by His love—and our hands can be used mightily by God. They can be so surrendered to and managed

by Him ... that when we touch *He is touching*, and when we encourage *He is encouraging*.

And what if we were to see a documentary about **the hands of Christ**? We wouldn't see abuse, greedy clutching, or self-centered yanking. One warm occasion after another we would see the kind hands of Christ on people as their lives were changed—infants and children being brought to Christ "*to have Him touch them*" (*Mark 10:13*), parents coming for encouragement; others for healing. Each one touched; each one changed.

None, however, were touched or changed more than the leper in *Matthew 8*: "*When He came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.'* Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. '*I am willing, He said. 'Be clean!'* Immediately he was cured {Greek: made clean} of his leprosy. Then Jesus said to him, '*See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.*'"

Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell the same story. In these three Gospels this leper appears and disappears. We don't even know his name. We know his disease. We know he approached Jesus, but what brought him to the point where he cried out from the side of the road for healing he hoped Christ could bring?

Leprosy was the most dreaded of diseases in New Testament times. The disease rendered the

body a mass of ulcers and decay.

- fingers would curl and gnarl;
- blotches of skin would discolor, rot and stink;
- certain types of leprosy could numb nerve endings, leading to losses of extremities—fingers, even a whole hand or a foot.

It's been said that leprosy was "death by inches."

The social consequences were equally severe. Since they were considered contagious, lepers were quarantined or banished, usually to a leper colony.

Since leprosy is almost cured in the world today, what's the application? Throughout Scripture, the "leper" is representative and symbolic of the **ultimate outcast**. He stands for *any* person in *any* nation in *any* era who has been set apart, kicked out, or turned away. He, like many today, is avoided by people he doesn't know and condemned to a future he cannot bear.

Getting back to the leper, in the memory of each leper was the day he discovered the truth about his condition. Then there would be the discovery and discernment by his wife ... children ... neighbors ... and having to see the priest for the "diagnosis."

The pronouncement of the priest became something of a "death sentence" in many ways. The priest covered his mouth and extended his hand palm forward: "You are unclean." With that one pronouncement the leper lost his family, his friends, his "farm," and his future.

What was it like for him to say good-bye to his wife and children as he headed into his new life of banishment and loneliness?

Seems terribly harsh, this isolation, doesn't it? Of course, the ancient East isn't the only culture to isolate their "wounded". We may not build colonies (anymore) or cover our mouths in their presence, but we certainly build walls and avoid eye contact.

The divorced know this feeling, don't they? So do the handicapped. The unemployed have felt it, and the less educated. Some unmarried moms feel shunned. So do the autistic. We keep our distance from depressed people. We wish the addicted would cry "unclean." We avoid the terminally ill. Only God knows how many there are living quiet, lonely lives, infected by their fear of rejection.

But there came that time when this leper would risk going to Jesus, even as *"the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him"*

(*Luke 15:1*). I wonder if the leper hid behind a rock? I think he was watching Jesus as He descended from the mountainside as throngs of people followed Him.

I think he waited until Jesus was just paces from him, and then he stepped out and addressed Jesus: "*Master, Master.*" Jesus stopped and looked in his direction. So did the dozens or more who were following Jesus.

God *enables* and *equips* us to reach out and "touch" others with His *love*.

Fear would have swept across the crowd. People's arms flew in front of their faces. Children ducked behind parents. "Unclean!" someone shouted. The leper would normally run; *he would have had to run*.

What kept him from running? Hope? Possibilities? Imagining what life could be again?

And what had he heard about Jesus? What did he know about Jesus' compassion?

Everyone stepped back **except Jesus**. He stepped forward, toward the leper! The leper didn't move. He spoke: "*Lord, You can heal me if You will.*"

This man would have been thrilled if Jesus had healed him with just a word (and soon Jesus will). Had Jesus cured him with a prayer he would have rejoiced. But, apparently, Jesus wasn't satisfied with just speaking to him. Jesus drew near and did the unthinkable, the unimaginable: **He touched him**.

Five years or so is when he had last been touched. Who had been the last to touch him? His wife? A priest? No one had touched him since until now. Jesus answered the request: "*I am willing. (...) Be healed!*"

The healing was instantaneous: energy and life streamed back into his limbs! Miraculous! He got up from kneeling in front of Jesus, and I see Jesus cupping His hands on his cheeks and drawing so near that the leper could see the moisture, the tears in Jesus' eyes.

