

March 2022

# michigan

## IN TOUCH

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

### HEALTHY WORKERS

## Jesus, Refuge of the Weary

by Todd A. Jones

We know from the Scriptures that John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, yet I must confess that there are times when I struggle with John. On the one hand, he writes the powerful statement, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins” (1 John 1:9). God is faithful, dependable, and trustworthy to forgive our sins because Jesus is our defense. He is our Savior, our righteous advocate before God. On the other hand, John writes, “We know that we have come to know him if we

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Official Periodical of the Michigan District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
March 2022, Volume 21, No. 3  
ISSN: 1538-8115 (print)  
ISSN: 2331-8619 (online)

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keep his commands. Whoever says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person" (1 John 3:3–4 NIV). Putting these two statements from John's epistle side by side, I wonder if John listened to himself. The first offers the sweet gospel to the wounded soul; the second gives no quarter for sin: "if you do not do what Jesus commands while you profess to know Him, you are a liar." Talk about an identity crisis. We know that we are sinners; therefore, does our sin mean that we are liars, and the truth is not in us?

While it is uncomfortable, there is no answer but "Yes." Yes, we are liars, and the truth is not in us when we fail to act on our profession as Christ-followers. To deny this truth would be to diminish the power of the first truth—"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). John's words do not create the tension; they reveal the tension that we experience as we stand firmly in God's merciful arms of grace through Christ, even as we struggle with thoughts and actions that deny the commands of God. Paul describes this tension at the end of Romans chapter 7:

*For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.  
For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now, if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me (Romans 7:18–20).*

Paul ends chapter 7 by describing the tension: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin" (Romans 7:25).

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, for through Christ we have peace even amid the war between our new life created in Christ through Baptism and our old sinful nature as it kicks and screams on its deathbed.

The Lenten season gives us space to contemplate our relationship with God as sinners and saints; to experience refuge in God's abundant grace. He gives us mercy not because we are sinless but because Christ's righteousness covers all our sins. Lent provides an opportunity to be renewed as we seek that refuge while living in the tension of sinner and saint. Girolamo Savonarola's words in the Lenten hymn *Jesus, Refuge of the Weary* remind us of God's amazing gift of grace in Christ Jesus, even as we struggle with the ugly reality of our sinful nature.

*Jesus, refuge of the weary,  
blest Redeemer, whom we love,  
fountain in life's desert dreary,  
Savior from the world above,  
often have your eyes, offended,  
gazed upon the sinner's fall;  
yet, upon the cross extended,  
you endured the pain of all. ■*

*Rev. Dr. Todd A. Jones is Assistant to the President – Mission Education and Support for the Michigan District.*

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“Lent provides an opportunity to be renewed as we see that refuge while living in the tension of sinner and saint.”



# Confidential Mental Health Care for Church Workers

by John R. Rathje

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When I was a young dad, I was feeling mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted. Can you relate? I had worked over 70 hours that week and it was only Friday. I realized I needed to talk with someone after my dear wife pulled me aside and told me she was concerned about me, that she needed my help, and that I was gone too much.

I had no idea how alone she felt. Admittedly, I didn't want to hear all of that, I only knew all the responsibilities and pressures I was feeling in my congregational position. In my anger I said I'd make it better, but I knew at that moment I was depressed, overwhelmed, and didn't want to let everyone down. I reached out to a friend on staff at another church, and he gave me the name of a counselor who was a Christian. I started meeting with that counselor and began a journey of growing that has continued to this day.

Whether or not you are struggling, you have a friend on staff at your Michigan District Office that can give you the names of counselors near you. The District offers a confidential process for church workers and their families to receive guidance when they are going through a difficult time. A trained Mental Health Case Manager helps individuals make informed decisions about their mental and emotional health. Insurance plans often cover such services, but if not, the District is prepared to offer financial assistance for ordained and commissioned church workers and their family members.

If you or your family member needs counseling, contact Deaconess Christie Hansard RN BSN, Michigan District Mental Health Case Manager, to get started. Christie is a confidential referral source for such counseling support. She

will gather some basic information and connect you with a counselor in your area. You can contact her at 734.845.2972 or [churchworkercare@michigandistrict.org](mailto:churchworkercare@michigandistrict.org).

The list of counselors has been approved through a process, including license and liability insurance verification. The approval process begins with a conversation to see if they agree with the LCMS theological perspective, to understand their integration of theology and good clinical practice, discover their specialties, and much more. Many of these counselors are LCMS Lutherans themselves.

