

June/July 2023

# michigan

## IN TOUCH

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



### HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

## Heart-to-Heart

by Rev. David A. Davis

The hearts of young people hurt. Reports abound about stress and anxiety levels for youth. The fallout from COVID, news of gun violence, and the pathological impact of “life online” mounts.

Parents, grandparents, pastors, and congregational

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leaders, please find time this summer to have a heart-to-heart conversation with a young person you love. Go for ice cream. Take a hike. Attend a ballgame. Sit by the lake.

And talk.

Heart-to-heart.

Talk about Jesus' love. Share how He comes to us in our weakness and failures. We do not need to prove ourselves to Him or justify our existence before Him like we feel pressured to do before others. Explain about the power and protection He showers upon us. Even though it can all sound so bad "out there," remind them that He is right here.

Confirm your commitment. Young people can feel very alone and isolated. Listen to them. Have a conversation about what you can do to provide support. What gaps can you fill? Are there regularly scheduled times you need to be together? Is there space and trust you need to provide? Promise regular prayer support.

Expand hope. Dream together. What gifts and abilities does the young person have? Where can he or she blossom and flourish? Discuss opportunities for a life of service for Jesus, His Kingdom, and a

world that badly needs it. Read a book together. Visit a museum. Take a trip to Concordia University.

Celebrate joyfulness. Laugh. Look at the clouds. Tell funny stories. Look at family pictures. Read Psalms like Psalm 145:3-4:

*"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts."*

The young people in our communities, our congregations, and our homes need the joyfulness, hope, and commitment of the adults in their lives. They need the love of Jesus. If you ache for more young people in the Church, connect with them this summer. Find time. Make time. Spend time.

And talk.

Heart-to-heart. ■



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

**“If you ache for more young people in the Church, *connect* with them this summer. Find time. Make time. Spend time.”**



# More Than Just Volunteers

by Steven D. Schave

Founded in 1970 with a seed grant from the Michigan District LWML, LAMP Ministry was set to have a grand celebration of their 50th anniversary in 2020. But of course, you can guess the rest of the story. The mission in 2020 was reduced to supplying COVID aid, and mostly virtual ministry, to remote indigenous communities in Northern Canada ... and any chance for a 50th gala event was squashed.

In the fall of 2022, when the US and Canadian board of directors of LAMP were able to meet in person, there was finally a chance to

dream big again and try to make up for a lost celebration of God's blessings for 50 years of service. So, the joint board of directors set a goal for the 55th anniversary in 2025: that LAMP would not only get back into all the communities they served pre-pandemic, but would go beyond and share the Gospel in 55 communities. So began the 55 For 55 initiative.

And it seemed more than coincidental to the new Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Steve Schave, that his next birthday in March of 2023 would be his 55th. He has celebrated past birthdays with sports-related ways to raise support for charities. A triathlete, marathoner, and obstacle course racer... Schave tried to think of something that would test his limits in 55 miles. He had participated a few years ago in someone's 40-mile birthday "ruck," and thought 55 miles would definitely be a worthy feat. Rucking is a fitness workout that involves a road march while carrying a weighted rucksack/backpack/weight vest, typically wearing at least military-style ruck boots. Pastor Schave's son is also in officer candidate school for the Missouri Army National Guard, and the ruck was meant to honor our military as well. So, Schave set out at 5 a.m. on his 55th birthday to complete the ruck and finished in 15 hours. He used it as a Facebook fundraiser, and he was able to meet his goal. But for Schave it was just a fun way to build awareness and encourage others to be a part of 55 For 55.

According to Schave, "The greatest need right now

for LAMP is committed volunteers willing to join a mission team for the next 5 years. Our volunteers are unique in that they aren't just short-term. The communities we serve have invited us to visit them for multiple generations now. This requires lasting relationships over all these decades. So, the community sees us as more than just volunteers; we are like friends and family. And we are excited to soar to new heights, reaching farther to the ends of the earth, to make disciples to the four winds of all languages, tribes, and nations." No doubt, Schave's "Ruck55" involved a great deal of suffering for the cause, but he said he would gladly walk that many miles again to see the joy on the faces of the children who get to hear about Jesus through LAMP's mission work.

