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michigan

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

IN TOUCH

HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

The Decline of Respect and What it Means for Your Church

by Kent Hunter

Pastor John sat quietly in his office. His stress had reached a new, high level for his 23 years at the church. His mind raced with thought prayers to God: *“Lord, I don’t know what to do. I’m desperate. My church is blowing up. This whole thing has gotten out of control.”*

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IN TOUCH

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“The teaching of the Scripture is our best hope to handle the challenges this generation faces with all the blessings and potential curses of an internet world.”

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This is a true story. The pastor had familiarity with Church Doctor Ministries. One of our church doctors had conducted a church consultation for his congregation two years before. So, he called to talk with that consultant.

“We have a new situation that has come up—and it’s divided our church. About three months ago, we discovered our full-time youth leader had some inappropriate behavior with one of the young people in our youth group. Our elders confronted him, and he admitted his mistakes.”

“The elders and I felt it necessary that the youth pastor be terminated. We asked him to seek counseling and restoration. We recognized his giftedness for youth ministry and, with professional help, indicated it was our hope he would likely be able to serve another church on staff in the future.

“We agreed to keep his impropriety private, as long as he promised to get professional help and guidance. We didn’t want to disrupt the entire church. So, the youth leader agreed and resigned.

“A few days later, I got this long, scathing email from a woman in the church who had two kids in the high school youth group. It was nasty and accusatory. She blamed me and the elders. Worse yet, she copied the email to 32 of her friends—all members of our church. About 20 of them had kids in the youth group.”

Our consultant responded from the other end of the phone conversation, “So, what did you do? How did you respond?”

The pastor replied, “I wrote her an email back—almost twice as long as hers. I told her that it was the elders’ right to let people go. I told her there were ‘issues’ that won’t be made public. And, as I sent the email, I copied it to the 32 people that got her email to me, along with the church council, the youth board members, as well as some of the officers in leadership at our church.

“Now, the rumors are flying, the congregation is divided, it’s a real mess. We need help. And we need it fast. This whole church is about to explode. We want to fly you out here as soon as possible to help us.”

The Issue Behind the Issues

The challenge the pastor shared is much larger than himself, the woman who sent the email, and their church. This true scenario represents a national issue in this country and our world today. It is called “incivility.”

The word “civility” means “respect.” It is related to the idea of being “civilized.” When people act without respect for one another, it is the reflection of uncivilized behavior.

The ideas of civility and respect are related to the concept of being “polite.” The word “polite” is the root idea from which we get the words “politics” and “politicians.” (Now, that is some food for thought!) Those in leadership, by definition of their office, are to be respected and respectful. That respect is a given. We are supposed to respect our leaders, and they are supposed to act with respect toward all others.

In Titus 3:1-2, it says, “Remind people to respect the government and be law-abiding, always ready to lend a helping hand. No insults, no fights. God’s people should be bighearted and courteous” (MSG). When this

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Keep the Home Fires Burning

On May 20, 2020, two dams failed in mid-Michigan, flooding entire neighborhoods and leaving 10,000 people displaced. Two months later, Pastor Dan Kempin of St. John's, Midland says that about one-third of the town had some form of damage and, even though many people are now in the rebuilding phase, some are still struggling and some are simply walking away from their homes. He describes what the priorities were in the aftermath of the floods and how St. John's is stepping in to help:

To begin, I would like to report how utterly encouraging it has been to see people stepping forward in this community, and from outside the community, to help those in need.

The first phase of that need was getting people to immediate safety—and thank the Lord that there was no loss of life during this flood. Nevertheless, many people were displaced from their homes and there has been a tremendous loss of property. Homes that were not on the flood plain have no flood insurance, and I have heard anecdotally that some flood insurance companies will not pay out because it was a dam failure, not a natural flood.

The second phase of need was the “mucking out” of homes and basements. Again, it was encouraging to see numerous relief organizations come with volunteers to help local volunteers tear out flood-damaged materials, prepare and deliver meals and water, and pray with those who are going through the loss. It would be impossible to name all of the churches and organizations that have helped, but the Midland Circuit churches have been involved in sending volunteers, hosting relief organizations, preparing meals, and even helping to replace washers and dryers, which took place through “Pivot

Point,” a ministry of Messiah, Midland.*

The next phase is rebuilding, which is taking place throughout the area, from the replacement of flooring and drywall to the repair of foundation issues on the homes that are currently condemned.

*St. John's is currently seeking to address one of the needs by helping people without the means to replace their furnace before the heating season. (We know there is going to be a need for furnace replacement because the vast majority of furnaces were in basements and destroyed by the floods). This program is being done in partnership with Wild's Plumbing and Heating, since a furnace requires professional assessment and installation. The hope is that we will be in a position to help people in the ALICE** demographic to proceed with a furnace replacement in the late summer and early fall. The need could easily exceed what St. John's is able to provide, and if so, we may be seeking funds from other churches or organizations, as well as additional professional partnerships.*

We ask for prayers in this endeavor, and that God would connect us to the people who have this need.

If you would like to help to those in need of furnace replacement, contact St. John's <https://sjlmidland.org/missions/social-ministry>. ■

*Pivot Point is a non-profit organization run by Messiah, Midland that operates by taking in donated appliances and repairing and cleaning those appliances to give them a new life instead of sending them to a landfill. Then they are re-sold to the community for an affordable price.

**ALICE = Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, a.k.a. people who live paycheck by paycheck and who just do not have the money to cover expenses such as a furnace replacement.

Calm Waters

by Richard Cohrs

This devotion is an excerpt from Richard Cohrs' new book: "Calm Waters: Devotions for Lutheran Teachers" available at amazon.com.

"And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39).