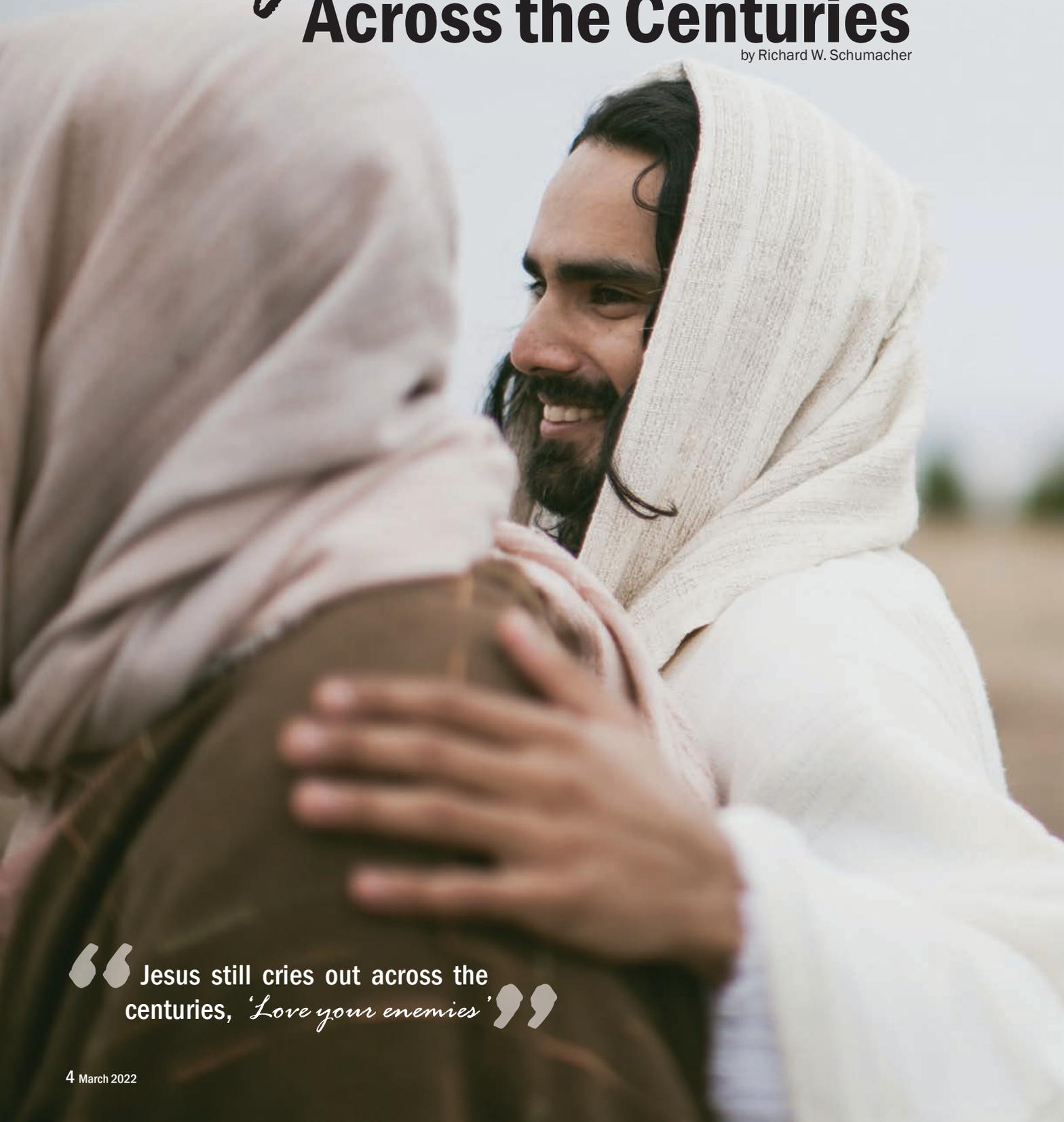
The District's Commission on Church Worker Care is always looking for more counselors to serve in this role. The goal of the Michigan District is to have approved counselors in every area of the state as well as virtual counseling to provide even more access. Currently, there is a need for more approved counselors in the Upper Peninsula and in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula. The Commission's vision is to build a list of statewide counselors to be an ongoing resource for church workers and their families. Scripture gives this image: If the leaders in Christ's Church are the healthiest they can be, then their ministry and mission of love toward others can be the healthiest it can be—as the Head goes, so goes the Body (ref: 1 Timothy 3, 1 Corinthians 12, 15).

Please join us in praying for all church workers and their families. ■

*Rev. John R. Rathje (LPC, NCC, SPM) serves as Dean of Students at Concordia University Ann Arbor and as the Michigan District Mental Health Support Counselor. He can be reached at [john.rathje@michigandistrict.org](mailto:john.rathje@michigandistrict.org) or 314.255.4453.*

# *Crying Out* **Across the Centuries**

by Richard W. Schumacher



“ Jesus still cries out across the centuries, *‘Love your enemies’* ”

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all (Romans 12:14–21).*

On the evening of January 30, 1956, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was attending a mass meeting to maintain support of a bus boycott that had begun in Montgomery, Alabama nearly two months earlier. On December 5, 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested and charged with violating Montgomery's city code requiring segregation on buses. In response, the African American community, led by Dr. King, refused to ride city buses until the law was changed. Weeks of tension between the city leaders and the protestors were about to lead the city to the brink of disaster.

The following excerpt comes from a 1972 essay by Jane Stevenson entitled, "Rosa Parks Wouldn't Budge."

