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IN TOUCH

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



GREAT COMPASSION

The Easter Effect

by Mark D. Brandt

Everybody dies.

Is that a happy thought for an Easter celebration? Probably not. On the other hand, it doesn't have to be a frightening one. Remember what St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:54:

“Death is swallowed up in victory!”

So, yes, everybody dies—but everybody who trusts in Jesus will live again and forever.

For now, though, death still looms large in our lives. For you, maybe it's the recent death of a loved one or the approaching death of someone close to you. Maybe it's your trips to the cemetery to visit the grave of a spouse, a parent, or perhaps

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a child. Or it's your own death that you know is going to happen probably sooner rather than later.

Death looms large in everyone's life. Nowhere was this truer than it was for Jesus. He lived His life knowing not only that He *would* die, but knowing also *when* and *how* it was going to happen.

But Easter isn't about death—it's about life, new life, everlasting life. People often visit the cemetery where a loved one was buried. We can't do that for Jesus. He isn't there! He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

That is a historical fact. Jesus died. It really happened. Jesus came back to life. That really happened, as well.

Let's call this "The Easter Effect" and think about it in two ways: what Easter means for us right now, and also what it will mean for us in the future.

The Easter Effect is very evident in our lives right now. While death still looms large, it doesn't have the same effect it would have had without Easter. The sting of death still remains and in fact can still be almost unbearable, but the Easter Effect means that fear and sorrow over death are lessened to one degree or another. Believers bury our loved ones knowing we'll see them again. That diminishes the sorrow. We contemplate our own death knowing we will live again. That reduces the fear. Already that has happened for us.

Those things are already true, such is the magnitude of the Easter Effect. But they pale in comparison with what is yet to come, when the full effect is experienced at the return of Christ.

At that time death won't just be diminished, it will be obliterated.

"The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26).

St. Paul tells us that will happen when Christ comes again. At His return, death will be completely obliterated. But not until then.

"When the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory'" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

Did you catch it? When the perishable (that which can die) has put on the imperishable (that which cannot die), then death will be swallowed up in victory.

That hasn't happened—not yet. That's why it still hurts when someone we love dies. But the pain won't last forever. By that I don't mean that the pain will fade over time. I suppose it might, although there's certainly no guarantee of that. But whether or not the pain fades over time, there will come a time when the pain will be gone, completely and forever. That time is coming, but it's not here yet.

When it is here, there will be no more trips to the cemetery to visit the grave of a father or mother, a wife or husband. What would be the point? They won't be there!

That's when death will be swallowed up forever and when Satan's power will be a thing of the past. On that day, as St. Paul says, we will shout with joy:

"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

That's the Easter Effect. To which, also with St. Paul, we exclaim:

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). ■

Rev. Mark D. Brandt serves as the 1st Vice President of the Michigan District, LCMS.

“... everybody dies—
but everybody who
trusts in Jesus
will live again and
forever.”

“*O death* where is your
victory? *O death*
where is your sting?
(1 Corinthians 15:55).”



Young Adults in Grand Rapids Build a Growing, God-Loving Community

by Jeffrey T. Heisner

“ We started building a community not knowing that God was about to do something amazing. ”

A group of international students in the Grand Rapids area seems to be shattering the notion that it is hard to keep young adults in church. With hearts on fire for Jesus, as many as 70 (or more) young adults come together every Sunday night to worship at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids.

The Barna Group, a research organization focused on the intersection of faith and culture, conducted a poll in 2019 that found 64% of young adults ages 18–29 who were regular churchgoers have left the church. Likely, during the pandemic that number has increased. This is a demographic the church has struggled to connect with, but on Sunday nights at Immanuel, the connection to God is strong.

It started as a group of 3 or 4 young adults. The growth happened fast, according to Samson Lusamba, as they invited a few of their friends. Now the small group has turned into a worship service with the name Lighthouse. “We started building a community not knowing that God was about to do something amazing,” said Lusamba, who attends Lighthouse.

Rev. Mark Bowditch, Immanuel Lutheran Church Outreach Director, has seen how this has grown in such a short time and gives a lot of credit to Abi Zewde. Zewde came to the United States from Pakistan and works as Social Media Manager at Immanuel. She has also taken on the role of Lighthouse Leader. “Abi definitely wants to communicate who Christ is, share His grace and what He’s done in her life,” said Rev. Bowditch.