You can find out more at [www.lampministry.org/get-involved](http://www.lampministry.org/get-involved) to learn about serving in the North with LAMP. Or Pastor Schave is happy to speak, teach, or preach at schools and churches. ■

Rev. Dr. Steven D. Schave is the Executive Director for L.A.M.P. - Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots Inc. (Canada) and LAMP Ministry Inc. (U.S.).



INITIATIVE



*Hospice*  
**is for Living**

by Jill M. Haiser



## **H**ospice. It's a word that holds so much weight, yet very few families truly understand it.

When someone is facing a terminal illness, there are a lot of emotions involved for everyone who is walking the journey together. It's one of the many reasons that Wellspring encourages and equips families to have important discussions about significant life moments long before the time comes. Because in a moment of crisis, it can be harder to hear.

One thing we often experience at Wellspring are families who get to the end of life and recognize that they don't have a plan in place. There are questions about the actual process of dying. And we often hear that families don't know what their loved one's wishes are. This can cause confusion among family members, which in turn can cause a heightened state of tension and additional emotional stress.

If you believe hospice is a service families utilize right before their loved one passes away, you are not alone. It's our hope that your perception can change to see the fullness of what hospice is, because when used to its maximum potential, hospice truly is a gift. It's a gift God gives us to be really intentional about how to LIVE, while also navigating the reality that there is a terminal illness that will eventually call a loved one to his or her heavenly home.

To help you navigate these conversations, here are the top 10 questions asked of the Wellspring Hospice Team as it relates to hospice.

### **When does someone qualify for hospice care? If a doctor doesn't suggest it for your loved one, how can you ask for it?**

A family can ask for a hospice evaluation. For someone to qualify for hospice, most providers take into account a person's physical condition now, declining trends (weight loss, functional decline, cognitive decline), new diagnosis or exacerbations. Generally, information from the physician or hospital is needed to make the determination. If a family feels their loved one would qualify, a hospice provider can assist them in how to talk to their physician about what is needed.

### **What does hospice do for my family?**

Many people who have utilized hospice services say they feel like it helped them gain back some control—

at a time when everything feels out of control. When someone is terminally ill, most likely their body has been in battle mode. Hospice allows the patient and the family to start to plan for how to live. Together, with a hospice nurse, you will navigate important discussions about how to live a full life with as little pain as possible. At Wellspring, our hospice nurses provide education on how to care for a loved one so you can help be a part of the process. We have a chaplain who will be there to provide spiritual support. We also have clinical support to make sure the patient's care needs are being met and they are well cared for.

**It's our *hope* that your perception can change to see the fullness of what hospice is, because when used to its maximum potential, hospice truly is a *gift*.**

### **Are hospice services covered by insurance? What is covered and what isn't?**

Most insurances have a hospice benefit, and Wellspring always checks this before we start. Hospice staff, medications, supplies, and equipment related to the terminal diagnosis are typically covered expenses. We encourage you to speak with your doctor and then reach out to a local hospice provider who will go over this information with you.

### **Does hospice help me die? Meaning, if I am ready to go to Heaven, does this make my time on earth go faster?**

Hospice doesn't speed up the dying process. Only God knows the number of days you have on this earth. The medications and support we give do not speed up the dying process. Medications are given at a level/dose for comfort, always at the lowest doses. Medications are only increased as appropriate to accommodate the patient's needs to make a patient's time on earth more comfortable not only physically, but also emotionally and spiritually.

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# The Gates of Beauty

by Joshua C. LaFeve

Summertime on the Leelanau Peninsula is a great time to consider the concept of beauty. We love our beautiful Peninsula this time of the year, and for good reason! The lakes. The verdant landscape. The cherry harvest. It's a big part of the reason so many tourists enjoy coming to the Leelanau Peninsula and the Grand Traverse area. Yes, at all times, and especially in the summer, this part of our beloved Michigan is a beautiful place to be!

One Sunday, while serving the good people of Immanuel, Leland, I found myself contemplating beauty at the most unexpected time. It was early in the Season of Pentecost, on one of the first Sundays in June. The Divine Service was about to begin, and I just announced the opening hymn to the congregation—"Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty" (*Lutheran Service Book*, 901). As the congregation was starting to sing the first verse, I turned to face the altar and to find my seat in the chancel area. I climbed the steps into the chancel and that's when I saw it. As the voices in the pews rang out, "*Open now thy gates of beauty; Zion, let me enter there...*", I spotted a dozen flower petals from the beautiful floral arrangement next to the altar fall lifelessly to the floor. And in that moment, while the congregation was singing "*Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty*," I found myself pondering beauty.

To be sure, the floral arrangement, placed next to the altar less than twenty-four hours prior, was a very lovely arrangement that greatly enhanced the glory of the Worship Service. The ladies responsible for the altar flowers here at Immanuel always do such a great job. And they take such good care of the flowers. At

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“ Above the all-too-many reminders of the fleeting beauty of this world is an image that points to the *eternal beauty* of our Lord's salvation given and shed for us for the forgiveness of sin. ”

JUNE/JULY 2023

## Event Spotlight: Worker Wellness Workshop

Concordia Plans Services (CPS) has helped care for Lutheran ministry workers for nearly 60 years. As the retirement and health benefits provider for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, CPS is committed to offering holistic care to ministry workers in LCMS ministries around the world.

This summer, CPS is trying something new. On June 29, CPS will partner with Church Extension Fund to host the first-ever Wellness Workshop for Lutheran ministry workers in the Michigan District.

“There is so much going on in the life of a full-time ministry worker,” says Steve Gruenwald, Director of Worker Wellness at CPS. “Their day-to-day focus is on their ministry, as it should be. But as a result, they often don’t have time to pay attention to their financial or physical health until they’re in crisis. We want people to have more than a sick plan, which is why we’re so excited about this event.”

The two main objectives of the event are easy access to CPS resources and open discussion with CPS educators. This is why CPS intentionally chose a date in the summer, to make the event more accessible to teachers and pastors statewide. There will be two main sessions of the seminar which will wrap up by 2:15 pm, with optional one-on-one meetings with financial educators before and after the event.





The wellness workshop will focus on the idea of preventative planning and personal care through financial, physical, and mental health. In the words of Gruenwald, “Our goal at CPS is never to tell people what to do. But we know by giving people basic information, they can make a clearer roadmap toward improving their overall health.”

More than anything, CPS is excited to start ongoing conversations with ministry workers this summer. “We get that financial planning and wellness look different throughout every stage of life. Our hope is that an event like this will help people remember we’re here for both sunny and rainy days in the future,” says Gruenwald.

And none of this would have been possible without the support of CEF. As Steve Gruenwald put it, “CEF has a really good understanding of what Concordia Plans does and what we can provide throughout the year for ministry workers. When we heard that 2023 was CEF’s Year of Worker Wellness we knew we wanted to be



involved. This event, their Wellness grant and other events they sponsor made us want to partner with them.

The event will be hosted at St. Luke Lutheran Church, in Haslett. “We want ministry workers to walk away from this event ready to talk to their families about future plans too. It’s nice to have an accountability partner in all aspects of health.”

Gruenwald hopes this is only the beginning of other CPS wellness workshops to come. “We know this is only the first year,” he notes. “But our desire is that this event will carry over into more and more ways to connect with LCMS ministry workers in the future.”

Registration information can be found on the CEF or Michigan District websites.



*“Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security.”*

*Jeremiah 33:6*

## LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

### Gifted for More

"Gifted for More" was the topic of the annual Michigan District Lutheran Laymen's League convention on April 29 at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Livonia.

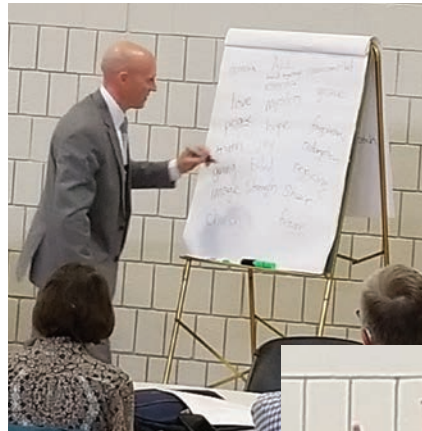
Rev. Joel Eden, associate pastor at St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth led a session on "Good Theology - Good Decisions." His second session was titled "Barrels of Gifts: Gifts that sustain creation, gift(s) of faith, gifts to build up that faith."

Lutheran Hour Speaker Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler also spoke at the convention. He had the attendees listen to what it may have been like for Paul to have written a letter with Timothy as his scribe. Rev. Zeigler portrayed Paul as his son, Jude, played Timothy his scribe. He asked everyone to please go to [EveryGift.org](http://EveryGift.org) and take the quick survey to learn more about our own gifts.

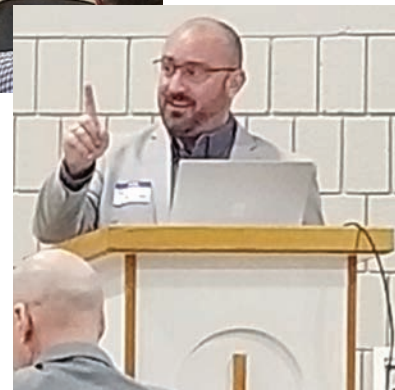
Because of the COVID pandemic, this was the first LLL district convention since 2019. One had been scheduled for April 2020 but was canceled shortly after the outbreak of the pandemic.

The convention voted for the following officers: President Dennis Engelhard; Vice President Gilbert Bartz, Treasurer, Phil Krauss I; and Secretary, Phil Krauss II.

The closing devotion and prayer was led by Rev. Dean Davenport, senior pastor at Christ Our Savior, Livonia.



Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler leads a presentation at the convention on April 29.



Rev. Joel Eden led a session on "Good Theology - Good Decisions"

Photos courtesy of John Raffel



Lutheran Adult Gathering  
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### Volunteers Sought for Love 4 Others Event in Detroit

Individuals, families, and groups are invited to join in at the Love 4 Others Service Event, a collaboration between Camp Restore Detroit and Gifts For All God's Children. Join other volunteers from around Michigan (and beyond!) July 23–27 as they gather together to serve in Detroit and demonstrate to the community that *we are the church!*

The days will be spent sharing God's love for others through community service projects suitable for all ages and abilities! Each evening will include dinner on Camp Restore's campus followed by a speaker and live worship bands. Camp Restore Detroit will host guests overnight in its bunk rooms. The registration fee includes a t-shirt, meals, lodging, project coordination, evening programs, music, and worship.

For more information, visit [support.detroitcamprestore.org/event/love-4-others-service-event/e449237](http://support.detroitcamprestore.org/event/love-4-others-service-event/e449237).

### Church Interpreter Academy

The Ephphatha Lutheran Mission Society for the Deaf is hosting its Church Interpreter Training Academy August 3–6 at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind. Students at the Academy interpret chapel services and attend classes designed to help them correctly interpret the Word of God in the context of the Divine Service. This is an important formation process for young men and women to prepare to become interpreters for LCMS churches across the country. Tuition is \$350 (\$50 non-refundable registration fee). To register for the academy, visit [eventbrite.com/e/church-interpreter-training-academy-cita-tickets-553636239897](http://eventbrite.com/e/church-interpreter-training-academy-cita-tickets-553636239897). To learn more about Deaf ministry, visit [elms-deaf.org](http://elms-deaf.org).

### Explore Synod's Convention Theme "We Preach Christ Crucified"

This summer, the 68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will take place. In preparation for the convention, a new Bible study is available that delves into the convention theme, "We Preach Christ Crucified," based on 1 Corinthians 1:18–25.