*"On that night while Dr. King was attending one of the regular mass meetings, a bomb tossed onto the porch of his house exploded seconds later with a shattering roar. Having heard the thud as the missile landed, Mrs. King and a visiting friend had moved quickly toward the rear of the house. They and the Kings' infant daughter escaped injury. But it looked for a time as if the chief casualty of the night would be the concept of nonviolence..."*

*Rushing home, King found an angry crowd milling on his lawn. As he stepped from his car, he heard one black man offer to shoot it out with a white policeman who was trying to push him back... The mood of the crowd was so hostile that all of them later reported having felt that a race riot was a distinct and immediate possibility.*

*Dr. King went into his house, assured himself that his family was all right, and then came back to speak to the crowd. His voice was unusually quiet, and everyone else stopped speaking or moving, to listen.*

*'My wife and baby are all right,' he told them. 'I want you to go home and put down your weapons. We cannot solve this problem through retaliatory violence... We must love our white brothers no matter what they do to us. We must make them know that we love them. Jesus still cries out across the centuries, Love your enemies. This is what we must live by...'*

*It was another miracle of oratory... simply, at his request, the crowd began to melt away, and with it, the tension."*

When I reflect upon the contributions Dr. King made to American society, this story always comes to mind. Amid a personal attack against him and his family, he had the strength to seek out God's will. Dr. King set aside the fear and anger he must have been feeling to share a message

of peace derived from Jesus' command for us to love our enemies. It was a remarkable response that kept his nonviolent movement intact and focused on the goal of desegregation. Dr. King and the Montgomery protesters would ultimately have their day. On November 13, 1956, the United States Supreme Court declared Alabama's bus segregation laws unconstitutional.

It is easy to see the comparisons between the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the events that have impacted life in America over the past few years. Racial and political tensions have created a dangerously deep divide in our country. Unfortunately, there is no simple solution in sight; no oratory masterpiece to calm us, no group to unite us, no court ruling to settle things for us. In many ways, it feels that we have all but abandoned the ideal that we are, "one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

How do we restore a sense of peace and order to our society? It is only my opinion, but I think that we too must heed the words spoken by Dr. King on that January night so many years ago.

**"Jesus still cries out across the centuries, 'Love your enemies.'"**

Why is this so important? We are sinful. All of us. It is the one thing that does unite us. Too often, our actions are spiteful, based on arrogance, intolerance, and a distrust of others and their ideas. We consider our own thoughts to be correct and we are willing to say and do hurtful things to oppress those with whom we disagree. Our minds are fixed. Our ears are closed. Our hearts are hardened. Faced with this sobering truth, we can only turn to the outstretched arms of Christ to save us from the evil world we have created through our sin.

Thankfully, Jesus knows our sinful condition. As true man, He experienced the sting of hatred, lies, and violence firsthand. As true God, He provided us a model of how we must look directly into the face of hate with love by forgiving those who harm us—even if they do not want it or deserve it. Remember, it was Jesus who, while being crucified, asked God to forgive those people who were responsible for whipping, beating, mocking, and executing Him. If the Son of God can speak peaceful words of forgiveness from the cross, we too must be able

*continued on page 15*

# Engaging in the Battle for

by Paul M. Clark



Ernest Hemingway, in his novel *“The Sun Also Rises,”* has this exchange between two characters, Bill Gorton and Mike Campbell:

*“How did you go bankrupt?”* Bill asked.

*“Two ways,”* Mike said. *“Gradually and then suddenly.”*

Many people wonder how our culture has sunk to such low levels as it has, with the attack on the sanctity of human life, the way many look at unborn babies as disposable, the acceptance by some of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, and of course, the ever-increasing attacks on traditional marriage and gender identity as male and female, as God created them.

*How did this all happen?* Of course, the answer is: *Gradually, and then suddenly.*

For years and years, those who oppose God and his Word have chipped away at such values as the right to life and traditional marriage and family structure.

Then, in swift blows, things came tumbling down suddenly. And many are dazed and wonder how it could all happen so quickly.

But in the same way, we can rebuild a culture of life. We

have been doing that— *“gradually”*—over many years, with our pro-life efforts at changing minds, combatting the lies, electing pro-life officials, and supporting women and their babies in their time of need.

Now, with the coming release of the Supreme Court *Dobbs* decision in June, we may have things going much more *“suddenly.”* If the Court would overturn or even weaken *Roe v. Wade*, that would be wonderful news for our dear unborn children!

But even then, there will continue to be a state-by-state battle for Life. *So, we must not weaken. We must not falter.* The Lord of Life is with us in this battle.

For all who have been damaged by the sin of abortion—and for all who have been complicit by not speaking up in defense of innocent babies—repent, and then hear the sweet and comforting words of Jesus: *“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest”* (*Matthew 11:28*).

God give us courage to *engage* in the battle for *LIFE!* ■

*Rev. Paul M. Clark is the senior pastor at St. Paul, Fowler and president of Lutherans For Life of Michigan.*

# Leading the Pandemic Population: Gleaning Strategies from Tim Elmore to Help Today's Youth

by David M. Wright

I am always impressed by optimistic, joyful, positive people. They stand out to me. They inspire me to be better in my outlook, more optimistic in my ministry, and joyful in all circumstances. Too often we see the outlook and actions of people being dictated by situations, and so when trials come, discouragement, hopelessness, and lack of productivity can come all too easy.

