

January 2020

# michigan

## IN TOUCH

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



### HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

## New Year's Evolution by Robert E. Kasper

It's just a thought ... but I'm going to guess that many congregations and other ministries are going to make an effort to roll out a "20/20Vision." And most of them will be fairly convinced that they have some great clarity and are quite clever to have captured the 2020 focus! God bless them. I wish them well; and may their tribe increase! As one who specializes in strategic planning for

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Rev. Dr. David P. E. Maier, President  
Debby Fall, Editorial Manager

Linda Ekong, Art Director  
Elisa Schulz, Staff Writer/Copy Editor

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Michigan District, LCMS  
3773 Geddes Rd  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

888.225.2111  
[intouch@michigandistrict.org](mailto:intouch@michigandistrict.org)  
[michigandistrict.org](http://michigandistrict.org)

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congregations/ministries, I'm all about setting a clear vision for ministry. Vision is very important.

But vision usually isn't all that grandiose or mystical.

Vision is simply, and wondrously, faith seeing God at work in the future. But don't confuse this 'faith' with the "faith by which we are saved" through God's' gracious work and promises in Jesus Christ, although such saving faith is most surely at work in the matter of vision. Nor should you confuse this 'faith' with the "Faith" that we believe as outlined by our creeds and our Lutheran Confessions, although these too are at work when we consider vision.

Vision, then, is the exercise of a faith or trust in God that first looks back and sees how God has been faithfully working, and then looks ahead and intentionally dreams of God's continued faithful working among and through a body of believers even as their situation or context of ministry changes. It's a picture of a preferred future of God at work that invites us to join with him in the grand adventure called God's mission (*missio dei*).

If you've read this far, let me dare you by inviting you onward into a riskier venture regarding vision. I intend to redeem a word that has been coopted in science and culture by those who would deny our Creator, the Maker of heaven and earth. The word is EVOLUTION. I know. I know! It's not a word usually spoken in our circles except in derision; but I can't think of a better word to describe a healthy process for a congregation of God's people at the beginning of a new year. It's better than RESOLUTION! We usually have broken our New Year's Resolutions by January 5th or for sure by Super Bowl Sunday!!

Now, let me state this all up front: I'm not talking about JEDP and the Historical Critical Method of biblical interpretation and I'm not talking about Process Theology. Those get us into all kinds of trouble!

What I am talking about is the work of casting vision for ministry as a faithful and faith-filled exercise in evolution. (Seriously, if you're still reading this, God bless you! Now you just have to continue to see if I actually have a point!)

### **A Natural Process Of Change**

What I'm suggesting is that evolution is a word that describes a natural process of "change." It describes a natural process of change in response to a changed environment. For example: an evolution took place in my garage this past November as my lawn mower was parked in the deepest recesses and the snow blower took center stage. (In fact, even having a snow blower is an evolution as my strong young boys have moved out and no longer man the shovels!)

Faithful vision-casting is often little more than adapting an existing ministry to a new context or a changed ministry environment. To be sure, the clear message of God's Law and Gospel as drawn from the inerrant Word of God, and outlined by our Creeds and Confessions, does not change. However, the delivery system(s), the language, the efforts at building relationships with those yet outside the Church and a saving faith in Jesus Christ, can, and sometimes must "evolve." Such a process calls on God in prayer to show us how He might want to work through us to accomplish His great acts of mercy, deliverance, and reconciliation in a changed and changing environment.

Vision casting:  
*looking* at your  
enviroment ...  
assets ... faithful  
God and *asking*  
Him "How do you  
want to proceed, ...  
how might you want  
to work through  
your people?"



Cursing the environment or society for changing and drifting ever farther from the true God will not stop it from changing. Nor will such an attitude demonstrated by God's people win a productive hearing.

But will God not give us wisdom when we ask Him to change us more and more into the likeness of His Son? Will He not enable us to shine His light clearly and effectively in ever-evolving ways with vision that sees God faithfully working in the past, faithfully working in a changed and changing context or ministry environment? Surely He will!!!

Vision says, "Yes! God will work! He is faithful! He will mold and shape us to be the servant people He desires us to be for this day and for this place. By His Spirit at work in us we will 'evolve' to meet the opportunities to be His witnesses in our community!"

### Yes, But ...

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8 ESV). Yes! Yes! Yes! I know that and believe that! Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35 NIV). Yes! Yes! I know that and believe that. But look at the early Church in the Book of Acts. Peter, and the rest of the Jewish-born Christians, had to ADAPT to the new work of God through the Gospel among the Gentiles. Check out Acts, chapters 10–17. Talk about an EVOLUTION!!!

Same God. Same Gospel. Same Savior. Same Spirit at work. Same message: *Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Sola Scriptura*. Same Word of God, both Law and Gospel. Same Sacraments. Some things must NEVER change!

AND

Healthy congregations/ministries must have vision: faith that sees our faithful God faithfully at work in a changed and changing environment /context of ministry. Living into that vision is God's invitation to experience evolution, or change, becoming what God is calling us to



Photo by Elisa Schultz/Michigan District, LCMS

be: faithful and effective ambassadors of the reconciliation He has accomplished in Jesus.

Let me give one quick example:

Aging Anglo congregations often want to reach young, white families of European ancestry. But what if the demographics of your community show that the fastest growing population segment in a three-mile radius is senior citizens, or African Americans, or immigrants from Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, or Africa?