Jesus smiles. "*Don't tell anyone about this. Go and show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded for people who are made well.*"

What a different trip to the priest this must have been! Imagine the trip home to the farm to see his

*continued on page 15*





# A2E 2019 Sports Camps/VBS

This past summer, Acts 2 Enterprise celebrated its 7th year of Summer Sports Camp/VBS at Messmer Park on the East Side of Detroit and at Our Savior Lutheran Church in North Flint. The theme, *Fundamentals*, was based on 1 Corinthians 16:13.

The Detroit Sports Camp/VBS had 42 volunteers; a number of them came from The Big Week at Camp Restore Detroit. The camp was blessed to see 161 participants as it offered basketball, cheerleading, lacrosse, martial arts, and archery. This was the first year in which they offered archery, and it was received with great enthusiasm. One of the highlights was seeing participants asking to be involved in the walking Bible verse which was used in the learning of the theme verse.

Another highlight was this, as reported by Rev. Chris Bodley: *"During our daily closing rally it was always challenging to keep children and youth focused to hear the Mega Camp Bible story because of the number of youth. On our 4th day, when we shared the salvation/Gospel story, the Holy Spirit caused there to be silence among the campers. They heard the story and several youth shared that they wanted to hear more about Jesus."*

In July, Our Savior, Flint held its second Sports Camp/VBS with the help of 27 volunteers. The camp was blessed to see 26 participants who tried basketball, football, golf, and track. Rev. Randy Schultz writes: *"A week before Sports Camp, the Lord nudged me to drop off some fliers at a local community center. Within an hour I received a phone call from the brother of the center's director. He asked if we needed a golf coach and offered to meet me at my office in ten minutes. When he arrived, he presented his business card: he*

*is the Executive Director of 'Northside Golf Academy – Flint' whose mission is to restore golf to the children and youth of our neighborhood! And he is a member of the PGA too! Praise God for His provision. I later learned that this golf pro is the half-brother of a long-time member of our church."*

Another highlight from Flint was that its Closing Rally was held the Sunday following camp week, and this year's Closing Rally was attended by 49 people—the third largest Sunday attendance of the year (following Easter and Black History Sunday, respectively). That count includes 14 non-member neighbors, 4 of whom were first-time worshippers. Praise God!

Both Detroit and Flint camps provided nutritious meals to the attendees and presented them with the Gospel as well as teaching them to play sports. If you would like to support future Sports Camp offerings and enable children to attend at no cost to them, visit [michigandistrict.org/donate](http://michigandistrict.org/donate), select "other," and earmark SportsCamps/VBS. ■



Photos by Elisa Schulz/Michigan District, LCMS

# This is *Your* Race

*The following is an excerpt from the devotional book “How Long, O Lord, How Long?” written by Dale Kreienkamp for the unemployed and those who love them.*

**H**ave you ever run in a race? I’ve participated in a few of them in my life. In a race, everyone who is participating has the same goal (to win) and the conditions and the course are the same. But life is a different kind of race.

In the book of Hebrews, the Apostle Paul points out that our life is our own and it is unique to us. *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1–2).*

You can compare your life with that of anyone else, but it’s not the same. From the day you were born, your life has been different from every other person who ever lived on this earth. There is only one “you,” created by God for His purpose. You’ve had different parents, grandparents,

siblings, and friends. I can easily go on and on regarding how unique you are, but what I really want you to know is that the race you are now running—your period of unemployment—is unique to you; it’s yours alone.

While there are many people who are or have been or even will be unemployed, they aren’t “you.” The danger, especially in difficult or stressful times, is in comparing our situation to that of someone else’s. For example, you may know of someone who found a job in three months while you remain unemployed at four months. If you dwell on the comparison, it will only add more stress that you don’t need.

The other challenge you’ll face is the advice others will want to give you. You’ll hear things like “you should be doing \_\_\_\_,” “don’t do \_\_\_\_,” “that’s a bad industry to be in, avoid it,” “when I was looking I did \_\_\_\_,” and so on. Everyone means well, but the advice of others may or may not help you. Hear me on this: Be a good listener, as there may be some wisdom in what they say, but ulti-

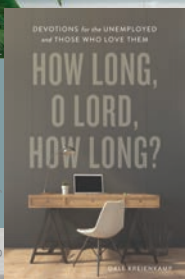
mately, you’ll need to pray about it, weigh what they have to say, then do what you believe is right for you. And then don’t second-guess yourself.

