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IN TOUCH

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GREAT COMPASSION

Shipleigh Learns Compassion

Rob Kasper

He disengaged the cruise control with his left thumb and habitually lifted the signal lever to communicate his intention to merge onto the exit ramp. Pastor Shipleigh was returning to his office, a 45-minute trip from a hospital call on Mrs. Schneider after her surgery. As he approached the stop light at the top of the ramp the man appeared with his cardboard sign. “Disabled Vet Anything Will Help,” the sign read. Pastor Shipleigh eagerly hoped the light would

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stay green long enough for him to just roll by the weather-beaten figure in oversized coat and trousers; but the car in front of him slowed abruptly when the light went yellow.

“*Maybe if I don’t make eye contact, he’ll just stand there and not approach me,*” thought the pastor as he tried to look busy by rearranging his small visitation Bible and private Communion case scattered on the front passenger’s seat. Movement out of the corner of his vision caught his attention as the man shuffled along, coming closer but staying safely distant along a well-worn path near the cement curb. Pastor Shipley did risk a glance at the man’s face. The face was creased from the sun and wind, but it still had an echo of being young rather than old. The man’s shadowed eyes did not look directly at anyone or anything in particular ... just out there somewhere. The sign, with its message, he held squarely to his chest like a shield with his coat of arms. “*I really wish this light would turn green!*”

As a good citizen, Pastor Shipley was rescued by his immediate obedience to traffic laws, lurching forward when the signal commanded him to enter into the intersection.

Compassion ministry is the **RESULT** of the Gospel in the lives of God’s people as they live out their part in God’s advancing Kingdom, in the power of the Spirit.

Pastor Shipley pulled into his familiar parking spot outside the door to his office at the church. He gave a quick and carefully worded update to his secretary on Mrs. Schneider’s condition for communication through the congregation’s prayer chain. As he strode toward his office he reflected with pleasure, and just a little bit of pride, on the faithful and caring community of Christians he was privileged to serve as pastor.

The prayer chain was just one way that this family of God in Jesus really demonstrated compassionate care for one another. He knew that Mr. Schneider and the three teenagers in the family would have several meals being delivered over the next couple weeks while his wife got back on her feet. Mrs. Schneider’s fellow choir members would see to that! Other families from the congregation were signed up to assist the Schneiders with their crazy sports schedule, making sure the two sons and daughter got to practices and games on time. What’s more, her job was waiting for her when she healed. This was just another example of the Body of Christ caring for God’s people; and he had seen such compassion from this wonderful congregation hundreds of times in the past several years as they demonstrated God’s love in Jesus to one another. What a wonderful expression of God’s Kingdom on earth!

At his desk, Pastor Shipley prayed briefly for guidance, clarity, and faithfulness before pulling out his sermon preparation file. He reread the appointed Gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday, Luke 4:14–30, “Jesus rejected at Nazareth.” Pastor reviewed his initial study notes:

- Jesus in the “power of the Spirit” (It’s like God’s coming Kingdom is “on the march”!)
- News about Him is spreading
- He went to the synagogues (local places for God’s people to gather to

hear His Word) NOTE: Jesus “**went.**” He didn’t stay in one place. He went to people. Again God’s coming Kingdom “on the move”!

- He went to the synagogue in Nazareth (Jesus’ home town)
- He **purposely** turned to the section of Isaiah that speaks about “preaching good news to the poor ...”

Pastor Shipley’s eyes froze. His mind seemed to be stopped at a red light. The memory of the man with the sign swirled like a wintery specter in his thoughts. The pastor could feel his throat tighten, his stomach sag; and he heard his heart in his ears. Rarely had he had such emotional and visceral experiences. It was unsettling. But he chose to embrace the event and allowed the image to remain. He decided to engage with it. (Preachers call this “ruminating” on the text.)

Jesus came to fulfill the prophecy regarding the “year of Jubilee.” There was freedom for the captives. There was hope for the hopeless and sight to the blind. This was/ is Jesus, the embodiment of God’s Kingdom, on the move in the power of the Spirit; and he was ushering in the great reversal of sin’s destructive forces in God’s creation. Wherever Jesus came, lives were transformed. Brokenness gave way to His wholeness. Weakness gave way to His power. Demonic strongholds gave way to His authority. Emptiness and hunger gave way to His fullness and provision. Bondage gave way to His freeing grace. Fear melted in the face of His love. Distress and disease gave way to His compassionate care. Confusion gave way to His wisdom. The wretched were redeemed. The devalued were considered precious in His eyes, and the lowly were raised up.



Again the man came into view—the vacant stare, the oversized coat and trousers, the sign. Pastor Shipley thought, “*I wish I could have a ‘do-over’ at that intersection. But what would be different? Hand him a couple dollars? ... A gift card to a fast food joint? ... A bottle of water? ... A tract that shares the Gospel of salvation in Jesus?*”

In the congregation he served there was a system of compassionate care. There were relationships of families and friends, all gathered in one way or another around the Savior. Mrs. Schneider and her family would be well cared for because of this congregation, this Body of Christ, this system.

But this man at the intersection was somehow outside of any helpful system. Pastor Shipley knew that this unfortunate veteran was not the only one who had fallen through to his isolation. There were the elderly without family or financial resources who were left to live out their lives in understaffed nursing homes run by the state or county. There were children living in poverty in this county who were dependent upon the subsidized breakfasts and lunches provided by the public school. But what happened to them in the summer, or on weekends? There were teens who, in search of some secure system, found a semblance of belonging in a gang. There were the families, some with two parents and some with one, who were working, but made just a few dollars more than the allowed amount to receive assistance in the system; but not really enough to live on with any security.

“*Our government is failing these people!*” Pastor Shipley blurted under his breath. Then he breathed deep and read the notes on the text from Luke again. God’s Kingdom is “on the move” in the power of the Spirit in the person and work of the incarnate God, Jesus Christ.