Today's generation of young people has to deal with so many negative situations and life circumstances! Dr. Tim Elmore, in his recent book, *The Pandemic Population*, points out that there are many complicated situations facing this generation, but he also notes that today's issues are even more difficult to deal with because not only are they complicated, they are complex. Elmore's definition of complex is that it is still a difficult situation but it is constantly evolving. So, when a pandemic overtakes our planet, shuts things down for a while, and alters life in a myriad of ways, it has the potential to cultivate within generation Z a sense of frustration, hopelessness, and despair. The need to coach and mentor today's young people must be done in a manner that displays optimism, positivity, and joy. At the very least, we need to impress upon today's youth the need to meet the challenges that face them head on and overcome them through a positive outlook. Elmore has spent the majority of his career honing in on the things that adults can do to help shape youth into optimistic, competent, confident, and

productive leaders of the future. After all, is that not what all parents, teachers, and youth leaders want—to give young people hope and inspire confidence? It is an important job and it must be done consistently and intentionally by those of us who lead youth and teens.

As mentioned earlier, there are many challenges facing today's youth, but the Covid pandemic stands out right now. It is imperative that we rally in an all-out effort to help today's youth overcome this challenge and be better for having gone through it.

In the book *The Pandemic Population* Elmore writes, “If the pandemic population will rise from the ashes of this health hazard and economic downturn, they will need to become practiced in the art of resilience.”

A friend of mine, after losing his job due to corporate restructuring, simply said to me that he was “given the opportunity to pursue a new position.” We chuckled at that explanation, but it was and is a profoundly correct outlook. When our lives encounter trouble and obstacles, we can either view them in a negative and even bitter way—which always leads to frustration and even hopelessness—or we can simply meet the challenge head on with confidence and optimism that God has a better plan for us. That is the attitude that adults have the opportunity to instill in youth. In fact, we must model 1 Thessalonians 5:1–18, “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”

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MARCH 2022

## What to Know About CEF's New Partner in Grants and Congregational Services



**Mighty Fortress**  
FOUNDATION

**“The Kingdom’s  
Ours Forever.”**



*These words from the hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”—written by Martin Luther some 500 years ago—perfectly capture the Mighty Fortress Foundation’s mission to serve Lutheran ministries in Michigan with needed grants and congregational services.*



*“We know the Mighty Fortress Foundation will be a strong, steady partner to all in the Michigan District. That’s why our church members support it so enthusiastically.”*

**Pastor Dean Davenport**  
Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church  
Livonia

Since featuring the Mighty Fortress Foundation in the January edition of *CEF Spotlight*, we’ve fielded questions from church leaders and members eager to know more about this new entity and how it supports the Michigan District’s congregations and ministries.

A quote in January’s *Spotlight* from Dr. Ronald L. Steinke, Chairman of the Foundation’s Board of Directors, especially sparked interest: “Think of the Mighty Fortress Foundation as a

new tool bringing new opportunities to serve.” Questioners have wanted to know:

“What exactly does this mean for a church or ministry looking for support?”

“What can an individual church member do to help ensure that their favorite ministries receive support?”

In this *Spotlight* edition, we’ll dive deeper into these inquiries, while answering other frequently asked



*Have an idea for a grant or service to help Michigan ministries Build the Kingdom? Contact the Foundation today! E-mail [info@MightyFortressFoundation.org](mailto:info@MightyFortressFoundation.org) with your thoughts.*

questions about the Mighty Fortress Foundation.

### **“How does the Foundation build upon Church Extension Fund’s historical role?”**

The Mighty Fortress Foundation’s stated mission is “to inspire ministries to make followers of Jesus.” CEF, meanwhile, exists to make resources available for members and churches of the Michigan District. Both organizations begin from the understanding that the already tough challenges to a church or other organization in spreading the Gospel can be so much more difficult when resources are scarce.

Often a ministry’s most important work can be hindered when there’s simply not enough funding to go around. Helping to fill these gaps in many ministries’ budgets is where the Mighty Fortress Foundation and CEF can have their greatest impact.

### **“How do the Foundation and CEF help ministries get specific resources they need?”**

Through many decades of interacting with our ministry partners, CEF has become skilled in designing grants and services to meet a ministry’s most urgent needs. We succeed by listening

to our partners, then we use this understanding to help guide our offerings.

The Mighty Fortress Foundation is taking this same “crowd-sourced” approach to designing its own grants and services. This helps to ensure that the Foundation’s offerings are timely and applicable, and targeted to the ministry’s top priorities.

### **“Will the Mighty Fortress Foundation compete with other Michigan organizations?”**

No, the Foundation’s goals are to support and assist all LCMS ministries in our state, and to supplement the work of other partner organizations wherever it can.

### **“Where does the Mighty Fortress Foundation itself receive its support from?”**

The short answer: through the generosity of mission-minded donors.

The Mighty Fortress Foundation relies on gifts from those who want their philanthropy’s impact to be felt throughout the Michigan District. Gifts can be one-time, continuing, or legacy gifts. Without these kinds of giving, the Foundation could not fulfill its mission. The Foundation counts on you to help inspire and support ministries.

### **“Who has donated to the Mighty Fortress Foundation to date?”**

The Foundation has received gifts from both individuals and organizations. Among the latter is Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Livonia. Pastor Dean Davenport reports:

“We’re very serious here about our mission to spread God’s Word. Christ Our Savior has been blessed with generous church members who want to provide monetary support for organizations who are dedicated partners in Gospel enterprises. We know the Mighty Fortress Foundation will be a strong, steady partner to all in the Michigan District. That’s why our church members support it so enthusiastically.”

### **“What can I do to support the Mighty Fortress Foundation right now?”**

Visit [MightyFortressFoundation.org](http://MightyFortressFoundation.org). You can donate to the Foundation right there on the website. It’s thanks to faithful givers like you that ministries can happen!



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 Campaign Reaches Home Stretch

If you subscribe to the Michigan District, LCMS enews, you may have noticed a countdown to the end of the *Here We Stand* Campaign (HWS) culminating on December 31. However, that was a “soft” closing: the HWS campaign’s final report will now be given at Convention in June of 2022, one year later than originally planned. That is good news, as these six additional months mean we can still reach the \$10 million goal to provide for Michigan District ministry through the four campaign initiatives.

The *HWS* Campaign currently stands at \$9,163,899 million in gifts, pledges, and goals. Each of the campaign initiatives has surpassed \$1 million, and we praise God for His rich blessings! Here is a breakdown of the initiatives, showing how much has been raised so far:

- Professional Church Worker Scholarships – \$1.64 million of \$3 million goal to date.
- Innovative Missional Ministry – \$3.97 million to date, surpassing the goal of \$3 million.
- Michigan District Endowment – \$1.29 million of \$3 million goal to date.
- International Ministries – \$2.18 million, surpassing its goal of \$1 million.
- Individual donors in the Michigan District have gifted nearly \$6.9 million, and congregational giving has surpassed \$2.2 million.
- 50.6% (178) congregations of the Michigan district have participated to date.
- The Michigan District Church Extension Fund has



provided matching gifts totaling \$800,000 to date. We are grateful for the wonderful partnership we share with our colleagues in ministry at CEF.

With the campaign remaining open until Convention in 2022, congregations and individuals who would still like to become participants will have the opportunity to do so. As additional monies are raised, Professional Church Worker Scholarships will continue to be given in future years, additional Innovative Missional Ministries will have opportunities to launch, and our support of Michigan District missionaries deployed around the world and other International Ministries will continue. Beyond this, our Endowment Fund may also continue to grow some, which is vital to future ministry growth and support.

Together, we can finish strong! Visit [herewestand.michigandistrict.org](http://herewestand.michigandistrict.org) to contribute.

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

(through January 28, 2022)

\$9,163,899.60	Total campaign gifts, pledges, and goals
\$8,974,432.91	Cash received which includes \$800,000 CEF Matching Funds
\$132,786.47	Outstanding commitments (pledges)
\$1,645,264.38	Total given/pledged for Professional Church Worker Scholarships
\$3,973,573.79	Total given/pledged for Innovative Missional Ministry
\$1,299,484.48	Total given/pledged for Michigan District Endowment
\$2,188,896.72	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

## LLL Virtual Event And Resources

### Spring Virtual Event

LCMS Michigan District Lutherans are all invited to join the Spring Lutheran Laymen's League Virtual Event from noon to 2 p.m. EST on Saturday, March 5. The event will include: An opening devotion led by Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Speaker of *The Lutheran Hour*; a training session hosted by Jennifer Prophete, Director of Community Engagement for Lutheran Hour Ministries; and Sara Johnson, *The Hopeful Neighborhood* Project Coach.

During this training, you will learn practical tools that will help you discover the gifts in your neighborhood, using *Better Together* resources. These tools will help you live into your vocation as a Christian neighbor. A live Q and A session will follow.

### LHM District Services Update

At [lhm.org/promote](http://lhm.org/promote) you will find an array of tools that you can use to promote LHM Programs on your website, social media, bulletin blurbs for newsletters and announcements. Check out this new resource and use on your website, social media, email, and in print.

### 2022 LHM Sunday

Resources are now available at [lhm.org/lhmsunday](http://lhm.org/lhmsunday) for the 2022 LHM Sunday. These are a few of the resources you will need to download and print for any LHM Sunday celebrations that are planned:

- 'Discover LHM' bulletin inserts – these are 2-sided, so churches will need to print both sides;
- 'Discover LHM' poster;
- jpeg images for PowerPoint slides if your congregation uses this resource for church services; you can also add it in presentations.
- bulletin announcements.

Make your plans and download your resources for your event. There is a link for your congregation to order donation envelopes.



## Your Investment Builds Schools

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

*“CEF is so respected in the lending industry that when the school talked to local banks to satisfy due diligence on the loan, the lenders told them there was no way they could beat CEF's rates and didn't even offer a quote.”*

- John Brandt,  
Executive Director at  
Valley Lutheran High, Saginaw



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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### Concordia Students March for Life

On January 20 at 7:30 a.m., three Concordia University Ann Arbor (CUAA) students loaded into a van along with Professor Charles Schulz and his son, Lucas, to attend the March for Life in Washington D.C. This was the first CUAA student trip to the event in a generation, and represents the growing activities of the life movement on the campus.

The trip took place under the auspices of Cards4Life, a new student group on campus. Already this last fall they had sponsored a fundraiser for local life causes and a plarn-making event for the homeless. Joining in the D.C. march was a natural progression.

Originally, a total of nine students had been slotted to go, but various difficulties—including a COVID exposure—reduced the participation. The university administration also worked with Dr. Schulz to establish plans and practices for the trip that would reduce the likelihood of COVID exposure along the way.

Once in D.C., the group participated in the Y4Life conference which gathered students from Lutheran high schools and Concordias across the country. The well-organized event, coordinated by Michelle Bauman, included worship, speakers, and exhibitors. The conference took place in a hotel in Arlington, Va. where everyone also stayed. The fellowship thus extended to the meals and the recreation time.

The march itself took place Friday afternoon. The Y4Life students joined with the rest of the LCMS contingent, led by President Matthew Harrison. Green hats had been distributed among the LCMS groups to help keep us together. Along the way, the marchers said prayers, sang hymns, held signs, and marveled at the many thousands who had gathered. Marching along, one could come across friends and acquaintances from other



parts of the country who had also joined in the event.

Although one might anticipate and even expect counter-protesters at such an event, very few appeared. There was no obvious reason for the lack of counter-demonstrations, though some pointed to the temperatures, which only hit the mid-20's that day. Indeed, those on the march depended on many layers and hand and toe warmers to ward off the cold from the wind. Even the original sunshine was overcast by the middle of the march.

Once the march was over, the conference continued with a debriefing, more worship, and more speakers and a panel discussion through Saturday morning. Topics extended from sexuality to the legal landscape in a post-Roe world. Since the conference pianist had to leave early, one of the CUAA students, Jacob Ferns, filled in with music at the last minute. Altogether, the students found themselves blessed to be part of this amazing event and all report that they look forward to returning in future years.

*Rev. Dr. Charles Schulz serves as Assistant Professor of Religion at Concordia University Ann Arbor.*



## Great Compassion Ministry at Peace, Saginaw

Through the faithfulness of God’s servants, members of Peace, Saginaw filled 179 boxes with gifts that were sent to children all over the world via Operation Christmas Child.

Operation Christmas Child collections, an effort led by Peace Women in Mission, are an annual tradition at Peace that is the culmination of donation drives throughout the entire year. In addition to toys, hygiene items, clothing and other supplies for the boxes, Peace members also donated \$270 for shipping costs.

The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to demonstrate God’s love in a tangible way to children in need around the world. Through this project, Samaritan’s Purse partners with the local church worldwide to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and make disciples of the nations.

Since 1993, more than 188 million children in more than 170 countries and territories have received an Operation Christmas Child shoebox. The project delivers not only the joy of what, for many kids, is their first gift ever, but also gives them a tangible expression of God’s love.

### Thanksgiving

For the second year, Peace, Saginaw took a slightly different approach to the common Thanksgiving food drive by restocking the pantry of a local charity the week-end after Thanksgiving.

*“Thanksgiving and Christmas are high-profile times for churches, businesses and other community groups to pitch in and help local charities,”* said Rev.

## Deaf Ministry Christmas Weekend

The Michigan District Deaf Ministry gathered 25 Deaf Lutherans and friends from around the state for a Deaf Christmas Weekend December 10–12. It began at Zehnder’s of Frankenmuth with dinner and then evening prayer at the St. Lorenz Lutheran School chapel.

On Saturday everyone traveled to Traverse City to shop and enjoy the city. A great highlight was the Deaf Christmas wine tasting and food pairing hosted by Soul Squeeze Cellars and Good Friend Ministries at the Grey Hare Inn on Old Mission Peninsula. Good Friend Ministries provides rest and renewal for LCMS pastors so they can return to their vocations refreshed in the Lord.

On Sunday, Trinity Lutheran Church in Traverse City welcomed all of us to join their Deaf members for worship and Bible Study.

What a wonderful weekend full of Wine and the Word! What a great way to welcome the Christ Child who came to dwell among us as God our Savior!

Erik Schmidt, Peace lead pastor. *“We’ve found that those donations can sustain big, one-time giveaways like Thanksgiving food baskets, but then the charity’s resources are often left depleted.”*

*“We at Peace have committed to quietly coming in and annually replenishing the grocery supplies at Heart of Saginaw after Thanksgiving so that the charity can continue feeding families for many months afterward.”*

Heart of Saginaw is a Christian nonprofit organization that primarily serves children and teens in the city of Saginaw. The charity provides groceries, hygiene items and clothing to the community free of charge. Two days a week, it hosts a sack lunch giveaway.