The morning started like many; Jesus led the disciples to the shore of the Sea of Galilee, perhaps searching for a quiet place to pray. But on that morning a large crowd gathered to hear Jesus teach, with so many people pressing around that He and the disciples were forced into a boat to put some distance between them and the masses.

At the end of this long day of teaching, Jesus asked the disciples to sail to the other side. Exhausted, He fell asleep as the boat rocked upon the waves.

Suddenly a fierce wind kicked up, waves were breaking over the side of the boat. The veteran fishermen knew boats. They knew storms. But this storm was like no other. It had appeared suddenly and with such violence that their skill was insufficient. They feared for their lives.

We can empathize with the disciples as we go about our daily walk, secure in the knowledge that we have the skill to complete any task, despite obstacles that may come at us.

But there come storms so powerful that they threaten our very lives.

Some storms are private and personal.

For as long as I can remember, I have struggled to breathe. First it was called asthma, later it was COPD. So, when I started to experience a tightness in my chest and shortness of breath, I dismissed it. But when my doctor heard my complaints, she ordered a stress test, just to be on the safe side.

The heart doctor ordered a heart cath procedure, just to be safe.

Halfway through the procedure, my storm hit as the doctor asked me if I wanted open heart surgery or stents to repair my blocked heart arteries. I feared for my life.

Some storms are public and shared.

No one will ever forget the end of the 2019-2020 school year as the world faced the storm called COVID-19.

The storm hit suddenly, with little warning, as schools were ordered to close their doors. Teachers, students, and parents not only had to face a dramatic change in the

educational process, but did so while many were forced to shelter in place. Others were forced to venture outside each day to provide essential services needed for life. Everyone feared for their lives, not only from a deadly disease, but from a loss of finances.

In their fear, the disciples called out to the sleeping Jesus, accusing Him of not caring if they lived.

Jesus spoke into their fear and into the storm, "Peace! Be still!"

The wind ceased, the waves calmed, the disciples were astonished.

In my fear I called to Jesus.

He spoke into my fear and into the storm of heart issues, "Peace! Be still!"

The stents were placed, the heart issues alleviated, I was saved.

In our fear we called to Jesus.

He spoke into our fear and into the chaos of a world pandemic, "Peace! Be still!"

The world responded, as we slowly return to safety.

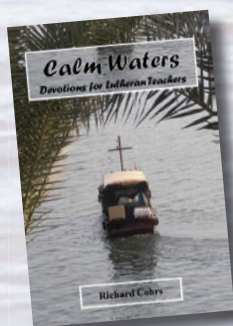
We face many storms in life. The waves of despair, doubt, fear, and panic crash over the sides of our boat, threatening destruction. We cry to Jesus. He speaks and our seas are filled with calm waters.

Jesus gives us the calm waters of His protection, His love, His hope, and His assurance of eternal life.

May His calm waters always be a comfort.

Reflection: Who needs the hope of calm waters today?

Prayer: Lord of all nations, be with us. We pray that when the storms hit, we will always look to Jesus. Let us hear the words, "Peace! Be still!" Give us the calm waters of Your protection, love, and hope. Let us always rest in You. In the name of Jesus, amen. ■



Richard P. Cohrs served as a principal and teacher for schools in Illinois, Texas, and Michigan. He also served in various capacities at Lutheran Hour Ministries. He retired in 2014 but continues to serve the church at large.



“He (Jesus) speaks and our seas
are filled with *calm waters*.”

Photo courtesy of Elisa Schulz Photography

Apologizing and Forgiving for **Lifelong** *Harmony in Marriage*

by Randall Schroeder



This article is an excerpt from Dr. Randall Schroeder's book, "Simple Habits for Marital Happiness: Practical Skills and Tools That Build a Strong Satisfying Relationship" published by CrossLink Publishing (2019), available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Adam and Eve sinned and placed a wall between all mankind and God. Forgiveness of sins was the only way to break down the barrier between God and mankind. Again and again, the essential importance of forgiveness is mentioned throughout the Old and New Testaments. The entire substance of the Christian faith is forgiveness. Hence, Christianity may appropriately be called the good news of forgiveness.

Just as forgiveness is at the center of Christianity, forgiveness is at the heart of a happy marriage.

On a human level, the central tenet of the Christian faith is interpersonal restoration through forgiveness. Jesus said, *“But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:15 NLT)*. Even while being crucified on a cross, Jesus said, *“Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34 NIV)*. Forgiveness is always beneficial because it alone can repair relationships—with God, others, and your spouse. Forgiveness is a lifelong essential ingredient for maintaining a gratifying marriage. Forgiveness of sins is truly the greatest blessing for every couple.

If a marriage is broken, only forgiveness can glue the relationship back together. Without forgiveness, you and your spouse will build an ever-growing wall between the two of you. I use three analogies to help couples understand the damage done by unforgiven wrongs, as well as the benefits associated with healing those wounds.

First, think of marital harmony like a lush fairway on a golf course. Apologizing and forgiving is like replacing a divot after a golf shot in the fairway. While playing golf, whenever a divot is made, the polite action is to either replace the divot or place sand with grass seed in the divot. If divots are not repaired, the golf course will turn into all dirt and

no one will want to play on that course. However, when divots are repaired, the golf course remains green and lush and is an attractive place to enjoy friendship and God’s creation.

Likewise, just dealing with day-to-day life issues, every so often, marital divots will unfortunately occur. When you do not replace your divots by apologizing and forgiving, the likelihood of a satisfying marriage is diminished because your “marriage golf course” will become more and more barren.

For a second analogy, think about what it would be like to try to wallpaper a room that’s filled with steam—certainly an impossible task. You can try to wallpaper that room until Jesus returns, but the walls will be so damp and moist that the wallpaper will never stick and it will keep sliding down. You will need to open the door and let the steam out of the room, so the walls can dry. Then, you can beautify the room with wallpaper.

Similarly, if your heart or your spouse’s heart is filled with the steam of bitterness and resentment, you can demonstrate all the nice actions in the world, but you will be unable to beautify your marital hearts because of the negative steam. Apologizing and forgiving one another allows the steam of bitterness to leave your heart. Healthy words and actions now have the opportunity to beautify your relationship once again.

Let’s look at the third example. Let’s say that tonight you have spaghetti for supper and you do not wash your plates but instead set them on the kitchen counter. Tomorrow night, you have barbecued chicken. You eat off those same two dirty plates and once again do not wash them. Then, the next night you eat chicken fried steak with cream gravy on those dirty plates, and once again you do not wash them and return the plates to the kitchen counter. By repeatedly eating off dirty plates, eventually with the bacteria buildup, you will contract food poisoning.

A poisoned relationship is what happens when unforgiven wrongs exist in your marriage. Relational bruises and emotional injuries will create “dirty plates.” Yet, apologizing and forgiving washes your dirty plates to prevent the poisoning. By eating off clean plates each day, you take no chances with hurting your relationship.

If your marriage has numerous unrepaired divots, hearts filled with the steam of resentment, and dirty plates, your relationship will probably be stressed and tense. I hope these mental pictures will help you understand why apologizing and forgiving are the glue for every healthy relationship. Definitely, apologizing and forgiving are always the first steps in restoring a broken marriage. ■

Randall Schroeder, PhD, is a retired professor of pastoral counseling at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind. He has a successful counseling practice and is passionate about helping individuals, couples, and families enjoy satisfying personal lives and relationships. For more information, visit drrandyschroeder.com.

“Just as forgiveness is at the center of Christianity, forgiveness is at the heart of a happy marriage.”

The Evolution of a *Spiritual Servant*

by George Locke

This article first appeared in the Spring 2020 issue of LEA Shaping the Future iWhy at <http://stf.lea.org/spring2020/feat3iWhy.html>. Used by permission of author.

I was born in 1940, however my story begins in 1945 in Palatine, Ill. My three brothers and I were raised in a dysfunctional home due to alcoholism. There was no religious climate at all. Both of my parents were raised in the Salem/Danvers (MA) area and it was a custom to feed the children at 5 p.m. and parents socialized until 9 or 10 p.m. when they ate dinner. At that point in the evening, often loud arguments broke out.

A neighbor who belonged to Immanuel, Palatine approached my parents to invite my brother and me to attend Sunday school at Immanuel. I believe the Holy Spirit prompted my parents to say yes. Immanuel was an easy two-block walk. The Holy Spirit further prompted my parents to approach Immanuel and inquire about my brother and me being enrolled in Immanuel Lutheran School as tuition students. This was extraordinary because in those days Lutheran schools were for member children only. Thus began my spiritual walk with the Lord.

While I do not remember any of the names of my teachers for grades two through five, I remember their love for me and learning about Jesus for the first time in my life. My classmates accepted me as one of their own and my journey toward the Lord was well on its way.

In 1950 my dad, who traveled a lot for DuPont, came home and informed my mother that he had bought an eighty-acre farm near Plymouth, Wisc. My dad had read a lot about farming and thought it would be a good environment to raise his four sons.

Plymouth was the home of St. John Lutheran Church and School. My parents decided to continue our Lutheran education at St. John and my mother drove us the six miles one way into Plymouth every day for many years. My teachers for the next four years were male and were outstanding religious role models.

The senior pastor at St. John was Rev. Herbert Baxmann who also served as the South Wisconsin District President. (In those days there were no district offices and the District President served both as parish pastor and president.) In eighth grade he put his hand on my shoulder and said I would make a good pastor or teacher. He also told my parents that I needed to be baptized before I was confirmed. So, on a Sunday afternoon, Rev. Baxmann came to our farm home and baptized the four of us.

Rev. Baxmann also asked my parents to consider

sending me to Concordia College located in Milwaukee, Wisc. Because of his east coast roots, my dad wanted to send me to a boarding school back east. But when this alternative about attending Concordia came up, he considered it good because he did not want me to attend the local high school in Plymouth. Again, I believe that the Holy Spirit prompted my parents to make this decision. I also have to be honest and say that I saw this as an opportunity to leave the toxic home environment. (I need to say at this point that two of my brothers had special needs and did not experience the home environment

like I did.) Although not a teacher, Mrs. Baxmann tutored one of my special needs brothers how to read.

In 1954 I enrolled in Concordia which at that time was solely an all-boy

preparatory school for the pastoral ministry. There were about sixty boys in my class and our class name was *sexta*, the Latin word for 6. Each of the next five years had their own Latin names, ending up with *prima*—number one. My first two years we were required to sit at our desks from 7–9 p.m. as a study period. Our curriculum was classical with an emphasis on foreign languages (German, Latin, and Greek). One of my most memorable moments in *sexta* was standing before my class (religion) and reciting the Six Chief Parts of the Catechism (with explanations) from memory with under three mistakes.

Most of my classmates came from church worker or Lutheran families. My professors and classmates were good role models for me. By my *quarta* year, my classmates were my family and best friends. After I graduated from *prima*, I felt the calling to become a Lutheran teacher and decided to transfer to Concordia Teachers College in Seward, Nebraska. I graduated in 1962 and served the next 45 years in Lutheran ministry. Lutheran schools were my safety net!!

Some Concluding Thoughts

Research tells us that, in the average Lutheran school, over 50% of the student body comes from non-member families, with 20% of those from non-churched families. Many of these children come to our schools from less than ideal home environments. They may not trust members of their family to keep them safe and provide for their needs. When they come to our Lutheran

In the average Lutheran school, over 50% of the student body comes from non-member families, with 20% of those from non-churched families.

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September 2020

Mt. Hope Lutheran, with CEF Support, Helps Grayling Meet Urgent Need for Day Care



Thanks to Mt. Hope's mission to always help others in their community, a new chapter has begun for the Crawford AuSable Day Care in Grayling. The new CADC building will have double the capacity allowing for a larger enrollment, a new pavilion for more outdoor play, and a multi-purpose room that doubles as a kitchen.



“The collaboration between CADC and Mt. Hope shows that we as Lutherans can serve with love for Christ even in places where we’re not directly sharing the Word of God.”

Pastor Joe Polzin

Mt. Hope Lutheran Church,
Grayling

When Pastor Joe Polzin, fresh out of seminary, joined Mt. Hope Lutheran Church in Grayling in 2016, he came to a congregation deep in self-reflection. “Our church’s mission,” he says “is to serve our neighbors with love for Christ. Our key question had become: How should our church be working now to engage with our community?”

As it happens, the Lord’s hand guided Mt. Hope in surprising ways.

Grayling, the seat of Michigan’s Crawford County, is the idyllic “Up North” home to about 2,000 year-round residents. Nearby Camp

Grayling is the country’s largest National Guard training facility. Sportspeople frequent Grayling to fish the beautiful AuSable River, which cuts through town. For others, Grayling is a friendly stop on I-75, from which to head west to the Traverse City area’s many recreational opportunities, or east to Lake Huron-side attractions.

“When we met with Grayling community leaders,” Pastor Polzin says, “we discovered two big needs for the area: one, helping the elderly, and two, helping our young families with children.” Since several of Mt. Hope’s ministries were already

contributing well to senior assistance, it was more the second need that captured the special attention of the church's members."

Commitment to Community

For some 40 years, Crawford AuSable Day Care (CADC) and Preschool, a non-profit, has been Grayling's only state-licensed day care provider. But CADC has struggled to keep up with demand. Its long-time building was a former sportsman's club, never intended for working with children. Only two of its rooms could be used for childcare, and its capacity for just over 60 children was far exceeded by a waiting list usually reaching 100 or more in recent years.

Mt. Hope's current membership skews older, so they ruled out operating their own day care center. Yet church members remained committed to the cause – and mutual interests soon emerged. Pastor Polzin explains: "We weren't prepared to operate a day care center, but maybe we could help to build one. CADC, meanwhile, wasn't prepared to build, but they know more than anyone else around here about how to provide good day care."

From these needs emerged creative solutions. The church and community alliance estimated the cost of building a new center equipped for Grayling's day care requirements at \$750,000. Individual pledges from Mt. Hope's members came to \$350,000—



The Mt. Hope congregation raised half of what was needed to fund the CADC project. When looking to fund the rest of the project they were unsure if CEF would be interested in helping fund such a unique ministry focused approach to daycare in their community. But the answer from CEF was a resounding yes.

an extraordinary amount for a congregation of only about 120 members. Trinity Lutheran Church, about 30 miles north in Gaylord, where Pastor Polzin also leads the congregation, has a current loan with Church Extension Fund. And Mt. Hope had previously secured a mortgage with CEF early in the 1990s. But the new situation was unusual. Would CEF agree to help finance such a unique day care facility for the church's neighbors in need?

The answer: a resounding yes. "We did our due diligence," says Pastor Polzin, "and compared CEF with other financing sources. Happily, we found that CEF's terms were competitive. Even better, they shared our passion for the project. Choosing CEF became a no-brainer."

State-of-the-art Facility

Church and CADC leaders broke ground on the new 8,400-square-foot day care center and preschool in August 2019. As construction neared completion this spring,

work had to halt for a while, until the coronavirus crisis subsided. But now this state-of-the-art facility is back on track to open for the 2020-21 school year. It doubles CADC's capacity while expanding the three- and four-year-old programs, adds an infant and toddler program, and gives the school-aged program its own space. There's also a 2,400-square-foot covered pavilion allowing children to be outdoors and physically active even in inclement weather. A multi-purpose room doubles as a kitchen with eating spaces large enough to accommodate all children in CADC's care.

"What has brought CADC and Mt. Hope together," Pastor Polzin says, "is our shared love for the community and the families who make it up. It shows that we as Lutherans can serve with love for Christ even in places where we're not directly sharing the Word of God."



Church Extension Fund

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LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

Michigan District Lutheran Laymen's League News

Photo courtesy of LLL



Dave Marasus will be Minister of Music at the LLL Men's Retreat in September at Camp Arcadia.

Retreat

The Men's Lutheran Laymen's League retreat is on as scheduled at Camp Arcadia September 10-13, featuring Dr. Dale Meyer. Dave Marasus will be the Minister of Music. There is still time to register by contacting the camp at 231.889.4361.

Volunteers Needed

The Saginaw Valley Zone of the Lutheran Laymen's League is in great need of volunteers to participate on the Zone Radio Broadcast Team to continue to broadcast The Lutheran Hour® on WSAM 1400 AM every Sunday morning. The role should take only about 10 hours of time a year and focuses on encouraging contributions from churches in the listening area. If you are interested

in serving or would like additional information, please contact Paul Moeller at pamoeller@aol.com or 989.631.1017 or Eileen Rodammer emrodammer@yahoo.com or 989.652.6696.

Households of Faith

Are you building your house on rock or sand? Start building a more spiritually vibrant household TODAY with the *Households of Faith* kit. Explore the ways you can nurture the faith of your household with tools, based on Barna research, for your individual household and those of your congregation. Each kit includes a detailed study, the *Spiritually Vibrant Home* book, *Households of Faith* small group study DVD, selected *Project Connect* booklets, a magnet, vibrant conversations deck, and online course information. For more information, visit lhm.org.

LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE

GIVE
THANKS TO
GOD



2020-2022 LWML MICHIGAN DISTRICT MISSION GRANTS

1. Filling Pulpits by Providing Scholarships for Michigan Men in the Seminary
2. Financial Assistance for Concordia Theological Seminary
3. Scholarships for Female Students Studying to be a Deaconess
4. Bringing Christ and Hope to Michigan's Urban Communities

...AND 10 MORE GRANTS!

YOU CAN HELP!

Click DONATE on lwmlmichigan.org to make a difference and spread the love of Jesus.

GRANT GOAL
\$251,250

MITE GOAL
\$335,000

THANK YOU ♥

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Here We Stand ... Why it has my Support!

by Dennis Sohn

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” Matthew 28: 19-20 (ESV).

These are familiar words for many of us. During my grade school years at St. Matthew, Walled Lake, I am certain this was an assigned memory work passage in religion class. It is one of those passages that once you memorize it you don't forget it, just like John 3:16. These are the final words that Jesus gave to His Disciples. These are words that we Christians should try to strive for and accomplish every day ... making disciples! So how do we go about making disciples in today's ever-changing world?

Supporting the **Here We Stand** Campaign, that is currently in progress here in the Michigan District, is an excellent way for us Christians to help make disciples. The four different campaign initiatives; Professional Church Worker Scholarships, Innovative Missional Ministry, International Ministries, and the Michigan District Endowment, all have the components and means of making disciples. Training future professional church workers, finding new ways to reach the lost with cutting edge ministries, and supporting both local (Michigan) and international ministries can help the church leave a legacy of helping to make disciples.

Over the years the Lord has given me many opportuni-

ties to serve Him. I have been a lay leader in several congregations. Currently, I serve as the Director of Operations at St. Luke, Haslett after a 35-year career as a registered pharmacist. I was elected as a lay member to the Michigan District Board of Directors from the West region in June of 2018. Supporting the mission work that a local congregation does and the greater church at large has always been something that I have embraced. I personally made a commitment to the campaign when I became a Board member. I'm thankful that my home congregations, Our Savior, Lansing, and St. Luke, Haslett, have also made commitments to this campaign. My prayer is that more congregations and individuals will support this campaign before it comes to an end in 2021.

The making of disciples is important to strive for and accomplish. With your prayers and financial support of the **Here We Stand** Campaign we can continue His command to do so. By passing the torch to the next generation of disciples, we will ensure that His name will continue to be hallowed, and that the Gospel will be proclaimed for generations to come!

Dennis Sohn is a Michigan District Board of Director and member of St. Luke, Haslett.



Here We Stand

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

(through August 5, 2020)

\$7,060,051.01	Total campaign gifts, pledges, and goals
\$6,754,082.31	Cash received which includes \$600,000 CEF Matching Funds
\$244,288.48	Outstanding commitments (pledges)
\$1,340,463.62	Total given/pledged for Professional Church Worker Scholarships
\$3,014,934.62	Total given/pledged for Innovative Missional Ministry
\$1,025,171.06	Total given/pledged for Michigan District Endowment
\$1,617,801.48	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



Here We Stand

Christ's Church in Action During Pandemic

by Christian Jones

Before COVID-19 hit Michigan, Franklin Avenue Mission (FAM) and its volunteers were regularly serving around 180-200 meals to the men, women, and children who daily experience the housing troubles and food scarcity in Flint's Eastside. However, since the start of the pandemic everything changed: the needs of our under-served community skyrocketed, which has exponentially added opportunities for the Mission to share the compassionate care of Jesus Christ.

For months, FAM has been blessed with the responsibility of regularly preparing meals for 270 members, guests, and neighbors every Tuesday and Thursday, alongside distributing clothing, personal hygiene products, and pet supplies.

In addition to the services listed above, FAM has been able to distribute hundreds of masks and disinfectant wipes which were handmade and donated by the servants at Immanuel, St. Clair and Light of Christ, Marysville.

While the virus continues to limit the functions that take place inside our facility, the Holy Spirit has been making huge waves outside as He has brought many new faces to our doorstep. People who had previously been nervous about entering into the doors of the Church are now building relationships with the servants who have stepped outside; and those families who have been forced to stay indoors are receiving front porch delivery from our local missionaries who want to ensure that the hungry and lonely are fed and reminded that Christ and His Church will never abandon them.

Again and again Jesus proves that He is the Light that no darkness can overcome. Thanks be to God!



Photo courtesy of Franklin Avenue Mission

In Partnership for the Kingdom



Photo by James Saleska/Michigan District, LCMS

Rev. Dr. Mandla Khumalo has been in ministry for over 40 years. He is the founding pastor of St. Peter Confessional Lutheran Church in Middleburg, South Africa, and is currently serving the Michigan District, LCMS as mission-

ary at large based in Lansing. His work, in partnership with the Michigan District, is to help congregations identify and engage in international mission opportunities that will result in kingdom growth. He also serves as a resource for congregations reaching out to African, Hispanic, and other ethnic communities.

Pastor Khumalo's ministry to the District includes:

- Developing and helping implement evangelism experiences in congregations around the District where people are already actively involved in Great Commission work;
- preaching and leading Bible class in congregations;
- sharing his story with schools; and
- intentionally working to hold evangelism/mission workshops for zones and circuits.

As Khumalo looks back on his life, he can see how *"Christ halted my way to go into an armed struggle to topple the Apartheid regime [and sent me] back to preaching peace to my people. I now understand that the problem of my country was not racism, hatred, tribalism, bigotry, or apartheid but sin itself, and that people do not commit these things because of their birth, origin, or color, but because of sin, and only Christ can solve that problem."*

On Sunday, July 26, Rev. Dr. Mandla Khumalo was the guest preacher at Christ Our Savior, Livonia. Both services and a Q&A with Dr. Khumalo and Christ Our Savior pastors were recorded and are available at christoursavior.org.