It didn’t take much for the Holy Spirit to begin to connect the dots for this prayerful man of God. Suddenly, there was a rush of energy. He quickly tapped out the following on his computer as the thoughts flowed:

“Showing compassion is not the job of the government. Showing compassion is the work of God’s Kingdom people as the Body of Christ. God’s people can work in the ‘gaps’ of existing systems. Yes, we want to have systems of compassionate care within our congregations. But how might the people of God demonstrate the movement of the Kingdom of God in the ‘power of the Spirit’ through individual acts, and perhaps more importantly and more effectively, through systems of compassionate care? Jesus ‘went’! He went to where the people were; and as he went, he showed compassion and brought hope and wholeness to sin-broken lives. We need to consider how to extend compassionate care to those outside the congregation ... to the injured, hurting, grieving, dying, and hopeless in our community.”

Pastor Shipley had very little idea about what to do next. Nor did he really know what he might be getting himself and his congregation into. But a fire of compassion had been lit; and he wanted the Holy Spirit to fan it into flame.

The Posture of Thanksgiving

by Ashleigh Leeds

It's that time of year when the primary sights and smells of our blessed and fortunate homes are those of fall décor, cornucopias, and turkey dinners. The time where refrigerators, freezers, and pantries alike are stuffed with preparatory ingredients for a savory and delectable feast; and the time where families and friends gather, cook, eat, and give thanks for the bounty before them. This week of Thanksgiving is a time where traveling families embark, to-do lists are written and executed, shopping trips take place, and celebrations commence. It is a joyous time, but do you ever feel like it is also a busy time?

tasks, traditions, and to-do's than with the spiritual filling we may need. Our postures exemplify tiredness, rather than thankfulness, and our thoughts resonate closer with, "I have so much to get done!" than, "I have so much to be still and thank God for." There is certainly nothing wrong with packing joy into the Thanksgiving and soon-to-be Christmas seasons, but our seasons often appear to center more around packing all of the traditions in than remembering what those traditions are for.

God has *blessed us* with many gifts. Take the time to look around for them. Even if your list feels short in this season of your life, you can be *assured* that you have the greatest blessing of all time: the *gift of Jesus*.

I can picture it now: Thanksgiving dinner is coming to a close, turkey and stuffing are being packed into their leftover containers, and families are saying their heartfelt goodbyes over coffee and pie. The completed, gravy-stained to-do lists are hastily discarded, and the new, Christmas-themed lists make their debut as families part ways at the end of the day. The Thanksgiving festivities come to an end, and we transition into the preparation season for the next holiday. Black Friday ads seem to be circulating earlier and earlier each year, and stores open their doors to chaos and "deals of a lifetime!" (altogether too early) on Thanksgiving evening. We don't want to miss those sales, and we need to purchase the best gifts for our loved ones, so many of us oblige.

This may sound familiar to you, or it may not, but my guess is, it is human nature to get caught up in what is seen. We seem to be in a perpetual state of busyness and lists, and sometimes struggle even catching a breath. Our hearts have such a proclivity toward stress and harbor a disposition of anxiety, especially during big holidays with much ahead of us to complete. The season tends to fill up more with

Intentionality

Like much of the Christian walk, it takes intentionality to reverse that human nature. Thanksgiving is a time to be still, meditate on, and be higher attuned to the goodness of God and recognize the plentiful blessings He has undeservingly lavished on us. In all we do, the Spirit of our incredible God invites us to hold a posture of thanksgiving. From the biggest blessings to the smallest, "*every good and perfect gift is from above*" (*James 1:17*). The food we eat and the families we eat it with, the rising and setting of the sun, and even the seemingly mundane, but astonishingly intricate details of a flower on the Thanksgiving table—for all this we can thank and praise our good and creative God. Whether we are hosting and cooking this year or simply dining, with family or alone, we can straighten our tired, weighed-down, and worried backs and reach up in a posture of thanksgiving to a God who provides all we need in every season until the blessing of Salvation becomes a reality.

At Thanksgiving and always, let us make time to be still and be thankful, and partake in this true and honest form of worship. Take some time within your families

to dive into the Word and into prayer together to thank God for all He's done. Be intentional to create moments of stillness to sit at the feet of our Savior. There are so many ways that we as individuals or families can acknowledge our blessings: make lists on paper, create a Thanksgiving garland of leaves with each leaf being a listing of something we are thankful for, or simply take the time each day to pray in thanksgiving for a few of our gifts from God. Parents, you also have a great opportunity surrounding this holiday about thankfulness to teach your children what it looks like to hold to an attitude of contentment and giving thanks in all things. We all have an opportunity to be an example of this to everyone we are gathered with.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 says, *“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”* It doesn’t say “give thanks in some circumstances ... when I happen to find the time amidst my to-do lists and when I also am surrounded by only good things happening in my life.” It says give thanks in all circumstances, regardless of the season in life. This year, let’s relax in our cooking and preparations and know that God is taking care of us and has blessed us with all we have before us. Let’s worship with thanksgiving in everything.

God has blessed us with many gifts. Take the time to look around for them. Even if your list feels short in this season of your life, you can be assured that you have the greatest blessing of all time: the gift of Jesus that allows us the adoption as sons and daughters of the King, and the Salvation that His grace and mercy made possible to be ours. I pray you remember in all things, through the preparation, chaos, or stillness, that He gave His life to give you yours. What a great God. A blessed Thanksgiving to you, my friends. To GOD be the glory.

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1). ■

Ashleigh Leeds graduated from Concordia University Ann Arbor in 2011 with a degree in Family Life Education, and has been working in congregational ministry as a DFLM for seven years. She has also served with Concordia Center for the Family in various capacities and roles for the last three years. She has a passion for teaching the Gospel, writing, photography, and painting.

Photo courtesy of Elisa Schulz Photography



“Every good and perfect gift is from above”

James 1:17



Step Out & Serve

by Lisa Jansen

Photo by Jeff Heisner/Michigan District, LCMS

Ron Kuczera could have passed for a guy who went 10 rounds in a boxing ring. He looked like he had a pair of black eyes at the end of the day as he exhaustedly sat and enjoyed a well-deserved popsicle. But he wasn't a beaten and bruised man from some kind of tussle. It was sweat, dust, and dirt that caked on his face after hours of labor at one of the Step Out & Serve sites.