In verse 2 of Hebrews 12, the Apostle Paul gives important direction on what we should be doing every day, but especially on this journey: *“fixing our eyes on Jesus.”* As you move forward, look to Jesus for direction. You won’t know what path to follow if you don’t look to Him.

Your life may be changing, but God isn’t. He’s there to love you and help you through the changes along this journey. ■

*Dale Kreienkamp is a Human Resources executive and consultant who has experienced a personal journey of unemployment twice when positions were eliminated in organizational restructuring. These personal experiences created a desire within him to help others impacted by unemployment through inspirational devotions. Dale is also an active volunteer at his home church and a leader in his local community.*

© imaginima/iStock



How Long, O Lord, How Long? contains 80 devotions, each with Scriptures to provide help, healing, and hope during the journey through unemployment. A group study will be available in December 2019. For more information, visit [howlongolord.org](http://howlongolord.org).



# The No-Casserole Illness AND HOW THE CHURCH CAN RESPOND

by Dennis Goff

**I**t's a conversation I'll never forget. While visiting with a local pastor one day about the mental health focus of The Lutheran Foundation, he shared something he did one Sunday morning in church.

As people gathered for worship, everyone received a sheet of paper with a list of ten questions related to mental health issues. There were questions like, *"Have you ever been depressed?"* and *"Have you ever been prescribed medication for mental health issues?"* Each person was to circle any question that applied to them.

When everyone finished answering their questions, the ushers collected them. They shuffled the papers and walked to a different part of the church to pass out those same sheets of paper. Each person was now holding someone else's paper (no names were on them.) The pastor then started to read the questions, one by one, and asked people to stand up if the question he read was circled on the sheet they were holding.

When people in the congregation saw the number of people standing up in response to each question, there was an audible gasp from the congregation. *"Everyone thinks they are the only one living with mental health issues,"* the pastor said. Too often, the stigma is so great in the church that people are afraid to talk about mental illness.

While author Amy Simpson was growing up, her mother had serious psychotic episodes and was later diagnosed with schizophrenia. The family was always active in church. But when it came to her mother's mental health issues, there was

silence and shame. *"We needed community and loving friendships,"* she says. *"The church is one of the only places left in society where that is readily available—at least in theory."* Amy tells her family's story in her book, *Troubled Minds: Mental Illness and the Church's Mission*. Amy says the phrase is not original with her, but she often refers to mental illness as the "no-casserole illness." It's not uncommon for people from church to bring a casserole when a family member is in the hospital, or when there has been a death in the family. But when it's mental illness, people often don't call or visit, or bring casseroles.

However, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that one in five adults will experience a mental illness in any given year. That also means one in five in our churches. Most people don't realize that mental illness is more common than cancer, heart disease, and diabetes combined.

The Lutheran Foundation is focused on promoting mental wellness and reducing stigma around mental illness. Starting the conversation and silencing the stigma is one step toward healing. Sometimes those caring conversations happen best across the table ... over a casserole. ■

*Contributed through the LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission monthly newsletter By Rev. Dr. Dennis Goff, director of Ministry Programs for The Lutheran Foundation, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

## *Want to learn more?*

### **FREE Mental Health Webinar**

In August, LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission hosted a free webinar with Dr. Goff on the subject of Mental Health. View the archive at [lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/rural-and-small-town-mission/webinars#archives](https://lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/rural-and-small-town-mission/webinars#archives).

### **LOOK UP Faith Conference on Mental Illness**

**October 7, 2019 | Fort Wayne, Ind.**

Advance your faith community's mental health awareness by attending the Lutheran Foundation's Look Up Faith Conference on Mental Health at the Grand Wayne Center in Fort Wayne, Ind. on Monday, October 7. This one-day event will provide practical insights for the church and other faith-based organizations to promote mental wellness and reduce the stigma around mental illness. Hear from nationally recognized leaders, including Kay Warren of Saddleback Church, Warren Kinghorn of Duke Divinity School, and many others. Cost is \$40/person. For more information, or to register, visit [lookupconference.org](https://lookupconference.org).