Your history has been God working through Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, and a Christian day school, all in English. (Or whatever the hallmarks of your ministry have been in the past.) God has been faithful with and through His Word and Spirit; but these ministry forms may now be under-staffed, under-utilized, and over-subsidized. May I suggest that you experience and invite godly EVOLUTION and adapt?! That's vision-casting: looking at your environment, looking at your assets, and looking at your great and faithful God and asking Him, "How do you want to proceed and how might you want to work through us, your people? How can we be faithful as you lead us to evolve into what you want us to be in order to reach the least and the lost in

*continued on page 18*

## Resources:

Possible helpful tools to ask some great diagnostic questions of ourselves and God's purposes for us in our communities:

- *Breaking the Missional Code*, by Ed Stetzer ([edstetzer.com](http://edstetzer.com))
- *Church Unique*, by Will Mancini ([churchunique.com](http://churchunique.com))
- Michigan District Webinar *Envisioning Your Church in Five Years* with Rev. Dr. David P. E.

Maier and Rev. Dr. Robert E. Kasper ([michigandistrict.org/resources](http://michigandistrict.org/resources))

# Church is *not* a Spectator Sport

Retooling Volunteer Recruitment by Todd Jones

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul describes the church as a body. He indicates that a healthy congregation is a church with each part functioning as determined by the Holy Spirit. That portion of Scripture provides substance to the term “member.” The member of a church is a vital organ of the church. When the members are not engaged, the whole church suffers.

As a parish pastor, I struggled with that Scripture passage. My experience has not been at church with 100% of the members engaged in the work of the congregation. I have more often seen the 80/20 principle at work, 20% of the people serving and 80% just showing up and sometimes applauding.

This problem isn't just a pastor problem; it's a church worker problem, from DCEs to volunteer Sunday school superintendents, from teachers to Altar Guild presidents. Key for volunteers and paid leaders is the skill of getting more people involved in the work. My hope is that this article will provide you with some tools to improve your volunteer recruitment process. I'm a big fan of lists, so I want to encourage you to think about the process of retooling recruitment as a four-step process.

## Step One

First, you need to determine the types of volunteer opportunities that you need to fill. The approach used to recruit a volunteer varies based on the type of positions you're trying to fill. There are two basic types of volunteer positions: task-oriented positions and goal-oriented positions.

Task-oriented positions need people who will do specific things for the church. These positions include ushers, greeters, altar guild members, hosts and hostesses, and custodians. Goal-oriented positions need people who will accomplish specific goals. These positions include spiritual care, children's ministry, youth ministry, discipleship ministry, and worship ministry.

## Step Two

Secondly, match the recruitment process to the orientation of the position. It's important to figure out the type of position that you need to fill because your recruitment strategy will vary based on the position. In addition, the level of commitment and engagement will vary based on the type of ministry position you're trying to fill and your recruitment strategy.

For example, if I approach recruiting a person for my children's ministry as if it were a task-oriented position, I might get someone to volunteer to complete a task for children's ministry, but their commitment would be to the task and only through the duration of the task. For example, if I recruit a volunteer to teach second grade Sunday school for the school year, that person would likely do a fine job checking all the boxes off of teaching Sunday school until the end of that year. Then, at the end of the year, I would need to find another teacher to teach second grade. More importantly, there's no guarantee that the goal or purpose of having the kids in second grade Sunday school was accomplished because the teacher's focus was on the task, not the goal. The teacher's focus was on the task and not the goal because I recruited her or him to the task, not the goal.

## Step Three

Invite a person to serve. This is where we tend to struggle. The invitation that we extend will influence how people will serve. I have noticed, and I'm ashamed to say I've engaged in, some bad practices in recruiting volunteers.

Consider this first: the bribery method. This is where you offer the potential volunteer a reward. It may be anything from “I'll be ever so grateful” to “I hear they may be putting names of volunteers into a hat at the end of the year and drawing out one of the names to possibly win a new car.” Included in the bribery method are attempts to make the job seem easy and inconsequential. For example, “Barry, all I need you to do is one Sunday every three months and hold the door open as people

approach the entrance. Don't worry. You can stand inside where it's warm in the winter and cold in the summer. You don't need to say anything or even smile. Just open the door. Barry, would you do that for me? Did I mention that there might be a drawing at the end of the year? Barry, new car?"

While bribery sounds criminal, it can be effective for task focused short-term volunteer positions. However, it doesn't do anything to develop a servant's heart in the volunteer. In fact, it reinforces a consumer mentality in the church.

Another bad habit is the guilt method. This is where you remind individuals that Jesus died on the cross for their sins and the least they could do is open the door for people as they enter the building on Sunday morning. There isn't much to commend this method of approach. Yes, it can bring quick results, but it also builds resentment. Not to mention that, if the pastor is doing a good job of preaching law/gospel sermons, your guilt-ridden volunteer will

suddenly feel guilt free at the end of the sermon and will no longer want to serve as usher or door guardian.

Lastly, the Buffalo Bill method. This is where you wait until the narthex is full of people and then you charge in as the people scatter before you and you lasso, [or rather] engage, the slowest person to flee and ask them to serve. Well, it might sound funny and if you've served at a church for any length of time at all it begins to feel more and more like you're recruiting using the Buffalo Bill method. It does work for task-oriented, short-term needs. However, it usually results in a warm body filling the slot and will require a great deal of attention and maintenance.

Here's what I have found has worked in the past for recruiting volunteers for task-oriented positions:

- 1. Be very specific about the requirements of the position.** The requirements include how long it will take each time they serve, how long they are

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# GREAT COMPASSION

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6 January 2020

# FAMILY OF GOD Street Outreach Ministry

by Tyler Cronkright



Deacon Tim prays with a man struggling with addiction

Much has changed in three years since Family of God, Detroit (FOG) moved from the little storefront church in Southwest Detroit on Sharon and Vernor to its new location on Whittaker Street.