Step Out & Serve is an initiative of Shepherd's Gate, Shelby Twp. based on *1 Peter 4:10*, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." The church website describes the event this way: "Step Out & Serve is a time when we come together to give back to our community. It's what Jesus calls us to do. We gather for two days to paint, landscape, fix up houses and more throughout the metro-Detroit area." Step Out & Serve started in 2009 with 22 sites. Ten years later, it has grown substantially—they served at 36 sites this past August.

Kuczera, the volunteer who wore the mask of dirt like a badge of honor, is one of the church members and the Step Out & Serve Coordinator. He poured endless hours into coordinating sites, getting volunteers, and all the behind-the-scenes happenings.

The sites are chosen based on needs in the community. This year, Step Out & Serve partnered with the Wave Project—a non-profit that helps the homeless in Macomb County by providing mobile showers. Donations for hygiene kits and for items to use in their mobile shower unit were collected through Step Out & Serve. 100 of 100 hygiene kits were filled, as well as 135 of 180 items to help with their shower supplies. Mission 13 (a program at Shepherd's Gate where they give 13% of their yearly income to help other Christian ministries, community organizations, and individuals who need assistance) contributed an additional \$610 to complete their list. Step Out & Serve also added new ways to bless

communities by getting donations for teacher kits, backpacks, and school supplies for Honduras.

To build excitement and get their members and guests to volunteer for Step Out & Serve, Shepherd's Gate's Communications Team utilized all their communication channels. They ran ads/posts on social media leading up to the event, sent emails, ran announcement slides within the church, gave verbal announcements during worship services, ran ads on their website, and made promo videos to use in church and on social media. They also had t-shirts made with their Step Out & Serve logo for people to purchase and wear while serving. To cap things off, they had all their site leaders send photos to their Social Media Coordinator so that they could post photos on social media throughout the weekend to give their followers an inside look into what happened at each site.

So many great things happen when we serve others. At the Paladino site, homeowner Marc was speechless. "I am in awe of the outpouring of love and generosity. God uses our human hands, feet, and backs!" The team built a large structure for their garden, cleaned out gutters, trimmed trees/bushes, weeded, and moved rock. At the Patrice Brown site on the lower east side in Detroit, the Step Out & Serve team gutted the house down to the studs so the homeowner could rebuild. A local farmer even left his business for the day to bring a wood chipper and proceeded to work alongside the team for the entire day.

Step Out & Serve is a hand-up, not a hand-out. It's meant to help people in the community get a fresh start, improve their circumstances, and show the love that Jesus has for each and every one of us. If you would like to learn more about Step Out & Serve or partner with the Shepherd's Gate community next year, contact pastor@sgatechurch.org. ■

Lisa Jansen is the Communications Director at Shepherd's Gate, Shelby Twp.

Keep in Touch

by Charlotte Campbell

“Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear” (Isaiah 65:24).

We say that a lot: “Keep in touch!” Or “Don’t be a stranger!” Or even, “Keep me posted!”

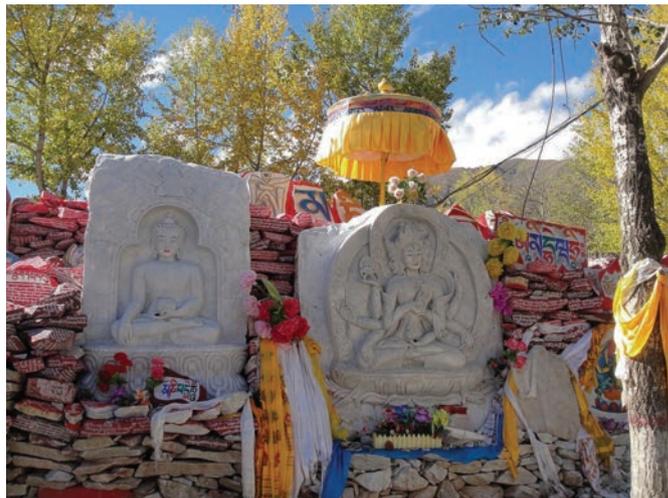
That used to mean, “Write a letter.” Then it was telephone, answering machines, e-mail, texting and instant messages, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter—all ways of keeping in touch, of letting family, friends, and even total strangers know what we’re doing or thinking. If a day goes by without some kind of contact, I feel like I may have become invisible. Doesn’t anybody care that I’m here??

As it becomes easier to broadcast our news into the ether, the sense that I am personally thought of and remembered can fade. That’s why I still buy and send real birthday cards, and still call (or even visit!) our daughter. I want her to know that I remember her, am thinking about her, and love her.

You know where this is leading. We have been given a great gift from God—the means to connect with Him, personally, day and night, and the assurance that He’s listening. That gift is, of course, prayer. When we pray, we never have to leave a message, or wonder if it might have gone into His spam folder or been overlooked in His Twitter feed.

On a mission trip to China some years ago, our host Phillip took us to a Tibetan Buddhist temple. It was fascinating, but also very sad. There were acres and acres of mani rocks with prayers painted on them, piles of rocks ten feet high. There were gigantic prayer wheels, hundreds of them each containing hundreds of prayers—spin the wheels to send prayers to heaven. The landscape was littered with strings of prayer flags.

How blessed we are to have a direct line and to know that God is listening. He tells us clearly: *“Call upon me in*



Mani stones represent prayers offered by the Buddhist faithful. The Yushu Jiana Mani stone mound, located in Xinzhai village of Yushu Tibetan autonomous prefecture, is estimated to have over 200 million stones.

the day of trouble; I will deliver you” (Psalm 50:15). No matter what the situation is—confusion, fear, grief, or happiness—He’s there and listening. We don’t need to send out thousands of prayers in order to be heard.

That verse concludes with, *“and you shall glorify me.”* And we do!

