

May 2023

# michigan

## IN TOUCH

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



### HEALTHY WORKERS

## Families Matter

by Rev. David A. Davis

Last summer, I was able to spend time with some cousins and my siblings. We reminisced about aunts and uncles, grandmas and grandpas, and caught up on other cousins and their children. Earlier I had done the same with other cousins. Families matter.

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This summer we have carved out some very intentional time to be with our children and grandchildren. We will eat and play and celebrate and swim and (maybe) fish and talk and grow and re-create together.

Families matter.

We hear about mass shootings. We hear about violence in the streets. We hear about the deadly nature of guns and knives and other implements of death. We wring our hands. We contact our elected officials. We mourn collectively. In the midst of it all, we need to keep in mind and live out this truth:

Families matter.

It doesn't take a social scientist's longitudinal study on family breakdown and social ills to prove a connection between healthy families and a healthy society ... and the opposite. Just check out the news.

Families matter.

Keep in mind it is no coincidence that we have seen so much decay in the American family (and families in other countries as well). An intentionality is at work. Read up on the Frankfurt School and Critical Theory. Read up on Marxism and Communism and the place of family in those systems. Such schools of thought know that families matter to a society and what happens in it; hence their desire to reshape them.

Of course, Satan has a hand in reshaping family too.

Read up on his work with our first parents.

All that is to say, tend your family this summer. Re-create together. Your family matters. It matters to you. It matters to others.

Bless your neighbors' families as well. We have a stake in one another's families. We are all under social pressures driven by assorted theories. We are all under the influence of sin and Satan. We need strong, healing, forgiving, nurturing families. Ours. Others. This is a work we need to do in and for community.

Families matter.

Let this all be in relationship with Jesus. He redeems. He renews. He re-creates.

Take time this summer for family. It's worth it. It's biblical. It's fruitful. It will bring blessing to your home. It will bring blessing to your community.

Families matter.

Resource: Check out *Take Back Your Family* by Jefferson Bethke. ■



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

*"Families Matter" first appeared on July 8, 2022 on the blog "Toward Significance" by Rev. David Davis. Used with permission.*

“...tend your family this summer.  
Re-create *together*. Your *family matters*.  
It matters to you. It matters to others.”



# University Lutheran Chapel Ann Arbor Offers

## *Winter Weather Refuge*

by Rachel Thoms



Winter in Michigan is not the most enjoyable season. Freezing air finds its way through layered clothing when venturing outside. The inconvenience of winter often distracts us from remembering people in our communities experiencing homelessness in the harsh climate.

Those who are unhoused do not have the assurance of warm relief provided by houses and cars. But through organizations like the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (SAWC), creative initiatives like a rotating shelter, and willing partners like University Lutheran Chapel Ann Arbor (ULC), some folks experiencing homelessness know that they'll have a warm place to sleep.

In March 2023, ULC had the opportunity to host a week-long rotating shelter for 17 men experiencing homelessness in Washtenaw County. SAWC works with area churches and civic organizations to host week-long shelters in an effort to provide spaces that are safe, comfortable, warm, and welcoming. Partnering with local organizations to host the men also relieves the overflowing public warming centers.

*"ULC is all about authentic hospitality, active faith, and fostering genuine relationships. Being able to extend kindness and love to people outside of our regular circle is the definition of hospitality. God opened this door for us and in response we were able to serve these people with no agenda other than to love them,"* said Charissa Hasper, ULC's Director of Worship and Outreach.

Hasper led ULC's team of 48 volunteers who made the rotating shelter possible. Volunteers took on roles like making home-cooked dinners or coming in the evening to hang out and play cards. Volunteers also stayed overnight with the guests, making themselves available to answer questions or just offer conversations for the men who needed a listening ear. In the morning, they transitioned ULC's building back to working order for daily operations, helped brew coffee for the guests in the church's coffee shop *The Common Cup*, and passed out to-go breakfasts and bus tokens as the men went on their way for the day to jobs or day-time warming centers.

Ken Huner and Kyle Gontjes, members of ULC, took on volunteer leadership roles for the week. Huner and Gontjes assisted Hasper in identifying ways to make ULC's building welcoming and comfortable for sleeping, regularly spent time with the guests, and helped onboard the volunteers as they arrived for their shifts throughout the week.

*"I was personally touched by meeting and getting to know these overnight guests. They are not just 'homeless' as they are labeled and all that implies, but these are real people with real life stories who have been redeemed by Christ,"* said Huner. *"I was also touched by the volunteers of our church who rose to the occasion out of their love for Christ to reach out to others. It was amazing!"*

Gontjes, a 3rd year Ph.D. Candidate in Microbiology & Immunology at the University of Michigan Medical School, fondly recalls the sparkle in one gentleman's eye when their conversation shifted to his love of mathematics and psychology.

*"Experiences like this reminded me of the joy of*

*continued on page 15*



Photos courtesy of ULC



# A Legacy of Love

by Richard W. Schumacher

Photos by Elisa Schulz/Michigan District, LCMS

In early 1873, a group of Lutheran pastors chaired by the Rev. J. A. Huegli met at Historic Trinity Lutheran Church in Detroit to discuss the formation of an orphanage. On March 31, 1873, they signed articles of incorporation forming “The German Evangelical Lutheran Orphan’s Assistance Society.” The group started a building project and issued a call to the Rev. G. Speckhardt of Sebawaing, Mich., to serve as superintendent. Pastor Speckhardt brought with him to Detroit two deaf pupils from Frankenmuth to live in the orphanage. Over time, Speckhardt’s reputation as a teacher of students with hearing impairments grew and more families sought out his tutelage for their children. Within a year, 17 of the 27 orphans housed at the facility were deaf.

By 1874, synodical leaders recognized the value of this unique ministry and resolved unanimously that the Detroit orphanage would serve hearing-impaired students exclusively, and the Lutheran School for the Deaf was born.

For the next 100 years, the Lutheran School for the Deaf operated a boarding school designed to provide hearing-impaired children the opportunity to live, study, and worship in an environment that allowed them to thrive. Over the years, the school saw several building campaigns designed to prevent a lack of space from being the reason

that a child would be denied a Christian education. Thanks to the leadership of the school along with the people who generously supported its mission, hundreds of children came to learn about the love of God and the world He created on Nevada Street in the city of Detroit.

## Changes

In 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act brought sweeping changes to the educational landscape of our country. Schools were required to provide services for students with hearing impairments, meaning a residential school for the deaf was no longer a necessity. However, instead of closing the doors and celebrating a long and successful run, the board decided to shift the ministry’s focus from a single building in one city to serve in multiple schools across the state. We continued to help students with hearing impairments, but this decision allowed us to support a wider range of students whose learning differences made it difficult for them to succeed in the classroom. In 1979, the first school partnership was established with Holy Cross Lutheran School in Detroit. By 1990, we were partnering with Christian schools from coast to coast as Lutheran Special Education Ministries. We had a new name, served in new locations, and faced new challenges, but through it all, we kept our focus on

serving our great God, who led us every step of the way during those critical years of transition.

### Unique Partnerships

Today, Lutheran Special Education Ministries continues to serve God’s children through our unique ministry partnerships. LSEM works to make academic support services available to any Christian school that desires them. We provide our schools with qualified resource room teachers on both a full-time and part-time schedule based on the school’s need. