

March 2023

michigan

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

IN TOUCH

HEALTHY WORKERS

Eyes on Jesus by Rev. David A. Davis

We continually need to learn Peter's lesson. When Jesus invited him out of the boat to walk with Him on the water, he did fine. Until. Until he took his eyes off Jesus.

Peter looked instead at the waves crashing around him. Trouble ensued. He sank.

There are waves aplenty for us to see. Look at the cultural situation. Look at the political climate and the economic waves. See the troubles at home, in the community and

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IN TOUCH

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throughout your locale. Like the waves Peter considered, there are real and present dangers around us. We do not ignore them; we just don't focus on them.

Eyes on Jesus.

There are other distractions. There are the good things of life. As far as distractions go, the pleasures of life may be more so. While our troubles demand our attention in the instant, pleasures can drive our life's itinerary. Pleasures and the good things in life certainly are not inherently bad. They don't have to be. Keep in mind that Satan does not care what distracts us as long as we are so.

Eyes on Jesus.

People, dead or alive, can distract us. "Family first" goes too far. We are to love and care for family. It is in the Bible. But "family" can easily become an idol. We filter our faith through authors and writers. Lucado. Luther. Augustine. Dear Abby. Paul warned the Corinthians about following Apollos and Cephas and others. People, dead or alive, can distract us.

Eyes on Jesus.

I. Me. Mine. It is easy, especially with all the cultural encouragement, even insistence, to focus our attention on self. The "big ME" camps at the center of sin and is the sweet spot of advertisement. Technological gadgets reinforce and train us even more so.

Eyes on Jesus.

See Him as the long-awaited Messiah. See Him as the Father's message in the flesh. See Him love and care for the lowest and the lost. See Him help, bless, and surprise in the most hopeless situations. See Him crucified. For you. See Him raised. For you. See Him at work right now through His Holy Spirit. For you.

Eyes on Jesus.

See Him as you read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Scriptures. See Him as He gives new life in Baptism. See Him as He comes to you in the bread and the wine. See Him at work in the gathering for worship. See Him at work in the Church deployed seeking and saving the lost.

Eyes on Jesus.

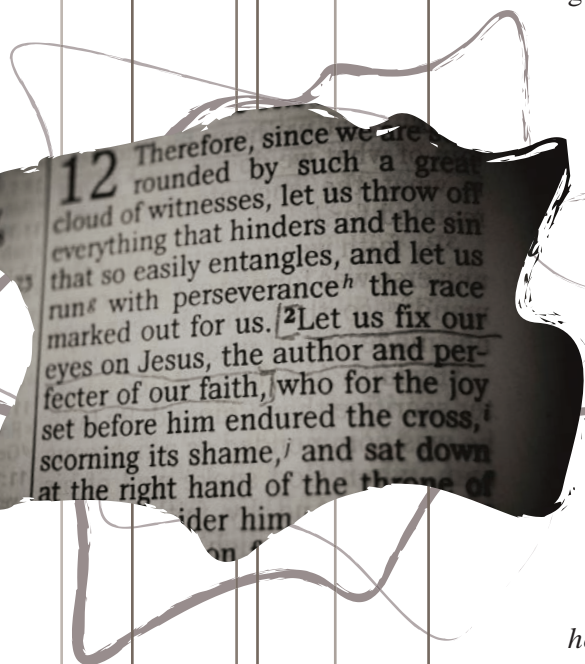
The writer to the Hebrews encourages this. *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart"* (Hebrews 12:2-3 BSB).

Then on the waves. Here in our lives. Soon in His glory.

Eyes on Jesus. ■



Rev. David A. Davis serves as President of the Michigan District, LCMS.





The Noblest Cause of Our Time:

Fighting for a Culture of Life

by Meredith G. VanDerWeide

“**H**ey hey! Ho ho! *Roe v Wade* has got to go!”—this was the battle cry of the National March for Life in Washington for 49 years. This year’s march was characterized by a new anthem: “1, 2, 3, 4, *Roe v Wade* is out the door! 5, 6, 7, 8, now it’s time to legislate!” Along with this change in chanting, the route of the March looked different this year, passing by the Capitol building to demonstrate the change in the location of the abortion battle. This was my first time attending the March for Life, but I knew something was different. Like always, the March is a celebration of life, an opportunity to make the pro-life presence known, and a call to action. But the call to action seems more urgent than ever—because *Roe* is gone, pro-life legislation can finally be enacted across the country AND pro-abortion laws even more radical than *Roe* must be stopped, such as Proposal 3, which recently passed in Michigan, making our state an abortion sanctuary.