Your prayers for our hosts and the people of other countries, our teams, our volunteers, and our staff are all valued and effective. We thank God for you and we glorify Him for the gift of prayer—and for those who pray.

To learn more about MOST Ministries, visit mostministries.org. ■

Charlotte Campbell is a board member for MOST Ministries.

How blessed we are to have a *direct line* and to know that *God is listening.*

Missionary Spotlight

The LCMS Office of International Mission recruits, trains, sends, and cares for missionaries in approximately 90 countries. Here is a little information about a few of these pastors, teachers, and other church workers who are from the Michigan District:



Alyssa Anders (lcms.org/anders) – Russia (Home congregation: Christ our Savior, Livonia)

Alyssa currently serves in St. Petersburg, Russia, working with the LCMS partner church, the Evangelical Lutheran

Church of Ingria in Russia. Trained as an English teacher, Alyssa assists the work of the church by equipping the ministers, workers, and members of this church body with English language skills. Although we often take English for granted, for Russians it opens a door to a larger community and more opportunities, helping the church to be less isolated. Alyssa also helps with various youth and children's programs, as well as English Bible camps in Europe.

Rev. David and Joyce Erber

(lcms.org/erber) – Ghana (Home congregation: Trinity, Jackson)

Rev. David and Joyce Erber serve as missionaries in Africa, based in Accra, Ghana, West Africa.



As a theological educator, David provides special training opportunities for Ghanaian and Nigerian pastors. Presently, he is working with a team of senior pastors in Ghana to develop a training program for men who are already employed but have time during the week and on weekends to study and serve as pastors. He is also working with a second group of pastors equipping them to serve as instructors for this same training program or to serve in other leadership capacities in the church. David also works with a group of Nigerian pastors who are conducting research in evangelism in their local communities.

Joyce serves as the business manager for the Africa region. She is responsible for managing the financial and

accounting dynamics for 30 LCMS missionaries and 82 mission projects in Africa.

Rev. Roger and Amy James

(lcms.org/james) – Philippines

Rev. Roger and Amy James serve in the Philippines, where Roger is a theological educator at the Lutheran Theological Seminary and Training Center (LTS) in Baguio City. This institution is the seminary of LCMS' sister church, the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP), and welcomes students from other Lutheran churches in Asia. In his work at the seminary, Roger supplements the work of the Filipino faculty in raising up new pastors and helps to provide continuing education for current LCP pastors.

Amy serves as an English tutor for the Seminary students.



Rev. Steven and Martha Mahlburg

(lcms.org/mahlburg) – Sri Lanka (Home congregation: Zion, Tawas City)

Rev. Steven and Martha Mahlburg serve as missionaries in Sri Lanka. Steven serves the Ceylon Evangelical Lutheran



Church (CELIC) in Sri Lanka as they restructure in order to better reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He provides administrative support, Christian education, and mentoring for the pastors, evangelists and laypeople of the CELIC. He travels to the CELIC congregations around Sri Lanka to encourage a bold witness to Jesus Christ. Steven also assists Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Colombo by conducting the English service and providing English medium pastoral care.



Rev. James and Christel Neuendorf (lcms.org/neuendorf)

– Puerto Rico (Home congregation: St. Paul, Ann Arbor)

James serves as a church planter and pastor in the city of Ponce, Puerto Rico. His focus is to establish a strong Lutheran presence in this city which will boldly proclaim the Gospel and meet the physical and spiritual needs of a community that is hungry for the Gospel and for hope.

As pastor, James engages daily with Ponce community members to share in their lives and to bring them into the life-giving presence of Jesus in Word and Sacrament. He is also working to create a generation of local leaders and well-grounded laity and future pastors who will be able to continue to spread the Gospel throughout Puerto Rico, around the Latin America region, and the world.

As a deaconess, Christel is involved in the long-term disaster relief efforts at the mission's various Casa de Amparo y Respuesta al Desastre (House of Refuge and Disaster Response) mercy houses. From these places, LCMS missionaries and Puerto Rican Lutherans offer food, water, and other basic necessities to community members affected by the hurricane. She is also engaged in assessing needs in the community and coordinating efforts to meet those needs as a congregation and mission.



Cindy Pine (lcms.org/pine) – Latin America and Caribbean Region
(Home congregation – St. Paul, Ann Arbor)

Cindy Pine is based in the Dominican Republic. As the associate business manager for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, Cindy works closely with the business manager and the regional director to manage the financial and business affairs of the

LCMS in this part of the world. She also supports the LCMS missionaries serving in this region and works with local church partners supported by many LCMS congregations and individuals.



Jeancarlos and Caitlin de Ramírez (lcms.org/ramirez) – Dominican Republic (Caitlin's home congregation: Salem, Coloma)

Deaconess Caitlin de Ramírez serves in the Dominican Republic, working as a congregational deaconess alongside the pastors. She serves as a mentor for the formation of Dominican deaconesses and works with the seminary in the

Dominican Republic to train them on a congregational level. She also supports the work of the mercy houses in this country, seeking to strengthen their relationships with the congregations. She specifically works with the program Amigos de Jesus, "Friends of Jesus," which is a disabilities outreach ministry.

Jeancarlos was born in Lima, Peru, and is a member of La Mision Luterana del Peru. He is currently studying at Seminario Concordia El Reformador, the LCMS seminary in the Dominican Republic. When Jeancarlos finishes seminary, he will receive a call as a pastor of La Mision Luterana del Peru, and he and his family will return to Peru.

These missionaries could not do the work they do if they were not financially and prayerfully supported by many LCMS congregations and individuals. The District's **Here We Stand** Campaign (herewestand.michigandistrict.org), under its International Ministry initiative, sends financial support to these missionaries on an annual basis. Please keep these servants in your prayers and hear their stories through their newsletters found at michigandistrict.org/ministries/world-missions/.

Stepping
Out in

Faith

To
Serve

NOVEMBER 2019

CEF Helps Bethany Lutheran Help Others



Bethany Lutheran is known for helping their community throughout Detroit's east side.