Zewde understands the temptations young adults face in today’s world. She admits to being tempted by the world in college, but now wants people her age to know about Jesus and she does it with an amazing passion. “I’ve seen tangible work in my life and God has done it for me,” Zewde said. “Why not for them?”

Lighthouse meets at 7 p.m. on Sundays and goes until 10 p.m.—and many nights even longer. It starts with worship music to set the tone for the rest of the night. After that, one of

the leaders will share a message from the Bible to the large group. Then, Lighthouse breaks into small groups to pray and share what these young adults are facing in their lives. It wraps up with more praise music and a lot of love flowing through Immanuel.

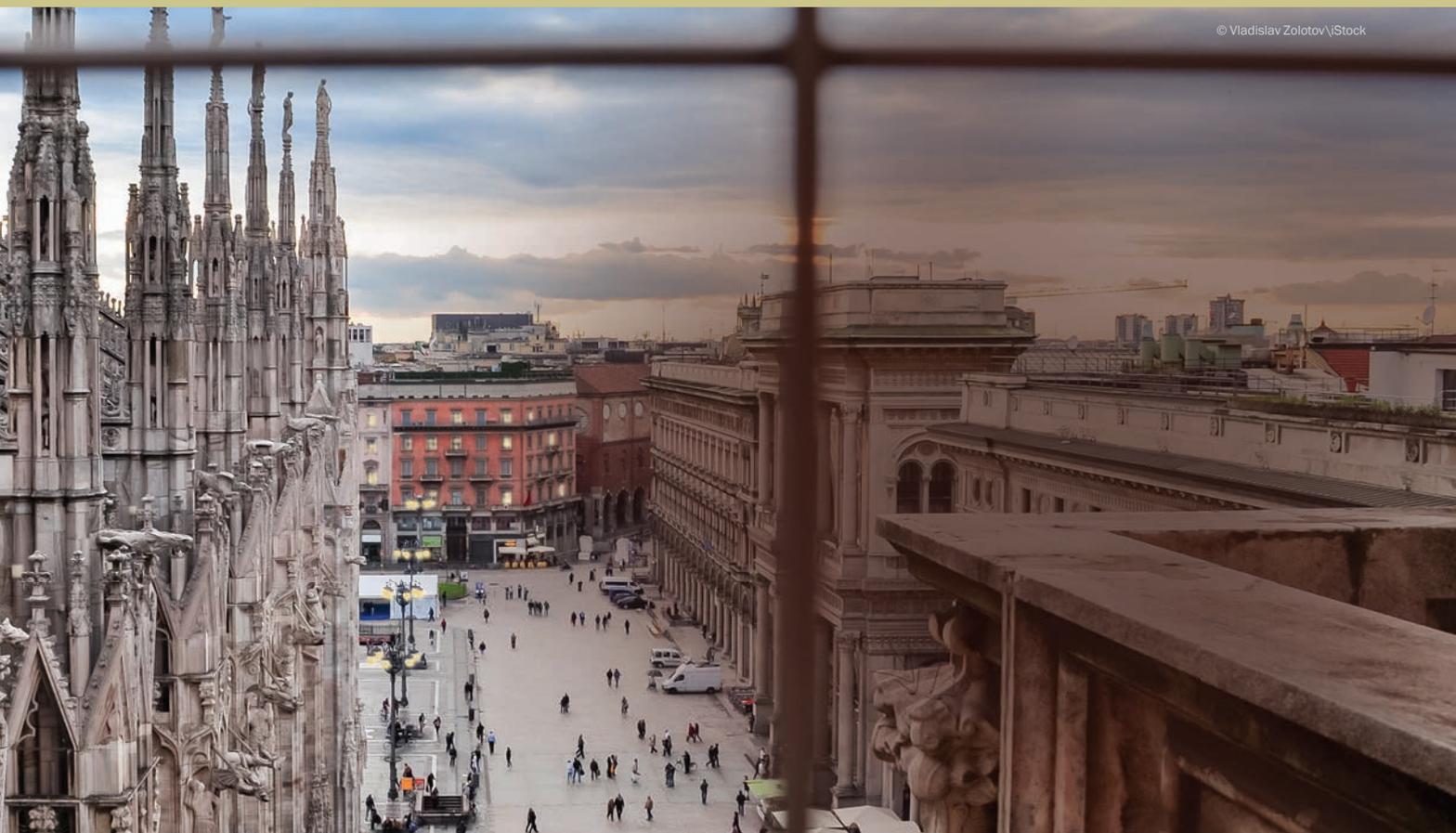
One of the great things that has happened with the growth of Lighthouse is the diversity you see. There are people of all races and backgrounds. “I feel like it’s a representation of what heaven is going to look like,” said Lusamba. “People of all different ages and races coming together to worship God. It’s a beautiful thing.”