My birthday was the day after the march, so I was able to reflect on that gift while I celebrated with friends in D.C. and on the long bus ride home. I turned 19 years old this year. That is a miracle. Life is a miracle, and I think we often forget just how miraculous it is that God has given humanity the ability to procreate and the opportunity to live on this beautiful earth, for whatever length of time we are granted. *Roe v Wade* ruled in America for almost 50 years. In this time, over 63 million lives were lost through abortion. Sixty-three million birthdays

that will never get to be celebrated. Sixty-three million murders were legalized in our nation. *Roe* is gone, but the culture of death that permeates our society remains. As I write this article, there have already been almost 4,000,000 abortions worldwide in 2023 alone, and this violence is celebrated! The killing must end, and a culture of life needs to be cultivated for that to happen.

Actor Jonathan Roumie, the keynote speaker at the pre-march rally, said that “*As ones created in the image and likeness of God who is Himself love, we are charged to be the standard bearers who defend and preserve the dignity of every human, but especially the most vulnerable.*” Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. A culture that despises God very quickly becomes a culture that embraces and celebrates death. This battle is not just political, or even cultural, it’s spiritual. Satan is angry when life prevails. So, we fight. We fight, as Roumie said, the “*noblest and worthiest cause possible, which is to allow the unborn the right to enter into the world and defeat those earthly forces that wish to destroy the very evidence of them.*”

Volunteer at your local pregnancy center. Have difficult conversations. Change hearts and minds. Pray to end abortion. Pray that life will win, because we know that Life has won. ■

Meredith G. VanDerWeide is a member of Redeemer, Jackson and a student at Hillsdale College.

What Now?

by Paul M. Clark

That is the question that so many have been asking since the tragic passage of Proposal 3 last November, which will now amend the Constitution of the State of Michigan in such a way as to virtually open access to all abortions throughout all nine months of pregnancy.

We joined with many other pro-life groups in Michigan in an attempt to bring the truth out about what this very dangerous proposal would do, but alas, we could not match the money and power of those who backed this proposal, including many who are high-up in our own government structure here in Michigan.

Over 34 million dollars was raised to support the passing of this proposal; a good portion of it (24 million) came from outside of our state, mostly from New York City and Los Angeles.

Indeed, the forces of spiritual darkness came out in full force to ensure that abortion would not only continue but would be even more accessible than ever. While we still rejoice at the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision, and the number of states that since have banned or vastly restricted abortions, our own State of

tions. But only in the darkness can you see the stars.

Into the darkness of this world has entered the Epiphany Light of Jesus Christ.

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;

but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.

And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isaiah 60:1-3).

Jesus has come. Jesus is here, with us, in His gifts of grace. Jesus will most certainly come again.

Until then, we carry on. We remain faithful. We confess the faith, once for all delivered to the saints. We are in the world, but no longer of the world. We are *baptized*. We are *washed*. We are *clean*. We are *forgiven*. We belong to *Christ*.

So, as loyal soldiers, we buckle down and stand fast in the good fight of faith. And that also means standing fast in this battle for the lives of our unborn babies. At this time, we cannot undo what the passing

**“We will *not* back down. We will *not* go away.
We will *never* surrender to the darkness.**

**The Light of Christ has come. In Jesus, in that precious blood shed
for us on the cross, we have forgiveness of sins. *We have Life!*”**

Michigan sadly is now on the extreme end of having some of the most radical abortion policies that exist in the nation.