“CEF met with us and it was a very productive meeting. Not only were they willing to help with a portion of the funding, but they also had innovative ideas.”

Pastor Christopher Bodley
Bethany Lutheran Church,
Detroit, Michigan

Church Extension Fund is often thought of as the go-to funding source for congregations in need of physical upgrades or expansions to their structures.

However, those paying close attention know that CEF's support goes well beyond this—helping churches to engage in ministries by providing monetary support to a number of “non-traditional” projects. The recent work at Bethany Lutheran in Detroit, is a perfect example.

As Pastor Christopher Bodley explained, the church held a number of focus group meetings to determine where they could best serve their community and the families in it. The discussions led to an innovative idea.

“What we saw from the meetings was the opportunity to help people in the community pursue their entrepreneurial dreams,” Pastor Bodley said. “There were a number of people looking to open food service operations, but they had no commercial-grade kitchen to make it possible.”



With the help of CEF, Bethany's new commercial kitchen will help entrepreneurs in the community and the congregation as a whole.

Bodley and the church board realized that an upgrade to their main kitchen—one that would allow it to become a certified commercial kitchen—could help create a number of local businesses, while also creating a revenue stream to fund the church's other missions.

"The east side (of Detroit) is underserved in this regard," Pastor Bodley noted. "Bethany was a logical place to make it happen."

Indeed, it was. Not only is the church's location ideal (near Eastern Market), but the community already looks to Bethany for leadership in grassroots initiatives to help residents. "We have a "soft skills" center at the church, Glory Minds Learning Center," Pastor Bodley explained. The center operates a food bank for area families and conducts several employment-skills workshops and classes.

"It helps people build the indirect work skills that are essential to succeed—from how to write a resume, to dressing for an interview, to communicating with co-workers, and things like that." Additionally, Bethany has free computer literacy classes for area residents and a sports camp for local youth.

With the upgrade to a commercial kitchen, they will further build this important outreach to families and young professionals.

"When we first proposed the idea, CEF came out and met with us," Pastor Bodley said. "It was a very productive meeting. Not only were they willing to step in and help with a portion of the funding, but they also had innovative ideas for us to explore additional funding sources."

When the kitchen project is completed, it will be another key progression in Bethany's evolution. The church has steadily embraced a community-centered mission since Pastor Bodley's arrival in 2012.

"We redefined our ministry and built it around outreach," Pastor Bodley noted.

Bodley also commented that this isn't the first time the church has partnered with CEF. Many congregation members utilize CEF's personal savings and investment products. In addition, CEF has helped with other loans throughout Bethany's 130-year history.

Bethany is proud that, with the help of CEF, these outreach ministries will lead to the Gospel being shared throughout their community.



Church Extension Fund

Church Extension Fund ■ Michigan District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
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LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

Liberty In Christ

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, writes: *"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."* In September, nearly 200 men enjoyed a long weekend of study, fellowship, and recreation under the theme "Liberty in Christ," during the 74th annual Lutheran Laymen's League Retreat at Camp Arcadia.

The keynote speaker for the event was Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, Executive Director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty working on behalf of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to advocate in areas of life, marriage, and religious liberty. Previous to his serving the Church in Washington, D.C., Seltz proclaimed the Gospel as the Speaker of The Lutheran Hour radio program from 2011–2017.

Chaplains for the retreat were Rev. Dennis Matyas (St. Paul, Bay City), Rev. Joel Eden (Christ Our Savior, Livonia), and Assistant Director of LCMS Ministry of the Armed Forces Steve Hikama.

Dave Marasus served as the retreat's music leader and Bradley Storck was the retreat chairman.



Photo courtesy of LLL

LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE



...with a Grateful Heart.

Our Mites Recipients are Thankful!

Your contributions to Mites will give hope and, yes, thankfulness to those current grantees and future recipients of Mite Grants.

Plan now to attend our 2020 Convention in Gaylord!



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



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<https://lwmlmichigan.org/>

Here We Stand Campaign Impacts Urban Ministries

by Ray Zavada

Mt. Calvary, Detroit served as host of the 2019 Urban Ministry Conference on September 16. This unique conference provided a centralized forum for the leaders of many of the Michigan District urban ministries to share how their respective ministries are impacting the lives of hundreds upon hundreds of people each year in several Michigan cities.

Over 100 people were in attendance and they all left the one-day conference with an increased understanding of the significant impact these ministries are having in the urban communities they serve, as each speaker was provided an opportunity to highlight the type of ministry they provide, how they carry out, and the impact it is having on individuals, families, and communities. Attendees also learned how they can personally get involved to support these ministries with their time, talents, and monetary gifts.

The *Here We Stand* campaign is closely connected to these ministries as it provides an important and substantial stream of funding in support of Michigan District urban ministries through the Innovative Missional Ministry initiative. Of the \$6.2 million in total campaign gifts and commitments to date, approximately \$2.5 million has been given and/or committed for Innovative Missional Ministry. Clearly, many campaign donors are passionate about the Innovative Missional Ministries of the Michigan District and want to help them impact the lives of others through their generous gifts.

During my brief remarks at the conference, I referred to the leaders of the urban ministries in attendance as “heroes.” I understand that not a single one of them think



Photo by Jeff Heisner/Michigan District, LCMS

of themselves as heroes as they do the Kingdom work they are called to do, but they truly are heroes. Why? Because heroes rescue people from the perils of their communities, families, or even from themselves. This is what the urban ministries of the Michigan District do each day.

If you, too, have a passion for Innovative Missional Ministry in the Michigan District, please prayerfully consider how you could financially support the *Here We Stand* campaign through a multi-year commitment or a one-time sacrificial gift. To make an online donation, visit herewestand.michigandistrict.org or call 734.213.4265.

Also, each of the urban ministries that were represented at the Urban Ministries Conference would appreciate your direct support of them either financially or through many available volunteer opportunities. I encourage you to visit michigandistrict.org/ and click on “Join a Ministry” to learn more about these wonderful ministries and/or to sign up to volunteer.