Zewde believes the growth of Lighthouse has not peaked and looks forward to what’s next. “This is something that the Lord is doing. My vision is to really trust God in wherever he leads it. Even if it’s outside of Grand Rapids that’s where I want it to be,” said Zewde. “For us to take this out and expand it into the world, I think that’s my vision.”

Lighthouse recently received a Start New Explorer grant from the Michigan District, LCMS. To find out more about the Start New Explorer opportunities, visit michigandistrict.org/startnew. ■

Jeffrey T. Heisner is the video journalist and digital media director for the Michigan District, LCMS.





On the *Street* and in the *Neighborhood*

by Alfred H. Renard

“**H**ow do we translate a hope that we know in our heads to a hope that we live out in our lives, so that, as Peter says, one might ask about the hope that we possess?” “Can you talk a little bit about what the church living as a community of hope looks like in the day-to-day lives of the Christian? Is that something that you’ve seen, or you envision?” These two questions were posed to Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer at the end of his presentation at the Theological Conference “Beyond the Walls with Jesus” on February 5, 2022. If you were in Rev. Lehenbauer’s place, how would you respond? While these questions are simple and

direct, the answers don’t seem to be.

Last November, I took on the task of preparing a demographic study for two circuits in the Michigan District, LCMS. Two observations stood out—observations that appear to be contradictory, yet both exist.

- I first observed that there are too many LCMS congregations in these circuits. So many, and so close together, that their missions and ministries overlap, begging the question: Are we good stewards of the resources that God has provided?
- Upon further study, I observed that there are not enough churches, LCMS or otherwise, to reach the thousands of people in the area, of whom Rev. Mitch Vogeli, pastor of Nativity, St. Charles, says, “*They are ... longing for a place to feel cared for, and a place where they can care for others,*” a place where they can meet Jesus.

The contradiction is obvious. How can you have too many churches and, at the same time, too few? The fact that both observations exist causes one to wonder.

Making Sense

Having completed the demographic study, I wandered outside the scope of

the study to make sense of what I had observed. You see, as I traveled through the neighborhoods that comprised this study, I noticed multiple locations of certain business establishments, such as chain pharmacies, gas stations, urgent care clinics, car repair shops, Coney-Island-style restaurants, and convenience stores. If their locations were plotted on a map, we might come to the first observation: too many, too close.

This business strategy led me to wonder if we shouldn't have more churches/mission stations scattered throughout the area near each other. Then, on second thought, churches/mission stations are fundamentally different than most business establishments. A church is not an outlet where one drives through the drive-up lane or runs into the establishment to quickly pick up something from the shelves, or, when needing urgent care, can get in without an appointment. Well, are businesses and churches different or the same? When someone is hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison, they need a so-called spiritual pharmacy, gas station, fast food outlet, convenience store, urgent care, or car repair.

Again, is it practical to establish more churches/mission stations throughout our communities? This seems to be an impossible question to answer until one realizes that we have hundreds, potentially thousands, of mission stations already established throughout the study area. These stations look like this: There is a church family living in a neighborhood, an apartment complex, or maybe a trailer park, wherever they call home. And across the street or the hall, next to and kitty corner to their residence, are several residences that may now or in the future need the hand of Jesus.

Sad to say, many of these mission stations are not open for business. People don't know their neighbor's names, let alone their neighbor's needs. To be open for business means to get to know your neighbors, greet them, listen to them, and be ready to give an answer for the hope you have in Christ.

Not a New Idea

I can't claim originality for the neighborhood mission station concept. Much of this insight came from reading Don Everts' books, *The Hopeful Neighborhood*, *The Hopeful Neighborhood Field Guide*, and *The Reluctant Witness*. Neither can Everts claim ownership. For insight, we are drawn to the theme for the Michigan District Theological Conference, 1 Peter 2:12: "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that

“To be open for business means to get to know your neighbors, greet them, listen to them, and be ready to give an answer for the hope you have in Christ.”

when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation” (ESV).

I'm struck by Dale Meyer's description of life when 1 Peter was written: No civil rights like we are blessed with in today's United States; submission to those in authority was an absolutism that we don't understand in today's culture; no cathedrals, let alone church buildings, yet the early church did worship, gathering in their homes in the name of the Lord. As I understand it, life in the early church, rooted in Christ, was found in the fellowship of believers.