So, once again, we ask, ***“What now?”***

Martin Luther King once said, *“Only in the darkness can you see the stars.”* We are now in a time of great darkness, make no mistake about that. Things will get worse before they get better. Planned Parenthood is already planning new abortion clinics around the state. The Governor's edict has come out saying that *all* departments and agencies of the state *“must* review aspects of reproductive rights that fall within their jurisdiction and identify and assess their operations and practices to *ensure* that they provide the *maximum protection possible* for the fundamental right to reproductive freedom *enshrined* in the Michigan Constitution.” (*italics mine*)

That is dark. That is even frightening in its implica-

tion of this Constitutional Amendment has done and will do. If there are ways in the future to address that, they will certainly be attempted. But for now, we need to proclaim the unadulterated truth that human life begins at conception, and that all human life is precious and deserves protection. *Thank you* to those of you who valiantly did what you could to educate and advocate against this proposal. *Your work is very much appreciated!* Yet now we must up the ante. We must continue to speak, write, advocate, pray, and offer better choices for those contemplating an abortion. We must support at even a higher level the frontlines of our pregnancy resource centers across the state.

We will ***not*** back down. We will ***not*** go away. We will ***never*** surrender to the darkness.

The Light of Christ has come. In Jesus, in that precious blood shed for us on the cross, we have

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Adoption as a Symbol of Redemption

by Trenton N. Wollberg

Every adoption story is different, and every adoption story is the same. They are different in the particulars: what sort of life circumstances set you down the path? What is the process or local legal requirements? Is the adoption of an infant or an older child, foreign or domestic, open or closed? How much will it cost? In the details each adoption is unique, but every adoption is likely to be daunting, confusing, and even quite nebulous. In the end, however unique, every adoption is the same. When it is finalized, your family will have grown, a child will have been saved from an almost certainly desperate situation, and love will have the opportunity to flourish.

Every adoption is experienced differently in a subjective sense, but every adoption also shares an objective frame of reference. I believe that the Christian life is a participation in the life of God. We are to be imitators of Christ. Our goal in this life is to be conformed to the image of God's Son. Of course, Jesus is the only perfect image of the Father, so we do well to keep our eyes fixed on Him, trusting in His grace and mercy. But even though we are only poor imitations, it is in striving toward that upward calling that we find our place in the grand tapestry of God's creation.

Saint Paul writes, *"In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to **redeem** those who were under the law, so that we might receive **adoption** as sons"* (Galatians 4:3–5). God has redeemed us in order to adopt us as His sons and daughters, that we may be His, and live with Him eternally.

The way I see it, anything that we might call good must be in accord with and find its fulfillment in God. For nothing can be good apart from Him. Since God in His love adopted us, the purpose of adoption for us should be to participate in that work of God and show His love in our own lives. Adoption here below ought to glorify God and honor His Word by imitating Him, albeit imperfectly, as children imitate their parents. In the same way that we can understand the procreative act between a husband and wife as a participation and imitation of God's act of creation, the adoptive act can be understood as a participation in and imitation of God's act of redemption.

Like an adoption story, every salvation story is different, and every salvation story is the same. Many, like myself, were adopted by God from infancy. Others, like my wife, were adopted by God as young adults. Whatever the particulars, we were all adopted according to the grace of God and born into His family through the waters of baptism. God only has one begotten Son; the rest of us were adopted. So in a way we all have an adoption story. You may or may not desire to pursue adoption for your own family; either way, it will only be done according to God's gracious will.

No adoption story is complete without the birth

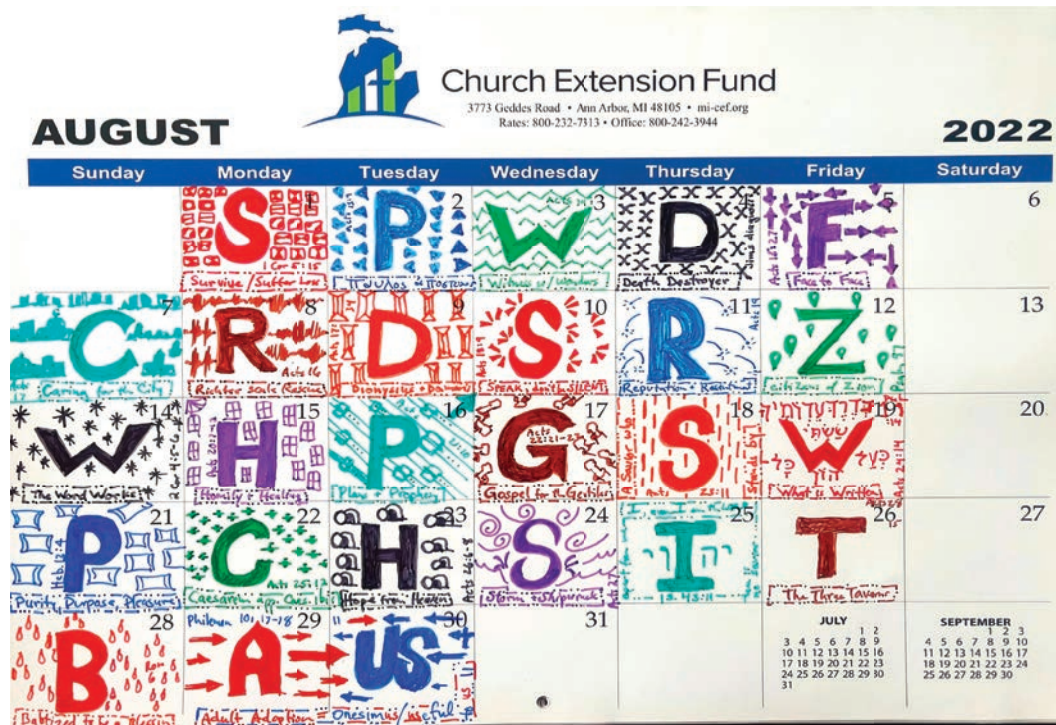
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“ God has redeemed us in order
to *adopt* us as His sons and
daughters, that we may *be His*,
and *live with Him* eternally.”



MARCH 2023

My CEF Faith Calendar



Pastor Justin Rossow's Faith Calendar

“My CEF calendar helps me follow Jesus!”

Justin Rossow

Guest Contributor
Next Step Press

An Annual Tradition

Each year, CEF produces a calendar that it sends to churches, pastors, and church workers. A special Spotlight contributor, Rev. Justin Rossow, reflects on how this simple tool has become a faith-growth opportunity for him.

A Simple Approach

I am always so glad to get my new CEF wall calendar every year! That CEF calendar has become an important tool in my life of faith.

A couple of years ago, I started experimenting with a *Visual Faith* practice that invites you to record a simple word or phrase each day as you engage God's Word. You might even try sketching an important image from the text, but there's no pressure to make great art: just find a way to capture what strikes you in God's Word today.

Practicing that routine daily, I have freedom to try different things.

Sometimes I choose a color pallet for a season (purple and black for Lent or blue for Advent). Some months I stick to images; other months, to words. I try variations on a theme, using only two words that start with the same letter, or sprinkling in some Greek or Hebrew. When my congregation did a 30-day thankfulness experiment last fall, I had a natural place to record three things I was thankful for every day (alternating red and orange).

Most days, I jot down a key word from my daily Scripture reading. On Sundays, I capture something I heard in the sermon.

Sometimes, I connect to a blog or a book I am writing.

And often enough, I end up leaving a day or two blank. I have learned from a friend to call those my “grace days” and to let go of the burden of filling out the whole month. I trust Jesus is with me even when I didn’t get something down on my calendar.

Growing In My Faith

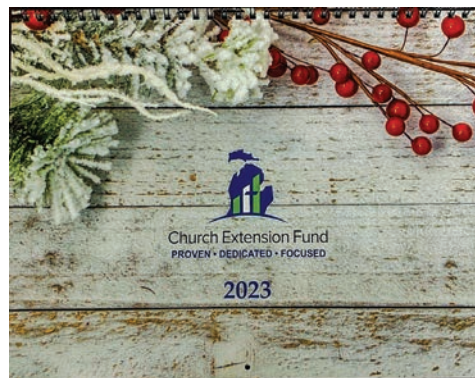
What matters isn’t the exact way you do it; in fact, the variety helps keep the practice fresh. And the flexibility combined with structure has helped me stay more consistent in daily interaction with God’s Word than I have ever been in my life.

One surprise blessing came only after I had been using my CEF faith calendar for several months. (I don’t call it a wall calendar anymore, since it never gets to my wall...) Once you have been calendaring your faith for a time, you can look back at a record of God’s work in your life.