A “By the Numbers” look at the *Here We Stand* Campaign

(through October 2, 2019)

\$6,188,530.72	Total campaign gifts, pledges, and goals
\$5,712,396.33	Cash received which includes \$500,000 CEF Matching Funds
\$381,772.50	Outstanding commitments (pledges)
1,394	Total Contributors
1,242	Individual Contributors
152	Congregations Contributing
41.7%	% of Michigan District Congregations currently participating



Here We Stand

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

Faster Pastor

Pastor Ed Meyer managed to be the “Faster Pastor” in the Faster Pastor Race at the TriCity Speedway in Auburn, Mich. on August 9, 2019. He raced to victory over 11 other pastors, all driving stock cars. Two other LCMS pastors participated: Rev. Ed Doerner (Messiah, Midland) and Rev. Dennis Matyas (St. Paul, Bay City).

The race raised \$115,000 to benefit many different charities. Doerner was racing for the Bridge Food Center and Matyas raced for St. Paul’s Ministry Center. Meyer was racing for Bridgman Cares, a group of concerned community members who noticed a need to provide for public school children who do not have their needs met at home. The group provides rooms at their elementary, middle, and high schools for students to go for meals, snacks, school supplies, clothing, outerwear, shoes, boots, and toiletries. The students go in without a chap-erone and are allowed to select whatever they need. Kim Schmitz, of Immanuel, Bridgman says, *“This is a very necessary and important program and we would like*



Photo courtesy of Immanuel, Bridgman

to see it continue! We are blessed to have a brave and adventurous pastor to take on this mission. Well done, Pastor Ed!”

Congratulations to all participants!

Read the story *“Faster Pastor is a \$115,000 Success at Tri-City Motor Speedway”* at Mlive.com.

God at Work Through Volunteers

by Dennis Ouellette

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35 ESV).

When you stop and ponder the purpose of LAMP and its mission—“sharing Jesus Christ with God’s people in remote areas of Canada”—what comes to your mind? A little red plane? Missionaries, perhaps? I think about the Indigenous people in those northern communities desiring to hear about Jesus. Every year, hundreds of volunteers go to their LAMP community in the summer to hold Vacation Bible School (VBS). More teams are going north to visit in the “off-season” as well.

What impact does the ministry have on our volunteers? The fact that the average number of years a LAMP team returns to their community is eight years speaks volumes! The love of Jesus, freely given to God’s people in the North, is reflected back to the volunteers in appreciation, love, and friendship.

It truly is the teams of volunteers who are willing to invest themselves in the communities they serve with LAMP that make it possible to carry out this vital ministry. Likewise, the supporters of LAMP make it possible for the teams and the staff missionaries serving the northern communities to keep sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.

For more information, visit lampministry.org.

New Advent and Christmas Hymn Arrangements from The Hymnal Project

In early 2017 a group of artists, arrangers, and liturgists, led by Peter Prochnow, were commissioned through the Michigan District, LCMS to create several new hymn arrangements, based on the original music, intended to facilitate enhanced worship in a multitude of modern musical contexts.

THE HYMNAL
PROJECT

The spirit of the project is simple: Hymns are arranged with various instrumentations and made available free of charge, in the form of a lead sheet and reference recording, so whether you learn by reading or by hearing, you can easily implement these arrangements and modify for your context without cost. The hymns are categorized by seasons of the church year.

We are grateful for the generosity of the donors who made this possible: Carl and Patsy Fabry, in partnership with the Michigan District of the LCMS. To learn more or to listen and download sheet music and recorded music, visit thehymnalproject.org.

Mercy House Opens in Flint

The very first story Rev. Christian Jones heard when he arrived to Flint was about the house immediately north of Franklin Avenue Mission (FAM). It had been the squatting residence of two scorned lovers. At some point a couple years ago, rather than simply calling it quits, they had called in hits on each other.

The man had hired a gunman to wait inside the house for his girlfriend to arrive. On that same day, the woman had hired an arsonist to set the house on fire with her boyfriend still inside of it. One Molotov set the house ablaze and the arsonist fled the scene. Immediately the gunman burst forth out of the house, ran down the street, and has not been seen on the Eastside again.

Needless to say, there were fireworks that day. But, miraculously, neither the man, the woman, the gunman, nor the arsonist was killed. The only casualty: the house.

While some saw the house as an eyesore, the members of FAM saw it as an opportunity to build a future for mothers in need. Rather than letting another burned-out house sit on the street, the Michigan District bought the residence and FAM began rebuilding and renovating it. Out of its ashes, Mercy House was born.



Photo courtesy of Franklin Avenue Mission

Mercy House is a home where homeless mothers can live with their children. With the help of social workers from Wellspring Lutheran Services, these women will learn necessary skills to care and provide for their families. Up to four families at a time will be able to live there.

Mercy House was dedicated on Sunday, September 8. We thank the Lord and His servants who continue to provide hope in the lives of these women and children who have been constantly on the verge of losing the one thing they have left: each other.

Pre-Retirement Conference for Church Workers

A pre-retirement planning conference will be held for full-time church workers and their spouses as they prepare for future retirement and their next stage of ministry. The conference will take place January 10–11 at Holy Cross, Flushing. Paul M. Snyder, Retirement and Benefit Educator, will lead the workshop. Snyder has more than 30 years of experience working for Concordia Plan Services. For more information or to register, visit michigandistrict.org/retirement or contact Debbie Hughes at debra.hughes@michigandistrict.org or 734.213.3234.



Under the theme "God's Perfect Design," the Timberline Zone LWML held its fall retreat at Bambi Lake in Roscommon in September. Pictured here are 35 ladies who attended with Pastor Matthew Dent, zone counselor.



Members of Grace, Auburn joined the Cornfest parade this past summer



New Members at Faith, Prescott

Trinity, Utica Recognized as 2019 NLSA Schools of Distinction



Photo courtesy of Travis Grulke

The National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) Commission had its annual meeting in July to accredit schools and conduct the business of the organization. The 2019 commission accredited 131 schools. Several of the schools were awarded special recognition as Schools of Distinction.