OCTOBER 2019

# New Investment Rebate Program Helps Churches Earn Cash Back!



*The Investment Rebate Program is an added bonus for investors, who already benefit from competitive rates and the peace of mind that comes from building God's kingdom.*

**Jim Saalfeld**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Church Extension Fund

Church Extension Fund (CEF) is the preferred lender for the vast majority of LCMS churches in the Michigan District. CEF has earned this spot by providing the lowest possible interest rates, while also making sure the loan application process is carried out with a spirit of partnership and stewardship that traditional banks or lending institutions could never match.

But CEF's advantages don't stop there — they also have a broad portfolio of investment products

and unique opportunities to help congregations grow.

A case in point is the newly unveiled Investment Rebate Program. This new program is an evolutionary step from CEF's long-standing interest incentive program. The Investment Rebate Program allows churches to earn a cash rebate based on the investments held at CEF by the congregations and its members. The new program also offers a new tier of rewards.



## HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS



The congregation takes out a loan from CEF

Members invest in CEF investment products

Cash back is awarded based on loan amount and member investment

### Here's how the Investment Rebate Program works:

A congregation earns cash back for their church based on the percentage of the loan that is matched by their investments in CEF products.

- If the congregation and its members have investments totaling half the value of the loan, the church will receive a .5% cash rebate.
- If the investment level crosses the 75% threshold, the church will receive a .75% rebate.
- If the investment level is 100% or greater, the church will receive 1% cash back.

The 75% tier is a new addition to the Investment Rebate Program since

the cash-back process replaced the interest-rate-reduction program.

“Churches prefer cash-back as a reward,” explains CEF’s Chief Executive Officer Jim Saalfeld. “The feeling is different when the church actually receives cash back ... when it affects the interest rate it tends to be forgotten.”

Assistant Vice President Jodi Gonzalez points out that three churches have already begun to earn rewards since the Investment Rebate Program started in July. She notes that as loan renewals start each month, the number will grow.

She also mentions that the Investment Rebate Program looks at investment level as a percentage of the loan at its current value —

not the original amount — which is another change from the old program.

The CEF team will talk about the new program in detail at the fall pastors’ conference and their own 36<sup>th</sup> Annual CEF Fall Conference. Churches can learn more in the meantime at the CEF website: [mi-cef.org](http://mi-cef.org) or by calling 800-242-3944.

“This is a rare opportunity for churches,” Saalfeld says. “The only other organizations offering this type of Investment Rebate Program are a few CEF’s in other states. It is an added bonus for investors, who already benefit from competitive rates and the peace of mind that comes from building God’s kingdom.”



Church Extension Fund

Church Extension Fund ■ Michigan District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod  
3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-3098 ■ [www.mi-cef.org](http://www.mi-cef.org)  
Offices: 800-242-3944

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## LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

### LLL Leaders

Phil Krauss II and Randy Larson continue to be two very important members of the International Lutheran Laymen's League Michigan District.

Krauss is currently the treasurer, serving his third year in that capacity. He has previously been the International Board of Directors chairman, and a member of the LLL Board of Governors, plus a district president. Krauss is an active member of Christ Our Savior, Livonia.

Larson is in his second year as district secretary. He is an active member of Our Savior, Lansing.

Lutheran Hour Ministries is a trusted resource in global media that equips and engages a vibrant volunteer base to passionately proclaim the Gospel to more than 125 million people worldwide each week.

Through its North American headquarters and ministry centers on six continents, LHM reaches into more than 50 countries, often bringing Christ to places where no other Christian evangelistic organizations are present. LHM's flagship ministry, The Lutheran Hour®, airs weekly on more than 1,800 radio stations and the American Forces Network.



Phil Krauss II



Randy Larson

The LHM encourages those people who are reached through these ministry efforts to respond by contacting staff or volunteers. LHM then cultivates relationships with those who respond to ultimately facilitate a relationship between them and a Christian community, thus helping grow the kingdom of God.

## LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE

### LWML Women's Conferences in November



#### November 2, 2019

North Women's Conference

*To be held at*

Mt. Hope Lutheran Church  
905 N. I-75 Business Loop  
Grayling, MI 49738  
Phone 989-348-5921

#### November 9, 2019

Western Women's Conference

*To be held at*

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church  
908 W. Oak St.  
Greenville, MI 48838  
Phone 616-754-4886

#### November 16, 2019

Eastern Women's Conference

*To be held at*

Hope Lutheran Church  
32400 Hoover Rd.  
Warren, MI 48093  
Phone 586-979-9055

Be part of the Mission with Mites. Send your donations to Sandy Maya, 6600 Constitution Blvd. #402, Portage, MI 49024.