In addition to the pantry restocking in November, the Piece by Peace Quilt Club also presented two dozen handmade quilts to Heart of Saginaw during the pantry restock event.



Photo courtesy of Peace, Saginaw



Photos courtesy of Rev. Thomas Dunseth

## Special Recognition

### Abatelli Installed

Rev. Kirk W. Abatelli was installed at St. Mark, Saginaw on January 2, 2022. A graduate of Concordia University Ann Arbor and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., he served Cedar Crest, White Lake; St. Paul, Millington; and Faith, Oak Ridge, Tenn. prior to accepting the call to St. Mark's.

Pastor Abatelli is pictured (fourth from the right) along with pastors from the Saginaw area and Rev. Mark Hill, who served at St. Mark's as its intentional interim pastor during a 3-year vacancy.

Pastor Abatelli and his wife, Katie, have three children and live in Saginaw.



Photo courtesy of Rev. Mark Brandt

### Kuehl Installed as Tri-Parish Pastor

Rev. Kyle I. Kuehl was installed on January 6, 2022 as the pastor of three congregations in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He has been the sole pastor of Trinity, Newberry since 2015 and now will serve not only Trinity, but also Grace, Germfask and Bethlehem, Engadine.

Pastor Kuehl is a graduate of Concordia University Wisconsin and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo. He also serves in the community as a Fire/EMS/Hospital chaplain and is involved on boards of several other community associations.

He is pictured with his wife, Caitlyn, and their three children, Felicity, Eliza, and Gabriel.



Photo courtesy of Rev. Randy Johnson

### Esterline Installed

It was a joyful day for members of First, Charlotte when Rev. Sean Esterline was installed as their pastor. A graduate of Valparaiso University and Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Ind., he served congregations in Illinois and Indiana before accepting the call to First.

Pastor Esterline is pictured front center with Lansing area pastors.



Photo courtesy of Rev. Bill Wangelin

### Pahlkotter Ordained, Installed at Peace, Saginaw

Henry G. Pahlkotter II was ordained and installed as associate pastor at Peace, Saginaw on December 19, 2021. He preached and presided in his first service as pastor the following week.

Pastor Pahlkotter has served Peace since 2012, when he was named principal of Peace Lutheran School. He has served as director of ministries at Peace while also completing his vicarage through Concordia Seminary's Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program.

He is a 1989 graduate of Concordia University Ann Arbor, where he earned a BA in elementary education. He earned his MA in educational leadership (administration) from Saginaw Valley State University. He will complete the SMP program in June 2023.

Pastor Pahlkotter and his wife, Debbie, a teacher at Peace, have three adult children: Garet, Olivia, and Gavin.



Photo courtesy of Peace, Saginaw

## Crying Out Across the Centuries continued from page 5

to find words of peace that we can share with our brothers and sisters in Christ on earth.

Jesus has given us this great, undeserved gift of forgiveness. By His redeeming death and resurrection, we have had our relationship with the Father restored and, by the work of the Holy Spirit, we will be with God for eternity in heaven. Until the day that Jesus leads us home, may we let Him lead us to share the gift of love with others who desperately need to feel it. Pray that our lives can reflect His love and, when our sinfulness overtakes us, God would allow us to seek forgiveness and make amends so that others would see Christ's love at work in us. ■

*Richard Schumacher is the Senior Director of Operations for Lutheran Special Education Ministries.*

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*Want to learn more? From 2020-21, the Michigan District developed several resources regarding Social Injustice, including a Bible Study and Sermon Series. To obtain these resources, go to [michigandistrict.org/resources/racial-justice](http://michigandistrict.org/resources/racial-justice).*



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## Leading the Pandemic Population continued from page 7

According to Elmore, “*When an adult is both supportive and demanding, it accomplishes something amazing. The recipient of this style of leadership begins to believe in themselves, because their leader believed in them first.*” So today’s youth need to be given challenges to overcome, expectations to be met, and the encouragement to do it. The challenges come at them left and right, and that is why parents, teachers, and leaders of youth must be intentional about letting kids know that they believe in them, thereby allowing kids to be confident in their ability to overcome challenges and meet expectations.

In order to expect positivity and joy in generation Z, we must demonstrate those qualities ourselves. Elmore points out eight strategies in *The Pandemic Population* that we can employ in order to lead generation Z through the current pandemic. These strategies are all steeped in optimism and positive affirmation. **Elmore will be presenting at Our Savior Lutheran Church on Saturday, March 19, from 9a.m.–12p.m. For more information or to register for this event, visit: [www.oursaviorlansing.org/elmore/](http://www.oursaviorlansing.org/elmore/).** This event is partially underwritten by Church Extension Fund of the Michigan District, LCMS ([mi-cef.org](http://mi-cef.org)). ■

*David M. Wright is the Family Life Director at Our Savior Lutheran Church and School in Lansing.*