I can now peruse the last two years and see what Jesus has been speaking into my life. I remember my prayers and my struggles, my joys and my grief, through the lens of the Scripture I was reading at the time.

I can clearly see how Jesus has been present with me, and for me, in the Word. I can see the Spirit shaping my next step. Having something as concrete and tangible as a faith calendar really supports my concrete and tangible life of faith. You could even say my CEF calendar helps me follow Jesus.

Thanks, CEF! I can use all the help I can get!



The 2023 CEF Calendar

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>2</p> <p>Ash Wednesday</p> <p>DUST TO DUST</p> <p>9</p> <p>Create in me a clean CENTER INMOST SELF IDENTITY, O God...</p>	<p>3</p> <p>LOOK & BE HEALED</p> <p>10</p> <p>no more shame</p> <p>17</p> <p>Jesus hurries to help.</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day</p>	<p>4</p> <p>SUB-EPHONAL</p> <p>11</p> <p>My Advocate JESUS CHRIST, THE RIGHTEOUS</p> <p>18</p> <p>But God gives MORE GRACE.</p>

A detailed look at a few days in Lent.



“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”
Colossians 3:16a



Church Extension Fund

Church Extension Fund

3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-3098

Offices: 800-242-3944 ■ mi-cef.org

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Impact of Holistic Ministry

"Ana" participated in a financial training course hosted by Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) staff in Mongolia. The purpose of this training was to provide financial education to families, youth, and single parents to teach them how to manage their finances wisely and sustainably. It encourages them to apply what they learn during the training into their daily lives to result in stronger families, in-depth financial knowledge, and a stable financial outlook where they can overcome debt and avoid a budgetary crisis. The weekly training sessions took place over two months and were focused on Christian perspectives regarding specific topics each time. After she completed the financial training, Ana continued to meet with LHM staff and enrolled in the ministry's *Bible Correspondence Courses* to learn more about Jesus. Ana shared that she had a difficult childhood and struggled with anxiety. LHM staff talked with her and shared that she can find her worth in Jesus. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Ana became a Christian. She and her husband were connected to a local church where she continues learning about Jesus and growing in her faith.

In carrying out its mission statement of *Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church*, LHM employs a variety of methods and programs through its locally established ministry centers to share the Gospel with people around the world. Since the staff members are from that culture and understand the local needs, LHM can customize its outreach to the issues that people are facing and begin establishing a more personal relationship. By identifying, developing, and using resources in local languages that are culturally relevant and attractive, LHM staff seeks to proclaim the hope and salvation found in the Word of God by reaching out to people of all nations and

building trust with those individuals to connect them in fellowship to a local Christian community.

During His ministry on earth, Jesus not only taught and preached but also healed the sick and fed the hungry. LHM ministry centers follow His example, often incorporating "holistic" approaches to sharing the Gospel by attending to people's physical and emotional needs as well as their spiritual needs.

In some communities where people may be struggling against the effects of poverty, our ministry centers often assist families by providing vocational training, educational materials, nutritional supplements, or hygiene supplies. When disaster strikes, ministry center staff and volunteers frequently work with partner organizations to distribute emergency supplies of food and clothing and share booklets like *Why Do Bad Things Happen?* to try to help people process their feelings. By working with smaller groups of individuals and families, LHM builds relationships, over time, and shares the Gospel.

Often the recipients of these holistic efforts desire to learn more about the God who motivates these Christians to reach out in love. This opens doors for staff and volunteers to share LHM resources and invite people to participate in other programs.

LCMS Michigan District Lutherans are invited to support this ministry through prayers and other ways and can do so at lhm.org.



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Michigan District, LCMS presents

2023 Professional Church Workers Conference

November 19–21, 2023 | Grand Rapids, Mich.

michigandistrict.org/pcw23

ABID *In Jesus*
John 15:4-5

Girls of Grace Worship Concert

Girls of Grace from St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth is hosting its 17th annual worship Concert, *Faithful in all Seasons*, on Saturday, April 15 (1 and 5 p.m.) and Sunday, April 16 (3 p.m.).