**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!**



Visit the LWML Michigan District website for information about what we do & much more! <https://lwmlmichigan.org/>



# Michigan District Annual Report

For the fiscal year ending January 31, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus,

The congregations of the Michigan District, LCMS are where God's people gather around God's Word and Sacraments. How blessed we are also that God continues to present opportunities for us to share the message of reconciliation through Jesus with those who do not yet call upon his name.

Because of your generous support, individuals and congregations of the Michigan District have been used by God to accomplish much. Here is just a snapshot of our collective work:

- In Flint, funding enabled Franklin Avenue Mission (FAM) to further expand its ministry to the homeless by renovating a home for women and children. Mercy House was dedicated in September 2019.
- In Ann Arbor, Adaptive Sports clinics were offered to handicap children in partnership with Peace Lutheran Church and the University of Michigan.
- In Detroit, the Luke 52 Project provided many women with pre-natal ultrasounds and medical care throughout their pregnancies and postpartum. Acts 2 Enterprise (A2E) summer Sports Camp/VBS served children and youth. A2E also held job skills classes and an expungement fair for adults. Elli's House enabled women who have been victims of human trafficking to receive emotional and prayer support, Bible study, and items for their physical needs. Today, Elli's House is a refuge and safe place to live.
- In our seminaries and universities, over \$260,000 in financial aid was disbursed to approximately 100 students pursuing full-time church work.
- We have continued to be a leading district in the LCMS with faithful support of Synod as we work together to send missionaries around the world among hundreds of people groups who need to hear the Good News that God the Father sent Jesus to be their Savior!



**Rev. Dr. David P. E. Maier**  
**President**

There is much more to share than this space allows. Please take a moment to watch the Annual Report in video format at [michigandistrict.org/annualreport](http://michigandistrict.org/annualreport).

To stay informed on how God continues to send out His people in the Michigan District, please visit [michigandistrict.org](http://michigandistrict.org) and subscribe to the enews, blog, and podcast.

May God continue to bless us all, as Jesus sends each and every one of us into our communities and the world.

*Rev. David P. E. Maier*

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





## Summary of Financial Activities

For the fiscal year ending January 31, 2019

### Support, Revenues, and Gains

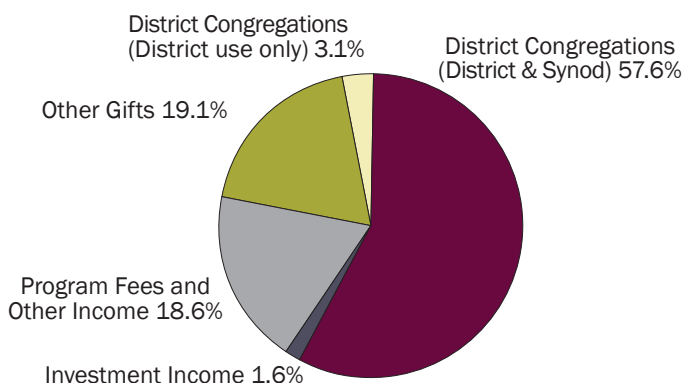
|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| District Congregations (District and Synod)..... | 3,851,870        |
| District Congregations (District use only).....  | 209,383          |
| Other Gifts.....                                 | 1,275,603        |
| Investment Income.....                           | 105,086          |
| Program Fees and Other Income.....               | 1,248,481        |
| <b>Total Support, Revenues, and Gains.....</b>   | <b>6,690,423</b> |