There are more people attending on a daily basis and worship services now take place in a beautiful sanctuary. There are more ministry opportunities

such as kid's summer programs, tutoring, and a Narcotics Anonymous group. FOG also hosts The Luke Project 52 Clinic and Pan da Vida, an LCMS Spanish worshipping congregation. Connections have been made with Elli's House Ministry to make a difference for victims of human trafficking. These partnerships are unanticipated blessings.

With all these opportunities, FOG is refocusing to maintain its mission to the hopeless: drug addicts, the homeless, and those caught up in human trafficking. Deacon Tim LeClair, soon to be an SMP pastor, and I acknowledged that there are so many people out there who are either unaware FOG exists or are too far away to walk to us.

These off-the-grid people are everywhere and there is so much more to do. It's easy to say "we can't serve everyone" and limit the mission, but FOG is asking the question: How can we do more? How do we get to these prodigal sons and daughters?

Christ's words echo: "I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick, and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Then the righteous will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:36-40).

The first step was to pray. The answer came quickly: Street ministry.

FOG needed to become mobile. What happened next

was amazing! God provided a brand-new pull-behind trailer that has a heater and generator for electricity!

After Tim described the vision of this ministry to a co-worker, donations from One Sheep Ministry (Trinity and Grace, Monroe) covered the full cost. God's plan was underway! The trailer provides a change of clothing, a safe, warm place to change, shelter, hot food, hygiene kits and, most importantly, the message of hope that only the Gospel affords.

FOG's trailer goes out on the first and third Saturday morning of every month with a team of 4-6 people. The congregation relies on God's provision through its supporting congregations and donations for the funds and food. The team meets at the FOG at 7:30 a.m. to load the trailer with food, clothing, and other resources required for the day and then leaves at 9:30 a.m. The route begins at Patton Park on the west side of Detroit and ends at Clark Park, also known as Mexicantown.

Deacon Tim is excited and blessed to be heading up this ministry. FOG trusts God's plan to bring some comfort to those who are suffering; but most importantly, HOPE to a place infected with hopelessness and despair.

Please remember Family of God's Street Outreach Ministry in your prayers, and prayerfully consider joining them in this effort that God is using to reach His people! ■

*Tyler Cronkright is a Concordia University Ann Arbor graduate in Family Life and Social Work. He started his practicum at Family of God, Detroit in 2013 and hasn't left since. He is now serving as Vicar and preparing to be an SMP pastor.*

The trailer that God supplied through generous donors will provide food, clothing, warmth, safety, and hope to those living on the street.



Photos courtesy of Family of God.



# Deaf Ministry at Cross and Resurrection, Ypsilanti

by Marliese Peltier

While they were driving down the road, Gloria said to her mom, “*Open the door of the window.*” Her mom paused, wondering what Gloria might mean. After a moment, she realized that Gloria had misheard the phrase, “*Open the car door window.*” Gloria and other individuals with hearing loss can “mishear” or miss auditory information. Families with members who have hearing loss often ask how they can support their loved one’s communication.

In 2016, the Schindel and Peltier families met at their school district’s Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) playgroup for children aged zero to five. The Schindel and Peltier families joined this playgroup because members of their families (Gloria and Louis) had hearing loss and qualified for early intervention services. In the months following their initial connection, the Peltiers and Schindels came to realize that they not only had children with hearing loss, but also many other things in common. One commonality was that they attended LCMS churches in Washtenaw County. Another commonality was that both families, including their children, began learning American Sign Language (ASL) to support communication and language development.

As the school year progressed, the families chatted about how their children’s hearing loss influenced communication. The DHH playgroup and early intervention services supported ASL instruction for everyday use, but there were communication gaps that arose while the families and children attended and participated in church services and events. A poignant example occurred during the St. Paul Lutheran School’s Christmas program, which was held at Concordia University Ann Arbor. During the program, Louis was highly distracted because of the limitations of his hearing aids. His behavior changed when his sister began to sign *Away in a Manger* with the other students. Louis’s eyes focused on his sister and he got a smile on his face. He had access to the joyous Christmas message!

It was moments such as that Christmas program that led the Schindel and Peltier families to ponder how they could provide access within the Church. In their search, the families connected with the Michigan District’s Deaf Ministry ([michigandistrict.org/deafministry/](http://michigandistrict.org/deafministry/)). Through the support of the Ephphatha Lutheran Mission Society ([elms-deaf.org](http://elms-deaf.org)), a Deaf Ministry was begun at Cross and Resurrection Lutheran Church ([crossandres.org](http://crossandres.org)) in Ypsilanti. Initially, the Deaf Ministry program focused on providing monthly ASL Sunday School classes for children aged infants through elementary school and beginning ASL instruction for adults. Deaconess Diana Rice, who serves with Ephphatha, taught these classes. As the ministry at Cross and Resurrection has grown over the past two years, it has expanded to providing interpreted worship services twice per month. From September–April, worship attendees can also stay for

a meal and community socializing following the worship service.