Just like the four beautiful seasons of the year, God orchestrates many changes, challenges, and blessings in our lives. What season do you find yourself in? Is God doing something ... FOR you? IN you? THROUGH you? No matter what season of change you may be experiencing, you can be sure of this: God NEVER changes and His love for you never ends! See this powerful message come to life. Be refreshed and inspired as the Girls of Grace fill the stage and your heart in three identical worship concerts.

NEW THIS YEAR! All concerts will be presented at St. Lorenz Worship and Events Center, 850 W. Genesee Street in Frankenmuth. Tickets are \$10 adults and \$5 children 10 and under. You can purchase tickets online at stlorenz.org.

A Safe Space for Mothers

A shelter has been installed at ^{THE}rapid bus stop on the south side of 28th Street just west of Byron Center Road in Wyoming, Mich. This bus stop is used by mothers and their families who travel to and from the Grand Rapids Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC) Family Service Center to obtain counseling and supplies for their babies and small children. Previously, there was only a concrete pad at the bus stop at the edge of a parking lot which is very close to 28th Street, a major east-west artery on the south end of Grand Rapids.

The congregation of Our Savior has supported the Grand Rapids PRC for many years, providing diapers, other items, and financial support. Members of Our Savior's Life Team have participated in PRC Life Marches. The team obtained congregational approval and pledges for the bus stop. An application was submitted for a grant through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Million Dollar Life Match program*. Lutherans For Life of Michigan also gave a donation to help raise the level of funds required. PRC contracted a construction company for excavation and cement work for the retaining wall and platform. ^{THE}rapid bus line was also involved, providing the structure, bench, and solar lighting. The shelter was installed before Christmas.

As a result of this partnership with the PRC, five women who are members of Our Savior are doing

Board of Directors Listening Event for the North & East Region

The Michigan District Board of Directors is hosting a Listening Event for the North and East Region on Monday, March 13, at Our Savior, Bad Axe. Pastors, church workers, church leaders, and laity are all welcome to attend. The Board seeks input in the following areas:

- What should the Board know about ministry in this region?
- What unmet needs do the congregations have?
- What mission opportunities exist in the region?

The findings from this event will aid the Board of Directors in its responsibilities towards strategic direction of the District.

Listening events will take place over the next 12 months in the other three regions. Stay tuned for dates and locations.



Photo courtesy of Our Savior, Grand Rapids.

volunteer work at the Family Service Center.

God be praised for His provision!

* *The LCMS committed to providing one million dollars to its congregations in matching funds for projects that support the needs of families during the beginning-of-life stage of their children. The program is administered by LCMS Life Ministry. For more information, visit lcms.org.*

Summer Camps in Michigan

We are blessed with three fantastic camp ministries here in the Michigan District: Camp Arcadia (camp-arcadia.com), Camp Concordia in Gowen (campconcordia.org), and Camp Lu Lay Lea in Lupton (camplulaylea.org).

There is nothing better than a Spirit-filled week of swimming, campfires, games, Bible study, and making new friends!

Check out the websites to learn more about each camp and all the fun weeks they have planned for kids/youth this summer. You can also learn more about opportunities for teenagers and young adults to work as camp staff.



Photos courtesy of Camp Arcadia, Camp Concordia, and Camp Lu Lay Lea

Davis to Preach on Good Friday



Photo by Elisa Schulz/Michigan District, LCMS

Congregations in the tri-city area of Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland are planning joint Good Friday events on April 7, 2023. An interview with Rev. David Davis, president of the Michigan District, LCMS, will take place at 9 a.m. on WSGW. Good Shepherd, Saginaw will host its annual Crosswalk at 10:30 a.m. All walkers are welcome.

The Good Friday worship service will begin at 1 p.m. at Horizons Conference Center, located at 6200 State Street in Saginaw. President Davis will be the preacher. Rev. Dennis Matyas from St. Paul, Bay City and other area pastors will be presiding. Valley Lutheran High School Choir students will provide special music.

The service will be broadcast on WSGW and livestreamed. For more information, contact Vaughn Begick at vaughnpac@aol.com or visit *Tri-City Community Good Friday Service* on Facebook.