This year, six schools distinguished themselves through the evidence prepared by the school substantiating assigned accreditation ratings and the practices observed by the Validation Team during the school's site visit. The following schools were recognized as Accredited Schools of Distinction:

- Immanuel Lutheran School, Seymour, Indiana
- Lutheran High School of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana
- St. John Lutheran School, Seward, Nebraska
- St. Paul's Lutheran School, Orange, California
- Orange Lutheran High School of Orange County, Orange, California
- **Trinity Lutheran School, Utica, Michigan**

The status of a School of Distinction is a tremendous accomplishment. The award demonstrates a school's commitment to providing a distinctive level of quality Christian education for the children that it serves. For this effort, each school receives a special award that is reflective of the accomplishment.

Travis Grulke, Superintendent of Schools for the Michigan District, LCMS (pictured middle) presented the award to Trinity's principal, Bruce Volkert (pictured left) and Rev. Chris Troxel (pictured right).

Stephen Ministers Receive Servant's Heart Award

David and Beverly Bork were recognized in August with Trinity, Monroe's annual Servant's Heart Award for launching, maintaining, and growing Stephen Ministries in Monroe County.



Photo courtesy of Trinity, Monroe

The Borks introduced the concept there 16 years ago and have been training ministers and meeting with their own multiple care-receivers for 15 years. As their classes have gotten bigger, they have expanded to the YMCA, Monroe Missionary Baptist Church, and St. Mary's Catholic Church.

The May issue of the local *MONROE Magazine* featured a long profile of the program with wonderful personal reflections by some of the dozens of care-givers the Borks have trained and continue to meet with twice a month.

Dave attended Trinity school and was confirmed there; Bev joined the day their daughter was baptized 50 years ago. Dave and Bev have been married 53 years.

Pahlkotter Inducted and Pett Installed at Peace, Saginaw

On Sunday, September 8, Executive Director Mr. Henry Pahlkotter was inducted as Vicar at Peace Lutheran Ministries in Saginaw, as he has begun the LCMS' Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo. On the same occasion, Mr. Royden Pett was commissioned and installed as a called Lutheran teacher at Peace.

Photo by Misty Gower/Peace Lutheran Ministries



Pictured l-r: Pahlkotter, Rev. Erik Schmidt, Rev. Matthew Hauser, and Mr. Royden Pett.

Educators of the Year

We are blessed with many Lutheran schools throughout the Michigan District, and those schools are full of gifted teachers serving their Lord by educating His children every day. Each year we lift up outstanding educators who are doing extraordinary things in the classroom. It is our privilege to recognize the following educators this year:

Brenda Sievert – 2019 Michigan District Early Childhood Teacher of the Year

During the nomination process, one person commented: *“Brenda is an incredible teacher who daily lives out our congregation’s mission of showing others by word and deed how beautiful it is to live with Jesus. She has a way of connecting with each student and making them feel special and loved by Jesus.”*



Michigan District Superintendent of Schools Travis Grulke says, *“Brenda’s ministry to the students, staff, and families at St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth is one that should be celebrated. We’re thankful for her work both inside and outside of the classroom.”*

Sheri Daniell – 2019 Michigan District Early Childhood Director of the Year



Comment from the nomination process: *“She manages a staff of people who respect her. Sheri has a diverse background in teaching little kiddos in Lutheran schools. She loves teaching. At the time of her hire, she could not have known how much her role would change—no one knew! She is now in a role that allows many teachers to teach children about Jesus. God had more plans for her than we knew!”* Grulke says, *“We’re extremely thankful for her leadership and dedication to the ministry at Trinity, Utica.”*

Sue Palka – 2019 Michigan District Principal of the Year

When nominating Sue, one person said, *“Sue has always demonstrated to her fellow administrators what it means to have a strong partnership with the congregation, academic excellence in the classrooms, a role model for spiritual growth, and a firm but loving management style.”* According to Grulke, the Principal of St. Matthew, Walled Lake *“is truly one of the gifted leaders we have in the district and one of the very best administrators I have seen in my years in education.”*



Teresa Walter – 2019 Michigan District K-8 Teacher of the Year



Comment from the nomination process: *“Teresa is willing to learn and collaborate—a team player. She is loved by her students and parents, always willing to go the extra mile, always striving for excellence. Teresa selflessly dedicates herself to her students, congregation, music, fellow teachers, and her husband. She is a shining example of Christian living and love for her Lord.”* Grulke adds, *“We are thankful for her dedication to St. Paul, Millington’s ministry and her willingness to lead in a variety of ways. It is awesome to see how Teresa has been a blessing to so many.”*

Congratulations to the 2019 Michigan District, LCMS Educators of the Year!

New Executive Named at Wellspring Lutheran Services



Photo courtesy of Wellspring Lutheran Services

Wellspring Lutheran Services has named Timothy Kalbfleisch as its new senior vice president and chief financial officer. This appointment will help advance the mission of Wellspring, which means embarking on its next 125 years of serving children, families and seniors across Michigan.

In addition to holding a master's degree in accounting, Kalbfleisch has a unique combination of corporate finance, risk management, and accounting expertise. Aside from his extensive training and experience, he understands the mission and vision at Wellspring—which is paramount

not only to his success in his new role, but in Wellspring's continued success moving forward.

"The role of chief financial officer at a large, complex nonprofit like Wellspring requires a unique blend of experience, accounting intelligence, communication skills, strategic vision and relationship building," says Wellspring president and CEO David Gehm in making the announcement. *"Tim has these core qualities and much more; his leadership will have a significant impact on the direction and strength of our mission."*

Wellspring Lutheran Services is a statewide nonprofit committed to engaging people at every stage of life to help them experience and embrace their God-given potential. For more information, visit wellspringlutheran.com.

Allmann Installed at Good Shepherd, Lansing

Pastor Robert Allmann was installed as the Intentional Interim Pastor at Good Shepherd, Lansing, on Sunday, August 18, 2019.