It has been three years since God planned for our family to meet the Schindels at a DHH playgroup. I remain amazed at how God orchestrated the beginnings of the Deaf Ministry at Cross and Resurrection through a chance encounter. It reminds me that God does truly take what society (and even ourselves) identifies as burdens, differences, or disabilities and uses them for His greater glory. He does LOVE each and every one of us. ■

*Marliese Peltier is a member of St. Paul, Ann Arbor. Her family has participated in the Michigan District’s Deaf Ministry outreach program for the past several years.*

Gloria Schindel signs “I love you”



Photos courtesy of Rev. Bryan and Laura Schindel



# The Blessing of Truth in the Scriptures

by Alex Hoffmeyer

*“All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground” (Psalm 104:27–30 NIV).*

In 2014, there was a debate between Christian Ken Ham and scientist Bill Nye over how our world was created. Ken Ham argued for the biblical perspective, advocating a six-day creation and a timeline of a few thousand years instead of billions of years. Bill Nye took the opposite approach, arguing that evolution brought all things to life and that no exterior force, God or otherwise, facilitated the shaping of our world in any way. Many scientists and many Christians watched this debate eagerly to see who would reign as champion over the other. But even today, five years after the event, the issue still remains a point of contention. The debate rendered no clear verdict. Both Christians and scientists claimed victory for each side, and no one belief triumphed over the other.

No matter which side of the debate you fall on, the common question I hear is this: why should we as Christians care? Does it really matter if we believe the world was created in six days or over many eons? Does it change the fact that Jesus came to redeem us and pay the price for our sins so we can be with God for all eternity? Some would say it doesn't matter. But the problem is not that simple.

## Why Does it Matter?

We can glean many things from this debate, none of which are very encouraging, but in the end there is one solid conclusion: the authority of Scripture is being lost. The Bible says very clearly in Genesis chapter 1 that God created the whole world and everything in it in six

days, and then rested on the seventh. It also tells us that God created the world out of nothing at all. Nothing. By His speaking the world came into existence, and it was created according to His design. But more than that, all things were created out of God's divine goodness and love for His Creation. If we deny even a portion of truth in this account, we call into question the validity of all other Scriptural accounts. And if we do this, then we might even begin to deny the greatest truth: that we are dependent upon God, our Creator, for everything.

As we lose the authority of Scripture in our world, we are subtly influenced by those who profess that there is no God. We are pressured into non-biblical beliefs by so many who try to attack the very existence of God by taking His creation out of His hands and placing it into the hands of chance. But God is our Creator, and from Him come all our blessings and everything we need for life. This includes physical blessings, as the above Psalm reminds us; but it also includes the blessing of truth, specifically the truth of the Word which shows us the true God who both created us and also redeemed His creation from the destruction of sin. We trust in this truth because we trust that God's Word is true. May this trust never be broken. ■

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, You guide the whole world by Your mighty hand, and You care for that which You have created. Forgive me for the times when I have not given thanks to You for Your rich blessings, and help me to always offer prayers and thanks to You in everything. In Your gracious name I pray. Amen.*

JANUARY 2020

## How an IRA from CEF Can Help You Prepare for Retirement – and Help Build God’s Kingdom



*“Church members who invest with CEF not only help themselves—they also help create the funds needed for growing our Lutheran churches, schools, and organizations” – Jim Saalfeld, CEO, Church Extension Fund*

**Q A**

*Have questions about CEF’s IRA offerings? You’ll get your basic IRAnswers here. To learn more, call Kris Nowak or Sandy Mastenbrook at CEF today.*

**800-242-3944**

It’s never too early to start saving for your retirement. And, really, it’s never too late.

Wherever you are in life, an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) is an excellent tax-advantaged way to save. What’s even better, you’ll support Lutheran ministries when you make your IRA investments through Church Extension Fund.

“This is exactly why we’re here,” said Jim Saalfeld, CEF’s Chief

Executive Officer. “Church members who invest with CEF not only help themselves—they also help create the funds needed for growing our Lutheran churches, schools, and organizations. That’s crucial to building God’s kingdom in the Michigan District.”

To get you thinking about your IRA strategy with CEF, here are answers to some basic questions about this popular category of investing:

## New IRA? Transfer? Rollover?

*IRAnswer: Do any or all of the above!*

You may already have an IRA you'd like to transfer to a CEF plan. Or maybe there's a 401(k) or 403(b) retirement account, still held from a past employer, you could roll over to an IRA from CEF. Both are easy to do. Call CEF to start the process. We can help you open a new IRA too.

## Traditional IRA? Roth IRA?

*IRAnswer: It depends on when you want to see your tax benefits.*

With a traditional IRA, your contributions are tax-deferred. That is: You won't pay taxes on your traditional IRA contributions until you begin withdrawing from them. Plus, for many or most investors, your contributions to a traditional IRA are tax-deductible in the year you make them. That can be a nice financial advantage, especially in your peak earning years.

A Roth IRA also lets your assets grow free of federal taxes – and you won't pay federal taxes on your Roth IRA withdrawals, provided you meet certain requirements. However, you can't deduct your Roth IRA contributions from your current year's taxes. So in essence, with a Roth IRA, you're forgoing tax advantages now for a major tax incentive down the road.

IRAs are mainly designed to encourage retirement savings,

so there may be penalties for early withdrawals. With a traditional IRA, there's usually a penalty of 10% of the withdrawal amount before age 59½. With a Roth IRA, an early-withdrawal penalty can apply to the earnings from your contributions (though not to the contributions themselves).

## Can I use an IRA-like investment to help fund education for my child or grandchild?

*IRAnswer: Absolutely!*

Set up a Coverdell Education Savings Account (CESA) with CEF. CESAs were formerly known as Education IRAs. Contributions are not tax-deductible, but withdrawals are free from federal taxes if used for qualifying educational expenses at a qualifying educational institution. CESA proceeds can be used for your student's tuition – at primary, secondary, and college levels—and for books, equipment, and supplies.