Northeast Syria Earthquake Response

Arabic Lutheran Ministries (ALM) is partnering with several Christian organizations that work with refugees and displaced people in Syria and Lebanon. There are teams at Aleppo and other cities that were affected by the earthquake. ALM is the only recognized service organization in the LCMS that is undertaking this mission to help Syrian families who were affected by the earthquake.

Despite the dangerous circumstances, a center for displaced families was built in a church in Aleppo; more than 300 families are staying there. The immediate need is for food, clothing, and energy supply. More volunteer teams are being sent to Latkia, Tartus, and Jableh to start centers to shelter families and help with their basic needs.

ALM is sending money to its partners to buy what is needed from Lebanon, as it is hard and expensive to ship material. Please consider helping Syrian families by sending your donations to Arabic Lutheran Ministries; Attn. Syrian Earthquake; 1565 Summer Chase Lane; Fenton MO 63026.

Special Recognition

Rudowske Installed as Executive Director of Lutheran Bible Translators

On February 4, Rev. Dr. Rich Rudowske was installed as the executive director and CEO of Lutheran Bible Translators. A reception followed in LBT's international offices in Missouri. LBT's *More Than Words* campaign has raised 70% of its goal of \$43.9 million for translation, engagement, and capacity efforts in Bible translation ministry.

"I was honored to share the vision for Bible translation ministry with Lutheran Bible Translators' reception guests. This is our season to create systems and equip partners to grasp and do Bible translation ministry. The More Than Words campaign is critical to make that happen," shared Dr. Rudowske.



Photo courtesy of Lutheran Bible Translators

GET EQUIPPED FOR EFFECTIVE GOSPEL MINISTRY

→ michigandistrict.org

The Michigan District Blog and Podcasts support the District's critical targets: Great Commission, Great Compassion, Healthy Congregations, and Healthy Workers. They can be easily shared through social networks and email. We are always looking for authors; to submit your article visit michigandistrict.org/storybucket.

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→ twitter.com/milcms

What now?

forgiveness of sins. We have Life!

What now? With more resolve than ever, with the absolute assurance that God's Word is true, that all human life is sacred, and that the Lord our God is with us in this fight, ***we will proclaim Jesus, we will proclaim life in His name.*** We will stand up for those who cannot defend themselves. And we will pray, "Lord, in Your mercy ... ***hear our prayer!***"

This is the time. ***Now*** is the day. Only in the darkness can you see the stars. ***Let that light shine forth brighter than ever—in Christ, and in His saving Word! AMEN! ■***

Rev. Paul M. Clark has been the pastor of St. Paul, Fowler for over 30 years. He serves as President of Lutherans for Life of Michigan, as well as the Pastoral Counselor. He serves also as the District Life Coordinator for the Michigan District, LCMS. Rev. Clark and his wife Elizabeth have three children through the blessing of adoption.

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Girls of Grace
PSALM 133:3

17TH ANNUAL WORSHIP CONCERT

faithful
IN ALL SEASONS

APRIL 15, 2023
1:00 & 5:00 PM

APRIL 16, 2023
3:00 PM

GIRLS OF GRACE MINISTRY CONCERTS are helping others and spreading the love of Jesus!
50% of ticket sales will be given to neighboring Christian charities.

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**BY GOD'S GRACE, THE COMMON
IS TRANSFORMED INTO THE
REMARKABLE**

Steadfast in that gift, Concordia University
sees the uncommon potential of each student.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
WISCONSIN & ANN ARBOR

Adoption as a Symbol ...

parents, and it is with them that I think God's redemption is perhaps most glorious. I don't know anything about my daughter Violet's biological father; he wasn't in the picture, so I'll refrain from commenting about him. But, for reasons unbeknownst to me, her biological mother could not have kept her. It was either give her up for adoption or to the state; the third choice is unconscionable. But we will be eternally grateful to her first of all for choosing life and secondly for choosing us to raise her baby. We were told by our case worker that she said that one of the reasons she picked us is because I am a pastor. However, she didn't want to meet us. She didn't want to see her newborn or even hold her. I can only imagine it would have been too painful. Whatever sins or life circumstances led her there, clearly she loved that baby.