If you would like Dr. Khumalo to speak at your church or school, inquiries can be made to Linda Glenn (llglenn@icloud.com or 847.738.5996).

You can read more about Dr. Khumalo through the blogs, *Christian Outreach Born From Struggle and Capturing God's Work in South Africa*, found at michigandistrict.org.

Love Protects Life

From the very beginning, the Church—meant to be the visible presence of God in the world—protected life. Therefore, the Church has endeavored to make it clear life is God’s gift and has sought to defend all life. The Church has always made it explicitly clear that there are two ways: the way of life, or the way of death.

We can learn much from our ancestors, these earliest believers who withstood great persecution, affliction and even martyrdom as they boldly proclaimed and witnessed to the sanctity and holiness of human life, from conception to natural death, no matter color, race, ethnicity, or language. From the first sentence of one of the earliest documents in the church, *The Didache: The Teaching of the 12 Apostles*, it is clear that those who would follow the One who called Himself “... the Way, Truth and Life ...” and those who would live for Him in this world were to be witnesses to His love and protectors of life.

October is our moment to remember this legacy. This November is our opportunity, and responsibility, to act on that legacy with conviction, to protect life. Christians across the state of Michigan will be acting as one, joining our collective voices together—one voice, one heart, one purpose—to protect human life from conception to natural death. To act in love, as those Christians did nearly two millennia ago. Despite differences in doctrine, theology, and practice, we are ONE in this cause, for we have an

“I call heaven and the earth to witnesses against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19 ESV).

ethical, moral, and biblical mandate to rise up and to vote God’s values in a nation where people decide which morality will govern us. We act because we love, and we love by protecting the gift of human life at every age and stage of existence, for to love our neighbor is to love the weakest and the most vulnerable.

This is love; a love that protects Life.

And so ...

The Michigan District, LCMS stands with fellow believers across Michigan to protect, defend, and advocate for those who are the weakest and most vulnerable. The Michigan

District, LCMS and its 358 congregations and members continue to encourage and proclaim our witness for the gift of human life, and we lift our voices, prayers, and our actions, so that in our lifetime the rights of the unborn, and all those whose lives are threatened, will be protected by God’s providence and by the God-pleasing laws of our nation. For He is love, and this is our moment to love life, because love protects life.

For more information on how you can support life in Michigan, visit rtl.org or Michigan Lutherans for Life at lflmi.org.



LERT Aids in Flood Cleanup Response

The Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) volunteers at Peace, Saginaw were busy throughout the summer. In late May, the team held a two-day drive in the Saginaw church’s parking lot to collect supplies for use in the cleanup of flood-damaged homes in mid-Michigan. More than a dozen LERT members and church volunteers showed up to form a bucket brigade after the collection to get the donated supplies ready for distribution throughout Saginaw and Midland counties.

Mid-Michigan suffered major damage in May when the Edenville Dam failed, flooding nearby communities. In early June, Peace volunteers put some of the supplies to use when they cleaned up the flood-damaged basement for a family in Spaulding Township (Saginaw County).

In July, the Peace team partnered with St. John’s, Midland to cook meals for flood victims and cleanup volunteers in the Sanford (Midland County) and Gladwin



Photo courtesy of Peace, Saginaw

areas (Gladwin County). In just a few short weeks, Peace volunteers reported preparing about 800 meals.

Peace plans to continue cooking meals as long as there is a need. If interested in helping out with meals and/or Peace’s LERT team activities, contact Dennis Browning at 989.233.4870.

Hope is Here Video Devotionals

The *Hope is Here* 10-minute video devotionals were posted on Facebook each weeknight at the very onset of the COVID-19 crisis. Produced by the District staff and Peter Prochnow of The Hymnal Project.

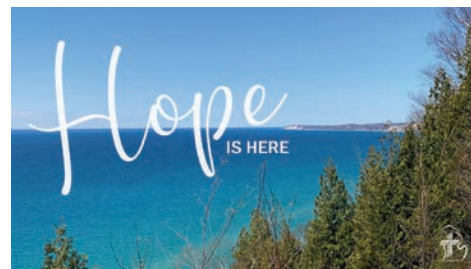
Hope is Here was an opportunity to share a word of hope in a very difficult national circumstance, a crisis which none of us had ever faced before.

President David Maier shares: *"I am very mindful of Paul's words in Ephesians 1: 'I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the HOPE to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead'" (Ephesians 1:16–20 ESV)."*

In every circumstance of life, in every day of life, we need hope—and that was part

of the reason for which the District did this ministry. Although it is no longer a nightly post on Facebook, we pray that the replay of the videos will continue to bless you. We thank you so much for your words of encouragement, and we hope that you would continue to pray for *Hope is Here*, that it would be a continuing blessing for those who tune in and listen to the playlist archive found at youtube.com/michiganlcms.

It has been one year since the District launched The Hymnal Project. To learn more, visit thehymnalproject.com.



Your Investment Builds Schools

When you invest with Church Extension Fund your investment helps to renovate and build churches and schools, just like Peace Lutheran School, Saginaw.

"CEF made things extremely easy. There were no hoops to jump through. They have a mission-minded viewpoint, and it is very pleasing to know that they are not just a lender, but a partner in what we are doing."

— Joel Keup,
Director of Facilities and Safety at
Peace Lutheran School, Saginaw



Church Extension Fund

Office:

800-242-3944

24/7 Interest Rates:

800-232-7313

Website:

www.mi-cef.org



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Special Recognition

Schram Ordained

Rev. Nicholas Schram (pictured center) was ordained at Peace, Saginaw, his home congregation, on Sunday, July 12. Schram graduated from Concordia University Wisconsin in 2016 before continuing his education at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo. While at seminary, he served his one-year vicarage at the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Garden City, New York. He earned his Master of Divinity Degree from Concordia Seminary in May 2020. Schram has received the Divine Call to serve as Pastor of Discipleship at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Sunset Hills, Mo., where he was installed in August.