In this day and age in North America, in our Western culture, as the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith, and likewise calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith (paraphrase of Luther's explanation to the Third Article), are we not daily reminded in Baptism of the love God freely gives to us through Christ? How was God's love made manifest? Certainly, on the cross of Christ. How is God's love made manifest? Certainly, in Baptism and the Lord's Supper. As we go "Beyond the Walls with Jesus," how is this love shown?

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me’”

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APRIL 2022

How CEF Grants Have Helped Ministries Meet New Technology Needs During Covid



Ask any teacher or student: There's no substitute for in-person learning. Yet when remote learning became required, CEF's grants helped equip our young scholars.



"The services we've put online have been viewed in many areas around the country. One out-of-state viewer made a generous donation to support Grace's ministry."

Pastor Joel Hoyer
Grace Lutheran Church
Coopersville

It's amazing how quickly new technologies can transform the routine activities of our daily lives—and how soon we can begin to take these technologies for granted.

"Think back just 20 years ago, to 2002," says Andy Sohn, Church Extension Fund's Vice President of Marketing and Relations. "Think what your life was like. We were in the new millennium! We had the Internet (dialup), maybe a cell phone (but not yet a smart phone),

and we could buy books (plus a few other things) on Amazon."

Yes, it seemed that technology had made life so much easier back then. "Now," says Andy, "it's almost comical to think how much more our life has changed just two decades since."

Andy can recall feeling thoroughly up to date in 2002. "I'd come home from high school and get online through a dialup modem on my desktop computer," he says. "Then

I'd type out instant messages to my friends." Andy compares this to 2022: "Now I can simply ask a digital assistant like Alexa or Siri to send my texts. Sometimes I don't even need to click. What had seemed easy back then has become almost automatic today."

For this we can thank our modern technology. Which, by the way, promises to continue streamlining our everyday tasks at even faster rates of change in the years ahead.

Remote Worship and Learning

CEF recognizes how technology works to ease our day-to-day living—but even more, how it can help to greatly simplify the job of spreading the Gospel. "Now think back just two years ago," Andy says. "As the pandemic began causing shutdowns and drove in-person gatherings into the digital sphere, many churches could see that their existing technology wasn't up to the demands of these disruptions."

Ministries needed help to continue reaching members during Covid—and CEF answered the call. In our mission to make resources available to Michigan District ministries, we introduced our Equip+Connect Grant and Loan Program.

Starting in mid 2021, CEF offered eligible ministries an "Equip" grant of \$2,500 and a "Connect" grant of \$500. Equip grants enabled churches and schools to purchase new equipment to help them adapt to Covid's challenges, while Connect grants paid for church workers to attend training in how to better operate in an increasingly online world. The



When the pandemic struck, many churches were forced to "go virtual", though not all had adequate technology to do so. Thanks to CEF's grant, churches could purchase new cameras, lighting, sound equipment, and more for live streaming their services.

program, which ended last month, was a tremendous success.

As the Equip+Connect grants became available, many applications came from churches aiming to upgrade their cameras and sound equipment to help improve production values for their live-streamed services. Many Lutheran schools, meanwhile, applied to purchase laptop computers for their students having to adapt to remote learning.

In all, over 180 churches and schools received one or more Equip+Connect grants. The program distributed a total of close to \$450,000 to ministries in technological need.

Impact Well Beyond Michigan

As it happens, the blessings from CEF's Equip+Connect Grant and Loan Program have extended quite

a ways past our state's borders. Pastor Joel Hoyer of Grace Lutheran Church in Coopersville, tells the story:

"The church services we've put online have been viewed not just in Coopersville and our surrounding communities, but also by folks in many areas around the country. One out-of-state viewer even made a very generous donation to support Grace's ministry. A note attached read: 'Thank you for preaching the Word of God.'"

Proving yet again that your investments with CEF matter. Through your saving and borrowing, we can provide grants and services to Lutheran churches, schools, and organizations across Michigan. These ministries are making lasting Kingdom impact throughout our state—and far beyond!



Church Extension Fund

Church Extension Fund ■ Michigan District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

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Here We Stand

Serving the Lord in Latin America

by Caitlin Worden de Ramirez

I serve as a missionary deaconess to Latin America alongside my husband, Jeancarlos, and our two children: Abraham (3) and Eliana (1).

As a deaconess, I work in the local congregation to help share the love and mercy of Jesus with our community. I work especially with the women of the congregation to encourage and equip them to share the Gospel with those outside of the church in their daily lives. Many of the church members are new Christians and their children, husbands, and neighbors don't know the Good News of Christ. Through Bible study, prayer, and visitation, I work with Pastor to fill these women with the Gospel and help them learn how to show Christ to their neighbors. I teach Sunday school, youth group, and Christian Education in our Lutheran school. But more importantly, I train, organize, and lead the local Dominican ladies to be Sunday school and Christian Education teachers. I also work with the altar guild and accounting of the church. At every step, I include local members so that they learn how to do these activities without me.

Our youth group has 13 active girls. We meet twice a month for food, Bible study, service projects, and fun. The girls love to sing and study the Word together. It has been a joy to work with these young ladies to share the Gospel with them and encourage them to form new lifelong habits of Christian living, like daily devotions and prayers, living a chaste and honest life, being free from gossip, and always interpreting the actions of others in the kindest way.

Another area of my service as a deaconess is teaching

at Seminario Concordia El Reformador.

This seminary of the LCMS-OIM serves churches around Latin America

training both pastors and deaconesses. I serve as a professor and mentor for the deaconess students. Additionally, I have worked on writing the course manuals for several classes. In May 2022 the first class of deaconesses will graduate—that is approximately 100 women from 5 different countries.

It is a joy to serve the people of Latin America bringing the light of Christ to shine in dark places. I am grateful and honored to be trusted as your missionary. Thank you for your prayers and support of our family and missionaries everywhere.

*Through the **Here We Stand** campaign, Michigan District missionaries receive financial support as a result of the many gifts given to the International Missions initiative. We're now in the home stretch of the **Here We Stand** campaign. There is still time to contribute. Will you help us reach our \$10 million goal? herewestand.michigandistrict.org.*



Photo courtesy of Caitlin Worden de Ramirez

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

(through March 4, 2022)

\$9,177,016.83	Total campaign gifts, pledges, and goals
\$8,988,225.14	Cash received which includes \$800,000 CEF Matching Funds
\$132,111.47	Outstanding commitments (pledges)
\$1,653,734.51	Total given/pledged for Professional Church Worker Scholarships
\$3,976,533.69	Total given/pledged for Innovative Missional Ministry
\$1,300,837.38	Total given/pledged for Michigan District Endowment
\$2,189,231.02	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

LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

Lutheran Hour Ministries India Outreach

Lutheran Hour Ministries supporters in the Michigan District continue to support LHM's outreach in such Asian countries as India where millions hunger for the Gospel's saving message.

LHM—India undertakes the challenge of spreading the Good News to thousands of Indian people who have never had the opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ.

The weekly radio program broadcast by LHM—India is found primarily in the southern portion of the nation and is produced in two major languages: Tamil and the national language, Hindi.

Recognizing the cultural influences of music, song, and drama, LHM—India brings the Gospel to listeners through devotional songs, short dramas, and dialogues. Youth groups of LHM—India perform public music programs, stage plays, dance, and dramas under the guidance of LHM—India director, the Rev. C. David. These local groups also conduct Gospel rallies for large audiences in big cities and remote villages.

As a result of Christian ministry, thousands of converts as well as non-baptized believers in Christ are identified and located for follow-up by the staff.

The LHM—India staff reaches out to those interested in the Word of God through cassette ministry, printed literature, and Bible Correspondence Courses (BCC).

LHM—India ministry programs include: 15-minute weekly TV Program; Cable TV Program; Online Radio Broadcast; YouTube; Text Messaging; CD/MP3/Cassette Ministry; Booklets; Daily Devotion; Quarterly Magazine; Bible Correspondence Courses; Christmas Rallies; Special Event Rally; Dance Program, Promotional Meetings; Drama Troupe, Puppet Ministry; Lutheran Hour Orchestra; 'Film Showing' Youth Ministry; Youth Conference; Equipping the Saints Workshop; Cassette Ministry Seminar; Literature Ministry Seminar; Tsunami Relief; and Children's Education.

For more information on supporting Gospel work in India, go to lhm.org.



Your Investment Builds Churches

When you invest with Church Extension Fund your investment helps to renovate and build churches and schools, just like St. Paul's Lutheran, Milan.

“CEF has been there every step of the way ... They told us that they saw no problem with funding our project, and then they helped us get the paperwork pulled together”

- Chuck Goerlitz,
Congregational Chairman
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Milan



Church Extension Fund

Office:

800-242-3944

24/7 Interest Rates:

800-232-7313

Website:

www.mi-cef.org



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Lutheran Choralaires 75th Anniversary Concert

The Lutheran Choralaires is celebrating its 75th Anniversary on Saturday, May 14, 2022, with a special concert and afterglow. The concert will take place at St. Peter, Eastpointe followed by an afterglow at the Lutheran Fraternities of America Hall directly behind the church.

The Lutheran Choralaires have a long history dating back to 1947. Shortly after the end of World War II, a group of young Lutheran men from the Detroit area, many of whom were veterans, decided to start a male chorus. The men had diverse backgrounds, but they shared a love of the Lord, a talent for singing, and a desire to use their musical talent to share the Good News of God's love. The Choralaires feel blessed to have one of the original members, Joe Foerster, still singing with them today. The men, who are all members of Lutheran churches, donate their time and talents, finding reward in the satisfaction that comes from singing the Lord's praises and in the fellowship with each other and those they meet in their travels. Their motto is



"Not unto us O Lord, but to Thy Holy name give praise."

For the 75th Anniversary Concert, in addition to many numbers performed by the Choralaires over the years, a brand-new musical composition by the current director, Terry Herald, was especially written for the occasion. There will also be guest conducting appearances by former directors Erwin Aufdemberge and David Marasus.

A freewill offering will be taken during the concert and tickets are available for the afterglow. For more information, visit lutheranchoralaires.org.

Celebrating Yesterday - Anticipating Tomorrow



Mount Calvary, Detroit is celebrating its 100th Anniversary! As conditions in the city of Detroit began to change, many thought that Mt. Calvary would eventually be among those congregations to close their doors. Although the congregation managed to survive beyond the closing of its school in 2006 by renting classroom space to a Headstart Program, they decided to have some special celebrations for the 95th Anniversary in 2017, still concerned that the congregation was not assured to reach its 100th Anniversary.

But God still had plans for Mt. Calvary and its ministry to the neighborhood surrounding its building. The congregation decided to reach out in faith and welcome the founding of Camp Restore Detroit within its building, converting the empty upper floor classrooms into dormitories that could welcome youth groups, church groups, families, and other ministry-minded organizations to come into the city and go out into the neighborhoods to provide willing hands to do a variety of service projects.

Despite the need to scale back the sizes of the groups that Camp Restore Detroit could welcome due to COVID restrictions, this ministry has continued to be blessed. The congregation is now celebrating the blessings it has received over the past 100 years and is looking forward to its role in the community over the coming 100 years.

A special Anniversary Celebration is taking place on May 1, 2022, with a time of fellowship at 1 p.m. and a Celebration Service that will begin at 2 p.m. Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer, recently retired president of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis Mo. and former speaker of The Lutheran Hour®, will be the preacher. Following the service, a buffet dinner will take place at the Vintage House in Fraser. Cost is \$40 for adults and \$30 for children 12 and under.

For more information or to make dinner reservations, contact the church office at 313.527.3366.

Breaking Stigma Surrounding Mental Health

Registration is open for The Lutheran Foundation's 2022 Look Up Conference, *Breaking Stigma—Empowering Change*. Join church leaders, experts, and authors working to integrate faith and mental health. This one-day event will give pastors and laypeople practical ideas for breaking the stigma surrounding mental illness and establishing or enhancing their mental health ministry. This inspiring and informative conference puts you and your congregation at the forefront of a mental health crisis, and makes you uniquely positioned to provide comfort, hope, resources, and professional referrals.

The 2022 Look Up Conference takes place on Thursday, May 12, 2022, at the Grand Wayne Center in Fort Wayne, Ind. For more information or to register, visit lookupindiana.org.

Girls of Grace Perform at Temple Theatre

Through the artistry of interpretive dance, drama, media presentations, vocalists, personal testimonies, and live art, the St. Lorenz Frankenmuth's Girls of Grace will perform on the stage on April 23 and 24 at 3 p.m. at the Temple Theatre in Saginaw. This year's theme, *You Are ...*, weaves a beautiful narration together with the messages of what God DOES and who God IS in an inspirational production meant to bring us all into the presence of a great and mighty God!

The past two years have had quite an impact on all of us, and there has been much time to dwell on things that can bring one down. But there is a Light at the end of the tunnel! God is GOD, and His promises remain constant, no matter what we go through! Close to 3,000 attend this annual concert each year, but in the dancer's hearts, they are always dancing for an audience of ONE.

The Girls of Grace dance ministry participates regularly in worship and chapel services, performs at a variety of community events, hosts workshops,



Photo courtesy of Girls of Grace

performs in an annual concert, and is involved in a variety of service projects including volunteering at the Saginaw Rescue Mission.

Tickets are \$15 orchestra and \$12 regular seating. Order tickets from the Temple Theatre by calling 877.754.7469 or purchase online at templetheatre.com/event/gog2022/.

Covenant/Wellspring Partnership Changes Post-Acute Care as Services Move to Wellspring Campus in May



Photos courtesy of Wellspring Lutheran Services

In May, Saginaw's Covenant Transitional Care Unit is moving to Wellspring's Senior Living Campus in Saginaw. The new facility is part of a \$5 million investment that will provide the most advanced post-hospital care and services available in the Great Lakes Bay region—all designed to help patients transition from hospital to home after a significant medical event.

"The opening of the TCU represents only the beginning of how our community will benefit from two legacy, faith-based and dynamic organizations coming together to serve. Both Covenant and Wellspring are committed to exploring additional ways our expertise and innovation can serve more and fill in gaps as our communities age," shares Dave Gehm, president and CEO of Wellspring.

Covenant and Wellspring are both leaders in their

respective fields. This partnership is particularly timely as the communities continue to age—which comes with an increasing need for transitional therapy care, especially over the next decade.

For more information, visit wellspringlutheran.com/tcuwelcome.

Expand Your Pro-Life Efforts

In January 2022, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) launched the Million Dollar Life Match, an exciting new matching grant opportunity to support LCMS congregations' local, beginning-of-life mercy efforts.

The program offers a total of \$1 million in matching grants—ranging from \$1,000 to \$50,000 each—to LCMS congregations. Grants will be given out in three phases during 2022 and 2023.

Eligible projects might include partnering with your local Christian pregnancy resource center; starting a donation center for baby items; supporting a Christian organization involved with adoption or foster care; working with your circuit to start a larger pro-life project.

How can your congregation start or expand its pro-life efforts? Find more project ideas, a list of LCMS Recognized Service Organizations and other Christian pro-life organizations, and step-by-step instructions for submitting your grant application at lcms.org/life-grant.

CONVENTION NEWS

Convention Essayists

Under the theme *People of Hope ... It's Time!*, Rev. Dr. John Arthur Nunes and Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies have been chosen as convention essayists.

Rev. Dr. John Arthur Nunes is a Lutheran pastor and Senior Fellow at the Center for Religion, Culture, and Democracy. He has served as the President of Concordia College New York, President and CEO of Lutheran World Relief, and professor at Valparaiso University. Recent books Nunes has authored are *Reimagining the Reformation from the Margins* (2017, co-authored with Alberto Garcia) and *Meant for More: In, With, and Under the Ordinary* (2020). Born in Montego Bay, Jamaica, Nunes is a graduate of Concordia College, Ann Arbor (B.A.), Concordia Seminary, St. Catharines, ON, Canada (M.Div.), and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (Th.M. and Ph.D.).

John is married to Monique Nunes, M.A., Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Concordia University Irvine, Calif. They have six children and thirteen grandchildren.

Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies is the regional director for North America at Lutheran Hour Ministries and provides leadership and operational management for the North America region. He regularly speaks at national and international conferences for pastors and church professionals and has published in several journals on the topic of faith and culture. His former life as a non-believer provides exceedingly relevant experience for thinking



Rev. Dr. John A. Nunes



Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies

about how to engage with our friends and neighbors outside the Kingdom of God.

Lakies most recently served as department chair and associate professor of religion at Concordia University, in Portland, Ore. Before that, he was involved in church planting in St. Louis. He holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy and psychology from the University of Michigan and an M.Div. and Ph.D. in systematic theology from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo. Lakies and his wife Bethany have two daughters, Anabel and Daphne.

The 103rd Michigan District Convention will convene June 26–28, 2022, on the campus of Concordia University Ann Arbor. The worship services and convention business will be livestreamed. For more information or to register, visit michigandistrict.org/convention.