## What kinds of investment instruments does CEF offer for IRAs?

*IRAnswer: Many!*

Take a look at CEF's Offering Circular. You'll find it on our home page at [www.mi-cef.org](http://www.mi-cef.org). It tells what's needed to invest in our Fixed Rate Notes, Variable Rate Notes, Dedicated Saving Certificates, and other offerings. All can be used to fund your IRA accounts from CEF.



*Coverdell Education Savings Account (CESA) withdrawals are free from federal taxes, if used for qualifying educational expenses at a qualifying educational institution.*

## Could my IRA investments through CEF help my local church or school?

*IRAnswer: They most certainly can!*

Does your church or school have a loan with CEF? If so, your individual IRA investments can help reach the ministry-wide investment level needed to qualify for our new Investment Rebate Program. This gives cash back—up to 1% of your ministry's CEF loan balance. Think of how your church or school can use these added funds. There may be a new program that would provide valuable outreach to your community—if only the resources were there to support it.

## How do I get started on my IRA investments with CEF?

*IRAnswer: Call CEF today! Please contact your financial or legal advisors with any questions about rules, exceptions, or other details before investing in an IRA with CEF.*



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)  
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## Here We Stand

### Impacting Lives for the Gospel

Rev. Mandla Khumalo of St. Peter Confessional Lutheran Church in Middelburg, South Africa, is serving as a missionary in the Michigan District and elsewhere in the LCMS to proclaim and model the power and joy of Jesus' Great Commission in our midst. He focuses especially on encouraging a fervor of international, Gospel-centered relationships and on helping build a passion for being "salt and light" in our schools, communities, and congregations. Rev. Khumalo arrived in Michigan in February, 2019 and will remain for a total of two years. He writes:

*My family and I want to thank all the congregations of the Michigan District, all pastors, and district office staff for the warm welcome and for all the help in getting us settled and acclimated. Thank you for your moral, financial, and prayer support. At times I forget that I am not at home because of your hospitality, goodwill, and willingness that we would serve together in the field of the Lord.*

*The congregations, schools, and gatherings I have already visited have been a blessing to many and taught me many things. It is wonderful to see all the children of the Lord who are joyfully baptized Lutherans, full of love for their Savior and Lord. Our gifts are different—some are preachers, some are prayer warriors, some*

*are apostles, some teachers, and others evangelists—but we work together as the body of Christ.*

# Thank You!

*Of note is the great work of Valley Lutheran High School in Saginaw in that they combine their teaching and love in reaching out to children of other nationalities and faiths without discrimination. The school has created an atmosphere of Gospel outreach and Christian message even in song. This is impacting lives for the Gospel, and I would encourage people to utilize this school choir across the district, as I saw a missionary element that could greatly benefit and promote Lutheran education.*

The Michigan District, through the Innovative Missional Ministry initiative of the **Here We Stand** campaign, joyfully and generously supports Pastor Khumalo's mission and ministry efforts to reach the lost and strengthen the faith of the faithful throughout our district and beyond. To financially support the efforts of Pastor Khumalo, please mail your personal or congregational contribution to: Michigan District LCMS, 3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-3098, Attn: Development Department/Khumalo, or online at [michigandistrict.org/donate](http://michigandistrict.org/donate).

### A "By the Numbers" look at the Here We Stand Campaign

(through December 6, 2019)

\$6,217,045.60	Total campaign gifts, pledges, and goals
\$5,847,170.82	Cash received which includes \$500,000 CEF Matching Funds
\$308,144.56	Outstanding commitments (pledges)
1,420	Total Contributors
1,263	Individual Contributors
157	Congregations Contributing
43.3%	% of Michigan District Congregations currently participating
\$1,255,890.55	Total given/pledged for Professional Church Worker Scholarships
\$2,532,136.15	Total given/pledged for Innovative Missional Ministry
\$ 951,029.58	Total given/pledged for Michigan District Endowment
\$1,416,259.10	Total given/pledged for International Ministries

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



Here We Stand

## LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

### Michigan District LLL President

Photo courtesy of Michigan District LLL



Chuck Bennett is in his second year as president of the Michigan District International Lutheran Laymen's League. He and his family have a long history of involvement in Lutheran Hour Ministries.

Bennett was named district vice president in 2008 and served for four years. The

following year, he became president. Bennett returned as vice president in 2017 and was elected president again in 2018. He is an active member of St. Luke, Haslett.

Bennett's father Donald, who passed away in 2018, was also actively involved in the LLL as a district officer, president, regional governor, and international

president (1992–96). Donald Bennett was also interim executive director of the LLL in 2004.

Chuck Bennett is currently preparing for the District LLL Convention taking place on August 25, 2020 at the Bavarian Inn Convention Center in Frankenmuth.

## LHM Sunday

February 3, 2020



Order materials at:

[lhm.org/lhmsunday](http://lhm.org/lhmsunday)

## LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE

Let's make some **DIFFERENT** New Year's Resolutions!

Prayers  
for my  
family

Rename  
your  
Zone  
event!

Encourage  
family &  
friends to give  
to Mites!

Prayers  
for  
peace.

Prayers for a successful  
convention in Gaylord!

JOHN 20:20B

Try  
something  
new in your  
Society!

Have a Bible  
Study in a  
restaurant.

LIKE US ON  
FACEBOOK!

Turn in your Mite donations by March 31, 2020.

Send your donations to Sandy Maya, 6600 Constitution Blvd. #402, Portage, MI 49024.

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

### Supporting Mission in Eastern Europe

God has richly blessed Nativity, Saint Charles. The more they open their arms to care about the community throughout the world, the more He gives them opportunity to do so.