Photo courtesy of Good Shepherd, Lansing.

Galan Walther, left and Rev. Robert Allmann, right.



Photo courtesy of Our Savior, Grand Rapids.

In September, Our Savior, Grand Rapids celebrated Christine McGladdery's twenty-fifth year of teaching.

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

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

Speakers:
 Rev. Dr. Robert D. Newton
 Rev. Dr. Dean W. Nadasdy
 Mrs. Heather L. Ruesch
 Rev. R. Gabe Kasper

General \$20
Student \$15

michigandistrict.org/theological20

Shipley Learns Compassion continued from page 3

On his notepad he wrote “next steps.” They were as follows:



- Visit privately with a few key leaders in the congregation and share my experience and thoughts.
- Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to give direction and encouragement. Invite others to join with me.
- Seek some counsel from others: Compassion ministries already working in our area, my Michigan District Congregation Mission and Ministry Facilitator (CMMF), my fellow circuit pastors.
- Seek out some resources to become better educated about how to be truly helpful to people in need. Review the book, *When Helping Hurts*. Find additional resources.
- Request a demographic study of my community from the Michigan District.
- Meet with community leaders to ask, “How might the Church help?”
- Go back to the intersection and try to find the man with the sign and ask him out for lunch this week. Ask to hear his story.

Pastor Shipley knew that compassion ministry was not

going to bring salvation because it is not “the Gospel” in its narrow sense. However, compassion ministry is the RESULT of the Gospel in the lives of God’s people as they live out their part in God’s advancing Kingdom, in the power of the Spirit. And compassion ministry may lead to wonderful opportunities to share the saving message of Jesus and salvation that is found only in Him. He would leave that up to the Holy Spirit. ■

Rev. Dr. Robert E. Kasper serves the Michigan District, LCMS as its Assistant to the President – Congregation Mission and Ministry Facilitator Metro Zone.

For further reflection and study:

- *When Helping Hurts*, Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, Moody Publishers, 2012 ed.
- *To Transform A City: Whole Church, Whole Gospel, Whole City*, Eric Swanson and Sam Williams, Zondervan, 2010 ed.
- Talk to the Michigan District LCMS Congregation Mission and Ministry Facilitators (find yours at michigandistrict.org/facilitator) and other servant leaders supported by the District who are hard at work in various expressions of Great Compassion Ministry.

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— Pastor Tim Loewe,
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Calls and Roster Update

ORDAINED

Calls Accepted

Rev. Robert Allmann IIM (Merrill) to Good Shepherd, Lansing
Rev. Richard Gizynski (Oak Park) to Peace, Warren
Rev. Robert Hoffman (Huntly, IL) to St. Stephen, Waterford
Rev. Paul Koehn (Albany, NY) to St. Paul, Albion
Rev. Keith Lemley (Washington) to IIP, St. Luke, Harrison
Rev. Bertram Lewis (North Ridgeville, OH) to St. Philip, Detroit
Mr. Joseph Schierlinger (North Branch) to General Colloquy, New Life in Christ, North Branch
Rev. Richard Townes (Hampton, VA) to Bethel, Howard City
Rev. Sean Willman (Pleasant Prairie, WI) to Associate Pastor, St. Paul, Hillsdale

Change of Status

Rev. Marvin Griffin (Allen Park) to Emeritus
Rev. J. Robert Herrod (Algonac) to Emeritus
Rev. Robert Low (Mesick) to Emeritus
Rev. Justin Rossow (Brighton) to Candidate
Rev. John Schinkel (Temperance) to Emeritus

Transferred Into District

Rev. Mark Gaertner (Emeritus) from Indiana District
Rev. Robert Hoffman from Northern Illinois District
Rev. Sean Willman (Pleasant Prairie, WI) from South Wisconsin District

Transferred Out of District

Rev. Robert Bayer (Emeritus) to Nebraska District

Called Home

Rev. Richard Krugler

COMMISSIONED

Calls Accepted

Abraham, Jennifer (Cq. Concordia, Ann Arbor) to Immanuel, Saginaw
Pfund, Susan (Candidate) to St. John, Rochester
Nett, Alyssa (Concordia, Mequon) to St. John's, Midland
Noel, Marie (Candidate) to St. Paul, Royal Oak
Sankey, Brent (Candidate) to Trinity, Sturgis
Schnack, Deborah (Emeritus) to Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Farmington Hills
Seehafer, Tyler (Zion, Greenleaf, WI) to MOST Ministries, Ann Arbor

Change of Status

Fahlsing, Gloria (St. Michael's, Richville) to Emeritus
Sankey, Margaret (Trinity, Sturgis) to Candidate
Siemen, Rachel (Trinity, Utica) to Candidate

Transferred Out of District

McMahon, Petrea (St. Luke, Clinton Township) to English District
Mueller, Dawn (Candidate) to Texas District

Transferred Into District

Heine, Mary (Minnesota South District) to Trinity, Paw Paw
Heinlein, Brian (South Wisconsin District) to St. Peter, Hemlock
Wallace, Jeffery (Central Illinois District) to Christ, Stevensville

Resigned From the Roster

Schmerheim, Roxanne

Called Home

Lockhart, John

School Closings

White Cloud, Christ Lutheran Preschool

A complete up-to-date listing of Calls and Vacancies can be found at michigandistrict.org.

20 November 2019

Calendar of Events

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
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

MARCH 2020

7-8 State Basketball Tournament
CUAA and St. Paul, Ann Arbor

APRIL 2020

5 Palm Sunday
10 Good Friday
12 Easter Sunday
17-19 The Katie
DoubleTree by Hilton, Bay City
22 Administrative Professionals' Day

MAY 2020

4-5 North & East Pastors' Conference
Garland Lodge, Lewiston
10 Mothers' Day
12-13 South & East Pastors' Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
16 Regional Track Meets
Location TBA
18-19 West Pastors' Conference
Great Wolf Lodge, Traverse City
21 Ascension Day
25 Memorial Day
30 State Track Meet

Frankenmuth High School, Frankenmuth

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