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

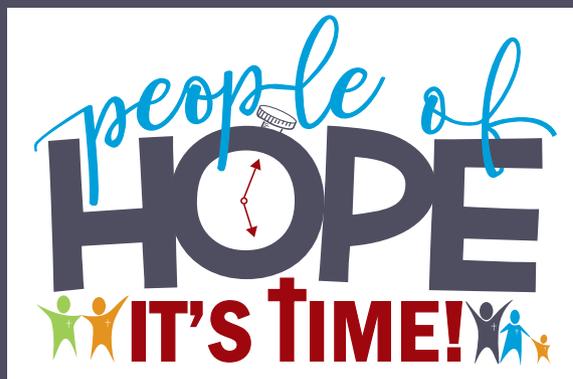
North & East Regional Meeting
St. John, Pinconning

May 14, 2022

Floor Committee Meetings

June 26–28, 2022

Michigan District Convention



michigandistrict.org/convention

Girls of Grace
PSALM 149:3

You Are...

16TH ANNUAL WORSHIP CONCERT
APRIL 23 & 24, 2022 @ 3:00 PM
TICKETS: RESERVED SEATING, \$12 & \$15
TEMPLETHEATRE.COM / 877.754.SHOW

THE TEMPLE THEATRE
AT THE SQUARES
PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
Wellspring
LUTHERAN SERVICES

On the Street ...

(Matthew 25:34b–40, ESV).

Thinking back on the opening questions asked in this article, it appears that the answer is as simple as living your faith. AND it also appears that the answer is as hard as living your faith. When confirmands and new members stand before the altar, they are asked: “*Do you intend to live according to the Word of God, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death?*” If so, respond by saying, “*I do, by the grace of God*” (LSB, p. 273).

Yes, be open for business. Live your faith by the grace of God, for without God’s grace the answer is hard. With His grace, we glorify His name.

To see the Theological Conference playlist mentioned in this article, visit youtube.com/michiganlcms. ■

Deacon Alfred H. Renard, a retired engineer, is serving at St. Michael Lutheran Church in Wayne, Michigan. Having recently earned his Master of Arts degree in Missional Formation, he prays that, by God’s grace, our neighborhood mission stations are always open for business.

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IN HIS PRESENCE

Throughout All Generations

Psalm 90:1

SPEAKERS
Rev. Matt Popovits
Dcs. Heidi Goehmann

MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT
100 White Flags Band
Jan Struck

Lodging, meals, and gratuities at the Grand Hotel
\$370
per person based on quad occupancy.

Michigan District, LCMS presents
Lutheran Adult Gathering
October 14–16, 2022 | Mackinac Island, Michigan

Register online at
michigandistrict.org/lag22

Gathering Registration is \$30 per person.
Deadline is September 1, 2022.

Calls and Roster Update

ORDAINED

Calls Accepted

Rev. Matthew Durance (Greenleaf, KS) Zion, Harbor Beach
Rev. Jimmy Riley (Painesville, OH) Trinity/St. James, Munger

Change of Status

Rev. Stephen Schilke (Bay City, MI) to Emeritus

Transferred Into District

Rev. Timothy Bickel (Emeritus) from Eastern District
Rev. John Plump (Emeritus) from Rocky Mountain District

Called Home

Rev. Daniel Dockery

COMMISSIONED

Calls Accepted

Barger, Anna (St. Paul, Flint) to Concordia, Ann Arbor
Hansard, Christie (Concordia, Fort Wayne) to Faith, Grand Blanc
Kern, Hanna (First Trinity, Pittsburgh, PA) to Our Savior, Marlette
Mackie, Ruth (Trinity, Conklin) to Pilgrim, Green Bay, WI
Reinking, Martha (Valley, Cedar Falls, IA) to Trinity, Utica
Swartz, Joshua (St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth) to Missouri District, LCMS

Change of Status

Heine, Mary (Candidate) to Emeritus
Rudick, Annette (Candidate) to Emeritus
Unger, Allison (Concordia University Ann Arbor) to Candidate

Transferred Into District

Kern, Hanna (English District) to Our Savior, Marlette

Resigned From the Roster

Meyer, Katherine

Removed From the Roster

Farney, Hillary
Grannis, Kristy
Grimm, Timothy
Kudray, Andrew
Miller, Adrienne

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

Called Home

Danz, Shirley
Loomans, Lowell
Rolf, Elda



Calendar of Events

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

APRIL 2022

- 1-3 The Katie
DoubleTree by Hilton, Bay City
- 2 Missional Formation Spring Gathering
Messiah, Clio
- 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
St. Lorenz, 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
- 21 Seasons of Change
TBD
- 24 Board of Directors
St. John, Midland
- 25-26 Intentional Interim Spring Conference
Michindoh, Hillsdale
- 30 Memorial Day
District Office Closed