### Expenses

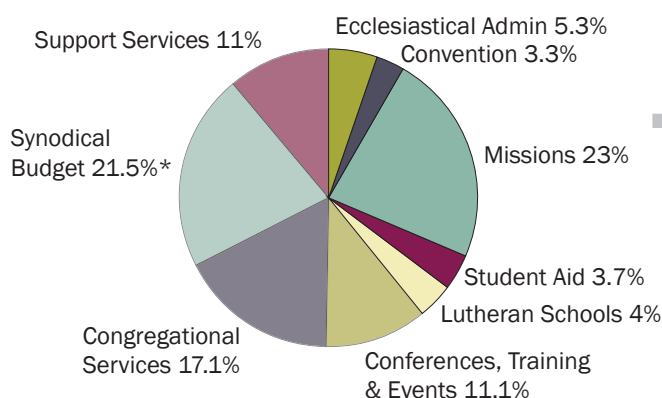
|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Synodical Budget*                        | 1,527,516        |
| Program Services                         |                  |
| Ecclesiastical Administration .....      | 375,384          |
| Convention.....                          | 232,667          |
| World & National Missions.....           | 1,632,327        |
| Student Aid.....                         | 263,120          |
| Lutheran Schools.....                    | 283,499          |
| Conferences, Training, & Events.....     | 789,668          |
| Other Congregation Program Services..... | 1,216,487        |
| Support Services                         |                  |
| Management & General.....                | 522,734          |
| Fundraising.....                         | 261,070          |
| <b>Total Expenses.....</b>               | <b>7,104,472</b> |

Change in Net Assets ..... (414,049)

Revenue



Expenses



Information is taken from the audited financial statements of the Michigan District, LCMS. Copies of the audit report, which include all integral parts of the financial statements, are available from the District Office.

\*The Michigan District sent 35% of its unrestricted cash receipts from congregations to national Synod during the fiscal year. The numbers on the financial statements reflect adjustments based on pledges from congregations and to the Synod as required by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

## Support for National and International Ministries

For the fiscal year ending January 31, 2019, the Michigan District remitted \$1,527,516 to Corporate (national) Synod, which represents 35% of the District's unrestricted gifts from congregations. The 35 districts of the Synod contribute approximately \$14 million of undesignated revenue to Corporate Synod annually in support of national and international mission and ministry. The balance of the \$69 million 2018/19 budget of Corporate Synod comes primarily from restricted gifts and sales of materials and services.

Allocations of the budgeted use of undesignated revenue for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019 are as follows:

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| International Missions 10.3% | Mission Advancement 7.0%                      |
| National Missions 2.6%       | Concordia Historical institute & KFUEO 2.1%   |
| Pastoral Education 5.1%      | Ecclesiastical Services and Commissions 11.9% |
| University Education 10.7%   | Officers and Administration 19.7%             |
| Communications 18.6%         | General and Administrative 12.0%              |

For More Information & Stories Visit

**[michigandistrict.org](http://michigandistrict.org)**

## Here We Stand

### Community Care Day

The Community Care Day partnership between Trinity and Redeemer Lutheran churches in Jackson began as a Community Event challenge to congregations in the Michigan District through its **Here We Stand** campaign upon the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. The initial event was such a success that it has continued over the past three years. This partnership to stand for those in need in Jackson has served well over 1,200 individuals since 2017.

This past August, over 100 volunteers from Trinity and Redeemer said thank you to God by serving their neighbors. Their combined efforts and resources once again gifted the community with much needed back-to-school items for 150 families (over 500 individuals!).

Trinity is uniquely situated within the city limits of Jackson and is easily accessed by its neighbors. The 2019 event opened with registration and a pancake breakfast in Trinity's church parking lot. Because each family has to register, the congregations can keep in touch with them and invite them to worship and to special events throughout the year.

Inside the church building, people were able to get haircuts or to pick up hygiene items, school supplies, family devotional supplies, and socks and underwear. Fun projects and games kept restless children occupied during the distribution of supplies. All items provided were new and donated or purchased through monies collected by Trinity and Redeemer members and area businesses and groups. Thrivent Financial was again a significant contributor, providing grants for several areas.

This event was the culmination of months of planning and preparation. A point person from each congregation was chosen. They organized volunteers, arranged for media coverage, and planned the step-by-step process

**Campaign Goal: \$10 million**  
**Campaign Progress: \$6.17 million**

(as of August 29, 2019)

[herewestand.michigandistrict.org](http://herewestand.michigandistrict.org)

needed to get to “D-day” with procedures and people all intact. Each person who headed up a specific area was responsible for things like getting licensed hairstylists and ordering or shopping for supplies to be packaged and displayed.

Over 100 volunteers stepped forward from the two congregations—young, old, and in-between. What a wonderful way for God's people to say thank you to Him by serving the less fortunate.