Photo courtesy of Peace, Saginaw

Cornwell installed



Photo by Elisa Schulz/Michigan District, LCMS

In July, Rev. Simeon Cornwell was installed at St. Matthew, Spring Lake. A graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Ind., he did his field work at New Hope Lutheran Church in Ossian, Ind. He also studied under Pastor Roy Coats in an impoverished and drug-ridden area of Baltimore, Md. where he worked with youth, taught VBS, preached, assisted pastor in catechization of new members, and assisted with various parts of the Divine Service. He served his vicarage at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Terre Haute, Ind. where he met his wife Emily.

Schumm Installed

Even in the midst of a pandemic, God still calls His shepherds. Rev. Dr. Mark Schumm accepted such a call in mid-March. He was then installed by Rev. Dr. Robert Kasper at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Farmington Hills on Sunday, July 12. Rev. Schumm previously served Zion Lutheran Church in Oneida, Wisc.



Photo courtesy of Prince of Peace, Farmington Hills

Rev. Dr. Mark Schumm was installed at Prince of Peace, Farmington Hills. He is pictured here with his wife Joan.

The Decline of Respect continued from page 2

was written, it is important to remember that the people who read this letter to Titus were under the heavy-handed rule of the pagan Roman government!

Titus 3:1–2 is a good reminder that respect is non-negotiable, even in unfair conditions.

There is no need to detail the enormous drift from civility—respect—in our nation and our world today. Everyone is aware of it: with every newscast and talk show host, with many Hollywood films, television shows, magazines, and books. Incivility has crept into the church, just like in the congregation mentioned above, where the youth leader on staff had to be terminated. Have you ever heard gossip from church members? What about abuse by email? Has email helped or hurt? The honest answer? Both! The difference? Civility is a non-negotiable framework for productive living.

Our “Sophisticated World”

Has the internet helped or hurt our ability to get along? The answer is “yes” to both. It may be that humans are intelligent enough to create the internet, but perhaps not *wise* enough to use it!

I watch our 5-year-old granddaughter glued to an iPad. Is that good or bad? The answer is probably both, depending. Depending on what?

It probably depends on moral discipline. From parents for their kids, for adults themselves. Yet, now there is evidence of increasing erosion of respect—civility—even in churches.

We have recently worked with a man representing the elders who are part of a very large church. A woman on staff accused the pastor of hitting her during



© Zephyr18/Stock

an argument/discussion. The elders did a great job of working with the pastor, who reports no infringement occurred. The pastor reports that he had disciplined her bad behavior and she acted out in retribution. The elders heard her side of the story and helped the leadership to conclude that she should be let go for several connected occurrences of unprofessional and unspiritual conduct.

The woman in question had access to the email list of the whole congregation, since she was on staff. She and her husband pleaded their case in a biased email to more than a thousand members of the church. Several families have left the congregation. The increasing number of stories of disrespectful behavior in churches continues to increase every month.

Elements of Misbehavior

Gossip is common in many congregations. It is also commonly misunderstood. We have interviewed many church members who say, “It’s not gossip because I know it’s true.” Yet truth is not the issue. Gossip is when you share damaging information about anyone, to *any* person except the one who is the offender.

Jesus makes this clear in Matthew 18:15–17. If someone “offends you,” there is a procedure. By “offense,” it can be to you personally or to another person, but you witnessed it. Jesus’ procedure is basic: “Go to the person and share your concern, privately.”

At this point, many Christians respond, “But I don’t like conflict.” No normal, emotionally healthy person *likes* conflict. In fact, if you like conflict, you need counseling. Discomfort with conflict is normal, and it is no excuse for gossip whatsoever.

Jesus continues by teaching that if the person continues in the offense, you should take another person with you,

10 Ways to Restore Civility

1. Use the Bible as the definitive resource for respectful living.
2. Share the resources listed in this article with everyone in your church.
3. Ask your pastor to preach on scriptural teaching about gossip, slander, and libel.
4. Use the Bible study *Email Mania* to help Christians grow in civil behavior.
5. Pray for civility to penetrate our society.
6. Pray for civility among leaders in every level of government.
7. Pray for civility for the leaders of churches and denominations.
8. Recognize that all the ferment that comes from disrespectful behavior makes unchurched unbelievers less receptive.
9. Don’t avoid conflict; manage it. Share what Jesus teaches.
10. Use discussions about disrespect and civility to share with others the values that Jesus brings your life.

as an objective witness. This person should be a mature Christian. It is better if you do **not** “brief” the person from your side of the story beforehand. Let the person hear both sides without prejudice.

Jesus goes further: If the person is unrepentant and the issue cannot be solved, take it to the “church.” Does this mean the “whole church”? Scripture does not say. But if restoration of the person involved is the objective, probably not. The whole elder group or leadership team? Not likely. The implied desired outcome is reconciliation. Once it gets to the “take-it-to-the-church” level, it may be best to gather a small group of the most mature Christians to seek a solution.

Slander and Libel

If your gossip includes damaging content about another person’s character or reputation, it is called *slander*. This is yet another sin piled on top of gossip. It is also a sure way to blow up a congregation.

If you put gossip or slanderous content into writing, it is called *libel*. Some libelous actions are punishable by law. Libel includes emails and even texting. It also includes any image or caricature or drawing of a person that sends a message of disrespect about the person. Consider all the political caricatures on the covers of news magazines!

Jesus on Civility

Jesus is the Master of civility teaching. No one in history has helped the cause of respect more than the Lord. The Scripture is the definitive source for civil conduct, polite interaction, and respectful living.

So, what is your church doing? What are you as Christians learning? How are you acting in order to curb the trend toward an *uncivilized* world? The teaching of the Scripture is our best hope to handle the challenges this generation faces with all the blessings and potential curses of an internet world.