The free Bible study is about the Gospel and the importance of keeping it front and center in all we do as the Church. Through the five lessons, participants will come to a deeper understanding of how Scripture defines the Gospel, how the apostles proclaimed it in the Book of Acts, and how continuing this proclamation is the Church's ongoing task. Both participant and leader guides can be downloaded at [lcms.org/convention/national/worship](http://lcms.org/convention/national/worship).

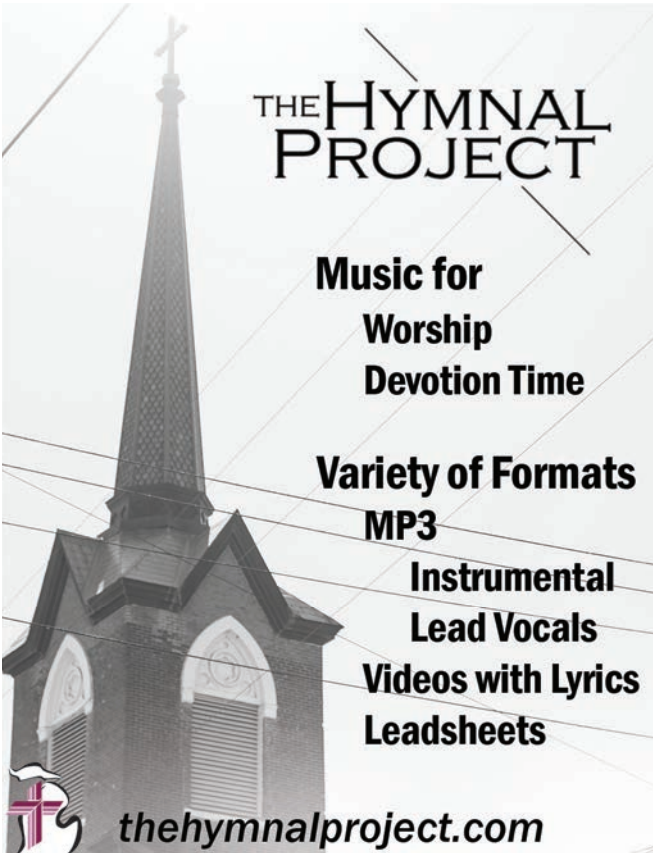
### Church Worker Wellness Conference

Concordia Plans, in partnership with Church Extension Fund and the Michigan District, is providing a free, one-day workshop for all church workers on June 29 at St. Luke, Haslett. At the conference, workers will learn pertinent information about financial benefits and ways to improve their physical and mental health. Registration is free and lunch is included. You can also sign up to meet with a Financial Educator for a 30-minute one-on-one session prior to the event or immediately following the event. For more information, visit the CEF Spotlight in this issue. To register, visit [michigandistrict.org/churchworkerwellness](http://michigandistrict.org/churchworkerwellness).

### Trinity Time for High School Students

Trinity Time is an overnight retreat for students considering church work. This annual retreat will be held July 23–24 on the campus of Concordia University Ann Arbor. All high school students who are interested in exploring church work vocations are invited to attend. The event is free and will include: a service event; kayaking on the Huron River; worship; learning from students, faculty, and professionals about church work vocations; and much more.

For more information, visit [apply.cuw.edu/register/trinitytime?site=cuaa](http://apply.cuw.edu/register/trinitytime?site=cuaa).



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## Special Recognition

### Deaconess Commissioning at St. Paul, Hamburg

On Sunday, April 30, Deaconess Miriam R. Yakimow was commissioned and installed at St. Paul, Hamburg. Dcs. Yakimow, who has an M.A. in Youth and Family Ministry, finished her deaconess studies at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Ind. in the summer of 2022. She has been serving as Director of Family Ministry at St. Paul since 2017. Before St. Paul, she served at congregations in St. Paul, Minn.; Bridgeton, Mo.; and Vancouver, Wash. Yakimow says: *“My Family Ministry has always been diaconal; we just made official the ministry I have done for years.”*



Front row, L-R: Dcs. Amy Rast, Dcs. Christie Hansard, Dcs. Miriam Yakimow, Dcs. Dr. Kim Schave, deaconess student Debbie Dyjak. Not pictured: deaconess student Drusha Musmann.