When LCMS missionaries came to speak at Nativity, the hearts of the congregation were touched in a special way. Kipp and Tami Beaudoin are everyday people (Home District: North Wisconsin, [lcms.org/beaudoin](http://lcms.org/beaudoin)) and many of the members really connected with them. The congregation decided to use the proceeds of its fall community pig roast to support the Beaudoins in their mission to Eastern Europe.

The congregation found that, as they were generous in sharing what God has given to them, He blessed them all the more. The death of one of the fall event's main planners/workers left Nativity members concerned about its success, but God was so faithful that they were able to generate as much dollars for missions as in any other year.



Photo courtesy of Nativity, Saint Charles

Nativity gives Missionaries Kipp and Tami Beaudoin a check to support their ministry in Eastern Europe.



Photo courtesy of LWML Timberline Zone

In November, the LWML Timberline Zone at St. John, AuGres held a Ladies Aid's Mission Fundraiser.

### Volunteer with LAMP Ministry

2019 was one of the best seasons to serve in northern Manitoba. Without any mechanical issues, Pastor/pilot Dennis Ouellette was able to fit in extended visits in the vast and remote area he serves. Relationships are crucial in order to carry out this ministry and Pastor Dennis stays overnight to allow more time to be with both the teams and the community members. He shares



Photo courtesy of LAMP Ministry

Pastor/pilot Dennis Ouellette helps out with crafts in Shamattawa in northern Manitoba.

photos and stories of his summer ministry in the North at [lightabovemyath.blogspot.com](http://lightabovemyath.blogspot.com).

Lutheran Association of Missionary Pilots (LAMP) is a cross-cultural ministry sharing Jesus Christ with God's people in remote areas of Canada. LAMP volunteers encourage and support people in these remote areas in their walk with Christ and the communities appreciate it very much. They (especially the children) anxiously await the team's return next year.

If God has placed a call for missions on your heart, consider becoming a volunteer. For more information, visit [lampministry.org](http://lampministry.org), call 800.307.4036, ext. 1, or send an email to [shelly@lampministry.org](mailto:shelly@lampministry.org).

## Senior High Gathering: Anchored in Hope

Registration is open for the District's Senior High Gathering at Mission Point Resort on Mackinac Island, June 28–July 1, 2020.

Today's youth are searching for HOPE and desperately craving for an anchor in this stressed out, anxiety-stricken culture. Under the theme *Anchored in Hope*, based on Romans 5:1–8, the Senior High Youth Gathering will address the suffering youth experience and how they can persevere, build character, and rely on the hope they have in Jesus Christ.

At the gathering, youth will learn from some of the best as they are challenged to grow in and through their suffering—which pushes them to persevere and helps them to develop character and find HOPE in and through all of the difficulties they face on a daily basis. Their days at the Gathering will be filled with Bible studies, large group gatherings, servant event opportunities, fellowship, concerts, comedy, exploration of Mackinac Island, and so much more.

For more information, visit [michigandistrict.org/srhigh20](http://michigandistrict.org/srhigh20).



**ANCHORED  
IN HOPE**

## Three Families Call Mercy House Home

Mercy House in Flint has housed its first three families since November. The families consist of three mothers and eight children. Two of the mothers are also pregnant.

As these mothers and their children entered the transitional housing program, Mercy House became their home for six months to a year. During this time, mothers receive help in financial planning as well as skills needed to find healthy, stable employment, as they parent and provide for their children.

Goals and successes will look different for each family, as they all have different dreams and aspirations; however, Franklin Avenue Mission ([franklineavemission.com](http://franklineavemission.com)) is tremendously excited to watch how God the Father continues providing for His children, to share the love of Jesus with each family, and to witness the incredible power of the Holy Spirit as He molds and shapes each person for their new lives.



## Keweenaw Base Camp in Upper Peninsula

Limitless adventure awaits campers at Keweenaw Base Camp (KBC), near Houghton, Mich. KBC has operated in its northern home since 2013 and has had groups from around the nation visit. KBC is a satellite location of Camp Luther in Three Lakes, Wisc.

Camp programming takes two forms: individual and group. Registration opened for individuals who have finished grades 9 through 12 for a weeklong adventure through the Upper Peninsula. Groups can also come for a week to grow in their faith together through service and adventure!

Registration for groups is filling up fast, so go to [camppluther.com/group-programs](http://camppluther.com/group-programs) or call Casey "Psych" Sprotte at 715.546.3647 for more details.



Photo courtesy of Keweenaw Base Camp

## One Michigan One Mission Call for Presenters

On October 15-16, 2020, the Michigan Association of Non-public Schools Education Conference and Expo and the Michigan District, LCMS Professional Church Workers' Conference will be combined



for a larger, two-day event to develop, inspire, and connect many professions that provide the important faith foundation in Michigan communities.

This premier event is the only one in Michigan to gather together Christian educators, pastors, and church workers. While networking and fellowship are important reasons for attending the *One Michigan One Mission Conference*, the keynote speakers and quality programming are the foundation of this conference. Presenter proposals are currently being accepted until January 17, 2020. To submit a proposal for a session that will help create a robust and well-balanced program, focusing on topics that both educators, pastors, and other church workers can benefit from, visit [surveymonkey.com/r/LAN2020](http://surveymonkey.com/r/LAN2020).

## Michigan District Podcasts

To equip servant leaders (both professional church workers and lay leaders), the Michigan District launched its *Thought Leader Podcast* in mid-July 2019. The podcast is an eclectic collection of episodes produced by its executive staff. The podcast covers many topics including theology, leadership, church and/or school administration, and ministry tips. To date, the District has produced over 15 episodes with topics ranging from Conversational Evangelism to The Future Church.