Photos by Connie Blackwood





## Special Recognition

### Geraci Serves Dual Congregation

Rev. Coleman Geraci, a 2019 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., was installed on August 4 and will serve St. Thomas, Ann Arbor and St. Paul, Milan. Born and raised in Louisville, KY, Geraci was a high school teacher and spent eight years in the US Army serving as a Special Forces Media Sergeant. He and his wife, Rachel, have one daughter, Augustana “Ana” Ruth.



Photo by Elisa Schulz/Michigan District, LCMS

### Deaconess Intern at Grace, Auburn

In August, Deaconess Intern Mika Patron (pictured center) was placed at Grace, Auburn. She will serve the congregation as Deaconess Jean McCain (pictured left) transitions into retirement. Joining them (pictured right) is Grace’s pastor, Rev. Aaron Schian.



Photo courtesy of Grace, Auburn

Michigan District, LCMS presents  
**2020 Theological Conference**  
February 1, 2020 | Our Savior, Lansing, Mich.

**LEGACY:**  
**Reclaiming A Lost Generation**  
Ephesians 4:1-3

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## The Touch of Christ continued from page 3

wife and children. How the children have grown!

Jesus could have healed this leper with a word (and that's actually what happens), but Jesus wanted to do more than heal him. He wanted ...

- to honor him
- to validate him
- to restore him
- to love him
- to “christen” and “anoint” him

Please note that Jesus' touch did **not** heal the disease. Matthew is very careful to mention in the text that it was the pronouncement, not the touch of Jesus, that healed the leper and cleansed his body from the dread disease: *“Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man and said, ‘I am willing. Be healed.’ Immediately the man was healed from his disease.”*

The healing of the disease came with **His words**; but, I think, the healing of his heart came with **the touch of Christ**. Remember the order. It's instructive for how we see and treat people today. Jesus did not wait for the leper to be “clean” before He touched him; He touched him and then “saw” him cleansed. We too need to “meet” people **where** they are, the **way** they are, and prayerfully, when we can, share the Word of the Lord and the love of Jesus.

Please consider how God continues to “touch” you in your life today. He has touched many in the waters of Holy Baptism—which we are to remember each day—when we were adopted and carried into His family. The Lord's Supper provides us the opportunity to be touched by the very price of our salvation—His body and blood given and shed for the forgiveness of sin.

And please remember how Jesus uses us today—individually and as congregations in ministry and mission—to extend His kingdom as members of His body (*1 Corinthians 12:27*). God enables and equips us to reach out and “touch” others with His love. Indeed, Jesus lives in us (*Galatians 2:20*). Jesus opened our



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eyes of faith when He encouraged: *“Whatever you've done for the least of these, My brethren, you've done also to Me”* (*Matthew 25:40*). We should seek out the forgotten and ignored, the “untouched” like this man, and touch them—whatever that means, **whoever** that is in our contexts.

When St. Francis of Assisi turned his back on worldly wealth and walked out of his village, he was naked. As he left the city, he saw a leper standing on the edge of the path. He embraced the man, then turned and continued his journey. Looking back one final time, he saw that the leper was gone. For the rest of his life, St. Francis of Assisi was convinced that the leper was Jesus Christ. Who is to say he was wrong? *“For whatever you've done for the least of these, My brethren, you've done also for Me.”*

Surely one sign of a healthy congregation is members who, convinced of God's great love, forgiveness, and mercy, are prayerfully, deliberately, thoughtfully extending the “touch” of Jesus' love and forgiveness to family, friends, and other acquaintances. When was the last time you put a hand on someone's shoulder and said, “I'm

going to pray for you; I'm going to encourage you”? These are the blessed occurrences that we need the family of God to hear about, celebrate, and continually be open to *seeing*.

Having been cleansed and touched, having been given a servant's heart, may you be *Christ* reaching out to others. ■



Thankful to have been touched by Jesus,  
Rev. Dr. David P. E. Maier

Jesus did not wait for the leper to be “clean” before He touched him.