Back row, L-R: Rev. Dr. Theodore Hopkins, Rev. Dr. Scott Yakimow, Rev. Dr. Charles Schulz, Rev. Jeffrey Burgess.

### Sassaman Installed

In April, Rev. Roger L. Sassaman was installed as pastor of St. Paul's, Centreville. Pastor Sassaman entered Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind. after successful completion of the Michigan District's Deacon Training Program. He served his vicarage at Peace Lutheran in Owensboro, Ky., and continued serving there for seven years. Upon his retirement in 2020, he did pulpit supply in Michigan and began serving St. Paul's in 2022.

Members of St. Paul's feel abundantly blessed and humbled to be gathered under the shepherding of Pastor Sassaman. He is pictured (center) with pastors from Circuit 44.



Photo courtesy of St. Paul's Centreville

### Vergin Installed in Grand Haven

Rev. Aaron H. Vergin, pictured first row second from the right, was installed in April at St. John's Lutheran Church in Grand Haven. A graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Ind., Pastor Vergin served St. Mark's, West Bloomfield as its sole pastor. He has also served the Michigan District as a Circuit Visitor and as an LWML Zone Counselor (2016–present). He and his wife, Amanda, have five children and reside in Waterford.



Photo courtesy of St. John's, Grand Haven

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## Meet Our New Church Workers

The Michigan District welcomed five pastoral candidates and four vicars to its roster in the spring.

On Monday, April 24, and Tuesday, April 25, two separate worship services took place at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (CTSFW) for assignment of vicarage and internships and for call placements, respectively. Adam Hiles was assigned as a Vicar to Historic Trinity, Detroit, and the following pastoral candidates received their first placement in the Michigan District: Micah Brooks (St. Luke, Nunica); Nicholas Gapski (Family of God and Saint Stephen, Detroit); and Carl Petzold (Hope, St. Helen and St. John, West Branch).



On Wednesday, April 26, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo. (CSL) held two separate worship services for assignment of vicarage and internships and for call placements, respectively. Vicars assigned to the Michigan District are (pictured top row) Daniel Bueckman (Messiah, Clio), Noah Pieper (Our Savior, Lansing), and Joshua Teggatz (St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth). Candidates receiving their first placement in Michigan from CSL are (pictured bottom row) Moses Dangba (Living Word, Lansing) and Joel Werner (Christ Our Savior, Livonia).



Please keep these students and their families in your prayers as they transition from seminary life into vicarage and full-time ministry.

## Hospice is for Living

*continued from page 5*

### Home vs. hospital setting. Do I get to choose?

You can choose home, assisted living, nursing home, adult foster care, or independent living. Hospice is usually only utilized in a hospital setting if the patients' symptoms can't be managed at home, and is usually only needed on a short-term basis. Once it is determined hospice services are needed, your hospice provider and your physician will help determine the best environment for you or your loved one to receive care.



© KatarzynaBlasiewicz/iStock

### How long does it take to qualify and start receiving services?

At Wellspring it usually takes less than 48 hours for a patient to start receiving services. This is totally dependent on the physician/hospital sending over the qualifying information and documentation so that a patient can be admitted into our hospice services.

### How often is a nurse in the home? What happens when they're not there?

Nurses visit one to three times a week depending on the patient's needs. In the very beginning, it will often feel more frequent as the hospice provider is establishing a plan and meeting with family members. The frequency of visits after that will be determined by the level of need based on the care plan established. Even when nurses aren't on site, support is always just a phone call away.

### Is hospice used only for people who are ready to die? What happens if I don't die for a long period of time? Does the benefit keep going?

Patients are evaluated every couple of months. If there is some decline, hospice services will continue. Wellspring has had people on service for more than two years. Patients can also be discharged from hospice if symptoms are managed, and they are showing stability without decline. Patients can always sign up again when the need arises. Hospice does not change the trajectory of the illness, but it provides support along the way.