In late November, the District launched the *Innovative Missional Ministry Podcast*. In its first episode, Michigan District Video Journalist Jeff Heisner spends time with Tyler Cronkright of Family of God, Detroit discussing its ministry, who they serve, and how one can become involved.

Both podcasts feature 10- to 25-minute audio episodes designed to be easily incorporated into staff, church, or school meetings and individually during a daily commute or workout routine.

To access current episodes and/or to subscribe to the podcast, visit [michigandistrict.org/podcast](http://michigandistrict.org/podcast) or search for “Michigan District LCMS” or “Innovative Missional Ministry” in your favorite podcasting app.



## Special Recognition



Photo courtesy of Trinity, Sturgis

Rev. Lawrence Matro (pictured center) was installed as Administrative Pastor at Trinity, Sturgis in November. Pictured (l to r) are Rev. David Bogda, Rev. Kurt Kuhlmann, Rev. David C. Fleming, Rev. Cal Kolzow, Rev. Lawrence Matro, Rev. Justin Smith, Rev. James Balzer, and Rev. Aaron Chittick.



Photo courtesy of Faith, Mesick

Rev. Timothy C. Selim (pictured center) was installed as SMP Pastor at Faith, Mesick in November.





# LEGACY: Reclaiming A Lost Generation

Ephesians 4:1-3



Michigan District, LCMS presents

## 2020 Theological Conference

February 1, 2020 | Our Savior, Lansing, Mich.

### Speakers:

**Rev. Dr. Robert D. Newton**

**Rev. Dr. Dean W. Nadasdy**

**Mrs. Heather L. Ruesch**

**Rev. R. Gabe Kasper**

**General \$20**

**Student \$15**

See event page for Livestream details.

Christians in general, and Christian families in particular, are under spiritual and cultural attack. As a result, more families are being broken and more individuals, especially the young, are leaving the Church. The typical fight-or-flight reactions can readily be seen: Some churches and individuals embrace the flight response by isolating themselves, while others choose to fight by using Scripture and reason to point fingers.

The goal of this conference is to propose and examine a third response reflecting the Apostle Paul's method of engaging the culture (and our relatives) by "speaking the truth in love." Our prayer is that we all develop the capacity to engage the culture as we also seek to retain our young people through healthy interactions under the blessing of our Lord.

***[michigandistrict.org/theological20](http://michigandistrict.org/theological20)***

## New Year's Evolution *continued from page 3*

your Name?”

I would submit that if your congregation/ministry is more than 10 years old, and you have not intentionally “evolved” in how you minister the Gospel to your community, then you are much less effective than you were ... or could be. Your ministry environment has changed. Every year should spur us to prayerful evaluation and a New Year's EVOLUTION.

So, happy New Year! I pray that the Holy Spirit will indeed grant you some 20/20 vision as He leads you, along with your brothers and sisters in Christ, in your New Year's Evolution. ■

*Rev. Dr. Robert E. Kasper is the Assistant to the President – Congregation Mission and Ministries Metro Zone/Ministry Support for the Michigan District, LCMS.*



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## Church is not a Spectator Sport *continued from page 5*

committed to serve, and what are the specific tasks that they will be expected to accomplish.



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- 2. Explain that they will receive training** for the position and how that training will take place and when it will take place.
- 3. Explain how you personally will support them** and their service. Recruitment is about relationship. If you recruit a person to a task and don't continue the relationship, you're just using people. While that is a future topic for podcasts, notice the implication that sentence has upon who should be doing recruiting. If you recruit someone to a task, you are the person that needs to keep in regular follow-up with that person.
- 4. Explain why you think they're a good fit** for the position. Now, this is a biggie. When people understand that you're asking them take on a volunteer position based on your appraisal of their knowledge, skills, and ability, it makes them feel valued. It makes them want to excel in the good that you see in them. Now, here's the hard part: To be success-

## Your Investment Builds Churches

When you invest with Church Extension Fund your investment helps to renovate and build churches and schools, just like St. John, Fraser (pictured). Pastor Smith of St. John says about their recent renovation, “CEF is very supportive of the work. They don't simply supply the money, they have worked with our staff for years to make it all come together.”



Church Extension Fund

Office:

**800-242-3944**

24/7 Interest Rates:

**800-232-7313**

Website:

**[www.mi-cef.org](http://www.mi-cef.org)**



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ful, you have to have a valid reason for why this person should be involved in the ministry task. You don't want them just because they can stand up and open a door. Why is it that they should be serving the church? What is their skill and ability that makes them uniquely qualified for this task?

**5. Connect the task to the bigger picture** of the mission of the church. Don't underplay the position that just makes people feel like you don't value them. When I recruit a person to be a greeter at the door, I want to remind them that God has prepared a table for his children. At that table we have the privilege to dine in the presence of our God and receive his mercy. You have the honor of welcoming them to this wonderful feast. Your greeting, your smile might be the first good thing they've experienced that week. As a person welcoming people into the church, you have the honor of preparing them for the feast.

When recruiting for a goal-oriented position, it's all about providing a clear vision or goal that needs to be fulfilled.

To begin with, if I'm recruiting to youth ministry, I would want to emphasize the goal of our youth ministry. I might say, "We know that, as teens get older, their convictions and confidence in their Christian faith are challenged by their peers and society. Faith becomes less significant. Having friends, figuring out a career, and establishing an identity apart from the family become more important than the church and their faith. Our goal for our youth program is to strengthen the faith of our teens so that they value God's Word and rely upon Jesus for life and salvation. I would like for you to consider being a part of our team that is focused on this mission."