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## CONVENTION NEWS

### IMPORTANT DATES

April 23, 2022

Metro East Regional Meeting  
Bethany, Detroit

Metro West Regional Meeting  
Christ Our Savior, Livonia

April 30, 2022

West Region Regional Meeting  
St. Matthew, Grand Rapids

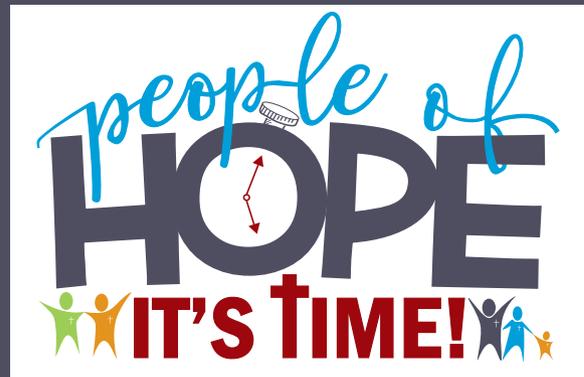
North & East Regional Meeting  
St. John, Pinconning

May 14, 2022

Floor Committee Meetings

June 26-28, 2022

Michigan District Convention



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

# Calls and Roster Update

## ORDAINED

### Calls Accepted

Rev. Phillip Baerwolf (East Dundee, IL) to Zion, Bay City  
Rev. Sean Esterline (Evansville, IN) to First, Charlotte  
Rev. Kyle Kuehl (Newberry, MI) to Multi parish Trinity/Grace/  
Bethlehem, Newbery/Germfask/Engadine  
Rev. Matthew Lytikainen (Weehawken, NJ) to Messiah, Midland

### Change of Status

Rev. Joel Baseley (Dearborn, MI) to Associate, Emmanuel, Dearborn  
Rev. Mark Hill (Grand Blanc, MI) to Emeritus  
Rev. Norman Koy (Sterling Heights, MI) to Emeritus  
Rev. Tyler Walworth (Dearborn, MI) to Sr. Pastor, Emmanuel, Dearborn

### Transferred Into District

Rev. Phillip Baerwolf (East Dundee, IL) from Northern Illinois District  
Rev. Sean Esterline (Evansville, IN) from Indiana District  
Rev. Matthew Lytikainen (Weehawken, NJ) from New Jersey District  
Rev. James Weist (Candidate) from Florida-Georgia District  
Rev. Kenneth Williamson (Yakima, WA) from Northwest District

### Transferred Out of District

Rev. Mark Bushuiakovish (Southgate, MI) to Mid-South District  
Rev. John Hile (Howell, MI) to English District

### Called Home

Rev. Arthur J. Bode

## COMMISSIONED

### Calls Accepted

Francik, Christopher (Topeka, Topeka, KS) to St. Paul, Royal Oak  
VanTol, Rebecca (Candidate) to St. John, Bay City

### Change of Status

Anderson, James (St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth) to Emeritus  
Arnett, Gregory (St. Paul, Caro) to Emeritus  
Krone, James (Candidate) to Emeritus  
Olsen, Matthew (Candidate) to Emeritus  
Schimm, Alisha (St. Mark, Muskegon) to Candidate  
Wyly, Jeaneen (LHSA, Rochester Hills) to Candidate

### Transferred Out of District

Hyslop, Dora (Candidate) to Texas District  
Krueger, Julie (Candidate) to Texas District

### Resigned From the Roster

Stier, Janel

### Removed From the Roster

Chester, Thomas

### Called Home

Erber, Glenn  
Palm, Lori  
Siefker, Dorothy

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



**Michigan District**  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

# GET EQUIPPED

FOR EFFECTIVE GOSPEL MINISTRY

- Start A Ministry
- Events
- Resources
- Calls & Vacancies
- Join A Ministry
- Ministry Finder
- Blog/Podcast
- Stories & Highlights

Visit us today at  
[michigandistrict.org](http://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](http://michigandistrict.org/events)

## MARCH 2022

- 2 Ash Wednesday
- 5–6 State Basketball Tournament  
Concordia University and St. Paul, Ann Arbor
- 15 Board of Directors  
St. Luke, Ann Arbor

## APRIL 2022

- 1–3 The Katie  
DoubleTree by Hilton, Bay City
- 10 Palm Sunday
- 14 Maundy Thursday
- 15 Good Friday  
District Office Closed
- 17 Easter
- 23 Metro East Regional Meeting  
Bethany, Detroit
- 23 Metro West Regional Meeting  
Christ Our Savior, Livonia
- 24–26 Office Personnel Conference  
DoubleTree by Hilton, Bay City
- 30 West Region Regional Meeting  
St. Matthew, Grand Rapids
- 30 North & East Regional Meeting  
St. John, Pinconning

## MAY 2022

- 3–4 South & East Pastors Conference  
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 4–5 Circuit Visitors Conference  
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 9–11 North & East Pastors Conference  
Garland Lodge & Resort
- 14 District Convention Floor Committee Meetings  
District Office, Ann Arbor
- 15–17 West Pastors Conference  
Great Wolf Lodge, Traverse City
- 21 Regional Track Meets
- 24 Board of Directors  
Midland
- 25–26 Intentional Interim Spring Conference  
Michindoh, Hillsdale