### What is the benefit of hospice?

The benefits of hospice are all that you make them. But first and foremost, it is helpful if you really lean into utilizing it as a benefit for you and your loved ones. If you have conversations now about what is important to you at the end of life, when the time comes to make

difficult decisions you will already have a plan in place.

Hospice is truly about living. We know life is precious. And we also know time is precious. At Wellspring, we want to make sure you are living life in a way that makes you most comfortable, and also in a way that allows you to cherish the time you have with the most important people in your life. Hospice does that because it also allows you to make choices. You no longer have to spend your days going to doctors appointments and taking medication that could potentially have negative side effects. You get to choose what medication you want to take, and you can begin to manage your mind, body, and spirit.

### Why Wellspring?

If you live in the Great Lakes Bay Region (50-mile radius from Frankenmuth) we would love to be your hospice provider. The Wellspring hospice program provides all of the standard hospice care services, and we don't stop there. We have partnered with donors who understand the importance of hospice care. Through their generous support, we are also able to provide chaplain services, bereavement services, a bereavement camp for children, music therapy and more—all for free.

If Wellspring can be of support to you, your family, or your congregation, please feel free to reach out to the Wellspring hospice team for more information at [hospice@wellspringlutheran.com](mailto:hospice@wellspringlutheran.com). ■

*Jill M. Haiser is the Vice President of Marketing, Recruitment and Brand Strategy and Chief Marketing Officer for Wellspring.*

## The Gates of Beauty

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the same time, the wilting petals were one more reminder that the beauty of this world is so fragile.

The brand-new car with all the bells and whistles is but a moment away from its first ding, scratch, dent, or milk spill from a toddler. The beautiful bodies and the vim, vit, and vigor that we once possessed in our twenties are no match for the inescapable aging process. Even this pleasant peninsula in “cherry country” that so many love and adore cannot avoid the high winds that tear down trees, damage fruit crops, and erode the lakeshore beauty. The beauty of this world is temporal, transient, and fleeting. It can only elicit our admiration and appreciation for a short period of time before our insatiable appetite for splendor looks to the next thing and cries, “Open *now* thy gates of beauty.”

And as my eyes that Sunday morning were desperately searching for something “more beautiful” than a pile of wilting flower petals, I saw the image adjacent to and exalted above the floral arrangement—the crucifix on the altar. Above the all-too-many reminders of the fleeting beauty of this world is an image that points to the eternal beauty of our Lord’s salvation given and shed for us for the forgiveness of sin. This is ‘gospel beauty,’ whose shape is the cruciform love of our Beautiful Savior, God’s chosen One, “*who had*



© Esther Perrault

*no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him” (Isaiah 53:2).*

It is then through Christ, and not through the beauty of this world, that we finally experience God as truthful, beautiful, and good.<sup>1</sup> We “*gaze upon the beauty of the Lord” (Psalm 27:4)* through faith in our Beautiful Savior ‘clothed’ and granted in His Word of promise, in Baptism, in the Lord’s Supper, in absolution, and in preaching.<sup>2</sup> Jesus reveals to us true beauty and, “*more importantly, frees and so beautifies sinners and discloses to us this good earth as beautiful.*”<sup>3</sup>

And yet, our experience of the passing beauty of creation is another reminder that, because of sin and brokenness, God’s creation does not work the way it is supposed to work. And so, even as we enjoy the beauty of God’s creation now, we look forward to the restoration of all creation at Jesus’ return. Until that Last Day, we look to our Beautiful Savior and can boldly and confidently say, “*Open now Thy gates of beauty; Zion, let me enter there, where my soul in joyful duty waits for Him who answers prayer. Oh, how blessed is this place, filled with solace, light, and grace!*” (Lutheran Service Book, 901:1). ■

*Rev. Dr. Joshua C. LaFevé serves Immanuel Lutheran Church in Leland, Mich.*

<sup>1</sup>Mark Mattes, *Martin Luther’s Theology of Beauty: A Reappraisal* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 100.

<sup>2</sup>Mattes, *Martin Luther’s Theology of Beauty*, 11.