Will you, will your church, step up for civility? If you do it right, you will direct people to the Master of civility, the Lord who restores civility—and much more, one person at a time. ■

Dr. Kent R. Hunter is the founder of Church Doctor Ministries, a nonprofit effort to help Christians and churches become more effective in fulfilling the Great Commission, to make disciples of all people. He is the co-author of the just-released book Restoring Civility: Lessons from the Master and the free Bible study Email Mania available at churchdoctorministries.com.

The Evolution ... Spiritual Servant continued from page 9

schools, they find people they can trust who continually remind them of a God who loves and cares for them. The teaching of Bible stories and life in the affective domain are perhaps more instrumental for them than for traditional Lutheran students. Integration of the faith provides them with a necessary condition for learning.

While I was at Concordia Milwaukee, the administration had a saying that “who you marry can break or make your ministry.” In 1964 I married Elise, a 1961 graduate of Seward. Her parents were both Lutheran teachers. While her expertise was early childhood education, she took off 17 years to give birth to our four children, three of whom are in church work today and the fourth is a hospice nurse. She has a servant heart and after 55 years of marriage is still heavily involved with serving the church. Having a partner of the same faith is an absolute blessing and she has been and still is a role model to me.

In our country today there is a lack of civility, hatred manifested by the use of guns, and a downward movement of spirituality. It is my prayer that there be a renaissance of faith-based education to begin to extinguish our resentment toward one another and that we love one another. I find solace in knowing that God is in charge and encouragement from Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:33, “*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*” ■

George Locke served 23 years as teacher and principal in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan and 22 years in the Nebraska and Michigan District Offices as Superintendent of Lutheran Schools. In retirement he has served on the Board of Directors of Lutheran Braille Workers and MOST Ministries. He and Elise make their home in Canton, MI.



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Calls and Roster Update

ORDAINED

Candidates Assigned to Michigan District

Mr. Mark Matheny (Fort Wayne) to Pilgrim, Burton

Calls Accepted

Rev. Carl Bassett IIM to Redeemer, Jackson
 Rev. Thomas Dunseth to (Associate) St. Paul, Flint
 Rev. Bryan Hopfensperger (Eden Valley, MN) to Peace, Sandusky
 Rev. Keith Lemley IIM to Holy Redeemer, Dryden
 Rev. Daniel Maske (Cape Girardeau, MO) to St. Michael, Portage
 Rev. Gerhard Mau (Farmington Hills) to Hosana-Tabor, Redford
 Rev. Jonathan Trinklein IIM (Shelby Twp.) to Somerset Hills, Basking Ridge, NJ
 Rev. David Weirauch (Anna, OH) to St. John / Immanuel, Rogers City

Called Home

Rev. Waldemar Neisch

COMMISSIONED

Calls Accepted

Daenzer, Bethany (Concordia, Bronxville, NY) to St. Michael's, Richville
 Parks, Trevor (Bethlehem, Saginaw) to Trinity, Reese
 Parrish, Elizabeth (Concordia, St. Paul, MN) to Mount Calvary, Detroit
 Spear, Alexandra (Concordia, Ann Arbor) to St. Paul, Ann Arbor
 Werling, Anna (Concordia, River Forest, IL) to Immanuel, Sebawaing (Christ the King)

Change of Status

Brandt, John (VLHS, Saginaw) to Emeritus
 Brandt, Susan (Bethlehem, Saginaw) to Emeritus
 Enge, Jennifer (St. John, Bay City) to Candidate
 Gruber, Mary (St. John, Fraser) to Emeritus
 List, Vicky (St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth) to Emeritus
 McCain, Jean (Grace, Auburn) to Emeritus
 Rosentreter, Kathy (St. Michael's, Richville) to Emeritus
 Schnack, Deborah (Lutheran Special Education Ministries, Ann Arbor) to Emeritus
 Seehafer, Tyler (MOST Ministries, Ann Arbor) to Candidate
 Streeter, Kim (St. Peter, Macomb) to Emeritus
 Waltz, David (St. John, Fraser) to Emeritus

Transferred Out of District

Johnson, Michael (Trinity, Saint Joseph) to North Wisconsin District
 Lynch, Andrea (Candidate) to North Wisconsin District

Transferred Into District

Cody, Robert (South Wisconsin District) to St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth
 Dressler, Kelly (Kansas District) to St. Peter, Hemlock
 Eifert, Jonathan (Indiana District) to St. Michael's, Richville
 Eifert, Mary (Indiana District) to Immanuel, Sebawaing (Christ the King)

Called Home

Beyer, Marilyn

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

Calendar of Events

Please check the District website for the latest updates and detailed information as COVID-19 concerns continue.
michigandistrict.org/events.

SEPTEMBER 2020

- 4 District Office Closed
- 7 Labor Day
District Office Closed
- 14-15 Deacon Conference
Camp Arcadia
- 21-23 Introduction to Intentional Interim Ministry Conference
Michindoh, Hillsdale
- 23-24 Circuit Visitors' Conference

OCTOBER 2020

- 9-11 Lutheran Adult Gathering
Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island
- 15 MANS Teachers' Conference
- 15 Heart Issues are Hard Issues Conference
Various Satellite Locations
- 20 Board of Directors
Camp Arcadia
- 21-23 District All Staff Retreat
Camp Arcadia
- 30 Reformation Day

NOVEMBER 2020

- 1 All Saints' Day
- 3 Election Day
- 7-8 State Volleyball Tournament
Concordia University and St. Paul, Ann Arbor
- 11 Veterans Day
- 26 Thanksgiving Day
- 26-27 District Office Closed

DECEMBER 2020

- 24 Christmas Eve
District Office Closed
- 25 Christmas Day
District Office Closed
- 31 New Year's Eve