Now, when you recruit to a goal, you recruit a long-term supporter of the ministry. You recruit someone who will seek to accomplish the purpose of the task, not just get the task done. Now you may have a specific task that you want them to accomplish in youth ministry. However, you would want them to commit first to being a part of the team and its purpose. Before you talk task, you want them to commit to the goal because the accomplishment of the task is not as important as achieving the goal. You want them to commit to the goal because you want them to be empowered to develop tasks and processes that will accomplish the goal. In other words, you don't want them to run your plan. You want them to develop their own plan.

Secondly, explain how the ministry team functions. What does it look like? How often does it meet, and what type of training is provided?

Thirdly, explain how you will personally help them get connected to the rest of the ministry team. It's good to have people work in teams with tasks. However, remember: You've recruited them to a task, not to community. You've asked them to greet people at the door, not care for people on the team. However, care for team is essential for a goal-focused team to be successful. Because the team includes care for the team members, you can eventually hand-off the relationship of that new recruit to the team. In other words, the team is responsible for establishing a relationship between its members and the new recruit.

Fourth, explain why you think they're a good fit for the purpose. Again, this is a biggie because people understand that you are asking them based on a passion that you've seen in them. It makes them feel valued; it makes them want to excel.

Now here's the hard part: It has to be valid. You have to understand and know people. You have to observe people and their passions and sometimes you have to speak aspirational hope into them because it isn't yet developed. But nonetheless, they have to see it as authentic before they're willing to say yes to the task and to the goal.

#### Step Four

The fourth step is follow up. Provide them an opportunity to pray about the request and include a time when you would get back with them: "I'll get back with you in about seven days," that type of a thing. Let them know that there's going to be accountability. Don't ask for a commitment right away, particularly if it is a long-term task or goal commitment.

If it's an emergency and they are just needed to take the offering today, then obviously you want a response right away. But for other recruitment, when you want them to be a part of an ongoing ministry, give them a chance to think and pray about it. Please emphasize prayer because it reminds them that this is a commitment between them and God. ■

*This article is a transcription of the Thought Leadership Podcast "Church is not a Spectator Sport" by Rev. Dr. Todd Jones on May 2, 2019. To subscribe to the podcast, visit [michigandistrict.org/podcast](http://michigandistrict.org/podcast) or search for Michigan District LCMS in your favorite podcasting app.*

# Calls and Roster Update

## ORDAINED

### Calls Accepted

Rev. Benjamin Bruns (Associate, Shepherd of the Lakes, Brighton) to Senior Pastor, Shepherd of the Lakes, Brighton  
Rev. Phillip Phifer (Alpena) to Trinity, Paw Paw  
Rev. Wayne Wentzel IIM (Grand Blanc) to Good Shepherd, Lake Orion  
Rev. Lucas Witt (Auburn Hills) to Immanuel, Baltimore  
Rev. Robert Wurst (Maple City) to LERT, St. Louis

### Change of Status

Rev. Scott E. Benjamin (Clinton Twp.) to Emeritus

## COMMISSIONED

### Calls Accepted

Wright, Blake (The Cross, Mount Dora, FL) to Trinity, Clinton Township

### Change of Status

Johnson, Paul (St. Paul, Trenton) to Candidate  
Schank, Hannah (Our Savior, Marlette) to Candidate

### Removed From the Roster

Schumaker, Stephanie

A complete up-to-date listing of Calls and Vacancies can be found at [michigandistrict.org](http://michigandistrict.org).

# Calendar of Events

## JANUARY 2020

- 1 New Year's Day  
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 10–11 Pre-Retirement Conference  
Holy Cross, Flushing
- 19 Epiphany
- 21 Board of Directors  
St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth
- 27-29 DCE/DFL Conference  
Maumee Bay Resort, Oregon OH

## FEBRUARY 2020

- 1 Theological Conference  
Our Savior, Lansing
- 6-7 Lutheran School Administrators' Snow Tire Conference  
Martin Luther High School, Lansing
- 20-22 District Stewardship Leaders' Conference  
Tempe, Arizona
- 26 Ash Wednesday

## MARCH 2020

- 7-8 State Basketball Tournament  
CUAA and St. Paul, Ann Arbor
- 17 Board of Directors  
Mount Olive, Grand Rapids

## APRIL 2020

- 5 Palm Sunday
- 10 Good Friday  
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 12 Easter Sunday
- 17-18 The Katie 2020  
Doubletree by Hilton, Bay City
- 22 Administrative Professionals' Day

## MAY 2020

- 4-5 North & East Pastors' Conference  
Garland Lodge, Lewiston
- 6-7 Circuit Visitors' Conference  
Garland Lodge, Lewiston
- 10 Mother's Day
- 12-13 South & East Pastors' Conference  
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 13-14 Intentional Interim Ministry  
Michindoh, Hillsdale
- 16 Regional Track Meets  
Trinity, Monroe; VLHS, Saginaw; LHN, Macomb
- 18-19 West Pastors' Conference  
Great Wolf Lodge, Traverse City
- 21 Ascension Day
- 25 Memorial Day  
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 27 Board of Directors  
Location TBD
- 30 State Track Meet  
Frankenmuth High School, Frankenmuth

## JUNE 2020

- 5-7 Junior High Youth Gathering  
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 21-27 The Big Week  
Camp Restore, Detroit
- 28-Jul 1 Senior High Youth Gathering  
Mission Point Resort, Mackinac Island

For more detailed information, visit [michigandistrict.org/events](http://michigandistrict.org/events).