<sup>3</sup>Mattes, *Martin Luther’s Theology of Beauty*, 204.

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# Calls and Roster Update

## ORDAINED

### Candidates Placed

Mr. Micah Brooks (Ft. Wayne, IN) to St. Luke, Nunica  
Mr. Moses Dangba (St. Louis, MO) to Living Word, Lansing  
Mr. Nicholas Gapski (Ft. Wayne, IN) to Associate, Family of God/St. Stephen, Detroit  
Mr. Carl Petzold (Ft. Wayne, IN) to St. John/Hope, West Branch/St. Helen  
Mr. Eric Shanburn (Colloquy) to Holy Cross, Warren  
Mr. Joel Werner (St. Louis, MO) to Associate, Christ Our Savior, Livonia

### Calls Accepted

Rev. Mark Brandt (Frankenmuth, MI) to Michigan District Facilitator, North and East Zone  
Rev. Marin Cerchez (Jenison, MI) to Calvary, Charleston, SC  
Rev. John Greig (Chesterfield, MI) to Michigan District Facilitator, Metro East Zone, also remains called to First, Algonac  
Rev. Gary Koltz (Cape Coral, FL) to Marco Lutheran, Marco Island, FL  
Rev. Daniel Meckes (Rochester Hills, MI) to Michigan District Facilitator, Metro West Zone, also remains called to Journey, Oxford

### Change of Status/Title

Rev. Robert Allmann (Merrill, MI) to Emeritus  
Rev. Robert Appold (Alto, MI) to Emeritus  
Rev. Gary Beck (Flint, MI) to Emeritus

### Transferred Into District

Rev. Colin Ford (Traverse City, MI) from South Dakota District

### Transferred Out of District

Rev. Gary Koltz (Cape Coral, FL) to Florida/Georgia District  
Rev. Marin Cerchez (Jenison, MI) to Southeastern District

### Called Home

Rev. Roger Aumann

## COMMISSIONED

### Calls Accepted

Belongia, Nathan (Guardian, Dearborn) to St. James, Shawano, WI  
Hiddings, Michael (St. John's, Midland) to LHSA, Rochester Hills (North)  
Kittleman, Joshua (Concordia, Ann Arbor, MI) to Christ Our Savior, Livonia  
Mellecke, Judith (Trinity, Traverse City) to Trinity, Jefferson City, MO  
Schwaegerle, Judy (Hosanna-Tabor, Redford) to St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth  
Spanos, Esther (Our Shepherd, Birmingham) to Emmaus, Fort Wayne, IN  
Stoelting, Daniel (Candidate) to Trinity, Traverse City

### Change of Status

Lustila, Gerald, Jr. (Trinity, Sturgis) to Emeritus

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



# Calendar of Events

For more information about these and other events visit:  
[michigandistrict.org/events](http://michigandistrict.org/events)

## JUNE 2023

- 2–4 Junior High Gathering  
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 3 State Track Meet  
Valley Lutheran High School, Saginaw
- 5–7 1517 Craft of Preaching Workshop  
St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth
- 9 Community Worship Network  
Concordia University Ann Arbor
- 9–12 Synodical Convention Floor Committees
- 12–15 A2E Master Built Lego Camp  
The Vine, Walker (North Grand Rapids)
- 12–16 A2E 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
- 29 Church Worker Wellness Conference  
St. Luke, Haslett

## JULY 2023

- 3–4 Independence Day  
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 17–21 Special Friends Camp  
Camp Copneconic, Fenton
- 24–28 A2E Summer VBS  
St. Paul, Pontiac
- 29–Aug 3 LCMS National Convention  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- 31–Aug 2 Higgins Lake Conference  
Ralph A. MacMullan Conf. Center, Roscommon

## AUGUST 2023

- 8 Early Childhood Directors Day  
St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth
- 9 Early Childhood Educators Conference  
St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth

## SEPTEMBER 2023

- 1 DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 4 Labor Day  
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 5–6 Emeriti Pastors Conference  
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 25–28 Intentional Interim Conference  
Michindoh, Hillsdale