Every adoption story is a story of redemption—not just for the child, but for every party involved. Through adoption, Violet was saved from what may have been a dysfunctional and unstable home life and delivered in the saving flood of baptism. Through adoption, my wife and I have been blessed with a child and all the

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joy she brings. But I would like to think that the birth mother has the greatest redemption story of all.

By giving up her daughter for adoption, she put the helpless one above herself. Whether she realizes it or not, in her own way she has participated in something bigger than herself which has its source in God.

I see in what she did a small reflection of what Jesus has done. I wish I could thank her and recognize that she has done a truly beautiful thing which shows a picture in time of the eternal glory of God revealed in Jesus' sacrificial love for us. It's a testament of what God can do through all of us.

As is almost always the case with these things, adoption is born out of tragedy. In a perfect world there would be no need for adoption and there would be no need for redemption. Ask yourself: Can a lifetime of mistakes, failure, and wonton rebellion be atoned for with a single act of sacrificial love? Yes! After all, that's what Jesus has done for you. He atoned for a world of sin which He did not commit by His perfect sacrifice on the cross. And to whatever extent we are able, it is pure bliss to share His life-giving salvation. ■

Rev. Trenton N. Wollberg is the pastor at Holy Cross, Onaway.

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Calls and Roster Update

ORDAINED

Calls Accepted

Rev. Douglas Adams (Berrien Springs, MI) to Senior Pastor, St. Peter's, Eastpointe
Rev. Gerald Corbett, SMP (Macomb, MI) to Vacancy, St. Thomas, Eastpointe
Rev. Samuel Fink (Orchard Park, NY) to Heart of the Shepherd, Howell
Mr. James Greenwalt (Bloomfield Hills, MI) to SMP, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Birmingham
Rev. Joel Haak (Rochester, MN) to Associate, St. John, Fraser
Rev. Dr. Korey Maas (Osseo, MI) to Associate, St. Paul, Hillsdale

Change of Status

Rev. Simeon Cornwell (Terre Haute, IN) to Candidate
Rev. Paul Hauser (Saginaw, MI) to Emeritus

Transferred Into District

Rev. Matthew Gunia (Whitehall, MI) from North Wisconsin District

COMMISSIONED

Calls Accepted

Fritsche, Christopher (Trinity, San Angelo, TX) to Immanuel, Macomb
Jackemeyer, Sarah (Concordia, Ann Arbor) to Trinity, Berrien Springs
Vincent, Heath (Valley Lutheran, Saginaw) to Immanuel, Bay City

Change of Status

Schultz, Sarah (Trinity, Traverse City) to Candidate

Transferred Out of District

Gallert, Frederick (Emeritus) to Rocky Mountain District

Called Home

Bickel, Elaine
Nieman, Anna

School Openings

Hubbard Lake, Small Wonders Academy

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

MARCH 2023

- 2-3 DCE/DFL/Deaconess/Worship Arts Conference
St. Paul, Hamburg
- 4-5 State Basketball Tournament
CUAA/St. Paul, Ann Arbor
- 13 Board of Directors Listening Event N & E Region
Our Savior, Bad Axe
- 14 Board of Directors
Our Savior, Bad Axe

APRIL 2023

- 6 Maundy Thursday
- 7 Good Friday
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 9 Easter Sunday
- 21-23 The Katie
DoubleTree, Bay City

MAY 2023

- 1-2 North and East Pastors Conference
DoubleTree, Bay City
- 9-10 South and East Pastors Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 10-11 Circuit Visitors Conference
St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth
- 15-16 West Pastors Conference
Inn at Harbor Shores, St. Joseph
- 22 Board of Directors Listening Event MW Region
St. Paul, Hamburg
- 23 Board of Directors
St. Paul, Hamburg
- 24-25 Intentional Interim Ministry Conference
Michindoh, Hillsdale
- 29 Memorial Day
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED

JUNE 2023

- 2-4 Junior High Gathering
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 3 State Track Meet
Valley Lutheran High School, Saginaw
- 9-12 Synodical Convention Floor Committees
- 12-16 Sports Camp/VBS
Detroit
- 17 Synodical Delegates' Pre-Convention Meeting
St. Luke, Haslett
- 19-21 FLAME
Ann Arbor
- 25-28 High School Gathering
Mission Point Resort, Mackinac Island