# Calls and Roster Update

## ORDAINED

### Calls Accepted

Rev. John Bookshaw IIP (Big Rapids) to IIP, Our Savior, Scottville  
Rev. Tige A. C. Culbertson (Hemlock) to St. Lukes, Oviedo, FL  
Rev. John Hansen SMP (Scottville) to Lighthouse, Pentwater/ Peace, Ludington  
Rev. James Hill (Mt. Clemens) to Family of God, Detroit  
Rev. Gary Koltz (Cape Coral, FL) to Missionary at Large, Gethsemane, Rochester Hills, deployed to Florida  
Rev. James Richter (Northern Illinois District) to Michigan District Missionary at Large, deployed to Grand Rapids  
Rev. Michael Schaedig (Harrison) to St. John, Cheboygan

### Transferred Into District

Rev. William Cate (Emeritus) from Rocky Mountain District

### Transferred Out of District

Rev. Tige A. C. Culbertson to the SELC District  
Rev. Richard Rossow (Emeritus) to Florida-Georgia District  
Rev. David Schmidt to the Arkansas District

### Called Home

Hoft, Thees C. (Jan 12, 2019)

## COMMISSIONED

### Calls Accepted

Brauer, Jennifer (LHSA, Saint Peters, MO) to LHSA, Rochester Hills (Northwest)  
Brown, Alicia (Cq. Concordia, Ann Arbor) to St. Matthew, Walled Lake  
Glumm, Julie (Zion, Bay City) to Zion, Bay City  
Goers, Bethany (Candidate) to Trinity, Traverse City  
Heine, Mary (Immanuel, Gaylord, MN) to Trinity, Paw Paw  
Heinlein, Brian (Trinity, Sheboygan, WI) to St. Peter, Hemlock  
Kamin, Jonathan (Candidate) to Zion, Bay City  
McMahon, Petrea (St. Luke, Clinton Township) to Our Savior, Hartland  
Rosin, Aaron (Concordia, Ann Arbor) to Peace, Shelby Township  
Sasse, Linda (Grace, Jacksonville, FL) to Peace, Shelby Township  
Schultz, Amy (Candidate) to Immanuel, Alpena  
Spiehs, Shawna (Linn Lutheran School Association, Linn, KS) to Trinity, Utica  
Wolfe, Morgan (St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth) to Immanuel, Wentzville, MO  
Zander, Joel (Trinity, Muskegon) to Faith, Grand Blanc

### Change of Status

Cowan, Beth (Our Redeemer, Muskegon) to Emeritus  
Lagalo, Ruth (Immanuel, Saginaw) to Candidate  
Mueller, Dawn (St. Peter, Hemlock) to Candidate  
Weiss, Jeffery (Trinity, Paw Paw) to Candidate

### Transferred Out of District

Merrill, Kenlyn (Emeritus) to South Dakota District  
Wolfe, Morgan (St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth) to Missouri District

### Transferred Into District

Livo, Gilbert (Southeastern District) as Emeritus  
Sasse, Linda (Florida-Georgia District) to Peace, Shelby Township

### Resigned From the Roster

Neumeyer, Sarah

### Called Home

Schultz, Robert L.

### School Closings

St. Luke Lutheran School and Preschool, Clinton Township

# Calendar of Events

## OCTOBER

- 4 New Teacher Orientation  
District Office, Ann Arbor
- 6–8 All Pastors' Conference  
Boyne Mountain Resort, Boyne Falls
- 9–12 LEA Convention  
St. Louis, Mo.
- 13 State Cross Country Tournament  
Oakland University
- 14–18 District Presidents' Administrative Assistants  
CUAA North Building
- 22 Board of Directors' Meeting  
CUAA Main Campus Black Box
- 25 School Committee Meeting  
District Office, Ann Arbor

## NOVEMBER

- 2–3 State Volleyball Tournament  
CUAA and St. Paul, Ann Arbor
- 7 New Church Worker Orientation  
CUAA Main Campus Black Box
- 11 Veterans' Day
- 22 Early Childhood Cabinet Meeting  
District Office, Ann Arbor
- 28–29 Thanksgiving  
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED

## DECEMBER

- 24 Christmas Eve  
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 25 Christmas Day  
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 31 New Year's Eve

## JANUARY 2020

- 1 New Year's Day  
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 10–11 Pre-Retirement Conference  
Holy Cross, Flushing
- 19 Epiphany

## FEBRUARY 2020

- 1 Theological Conference  
Our Savior, Lansing
- 6–7 Lutheran Schools Snowtire Conference  
Martin Luther High School, Lansing
- 26 Ash Wednesday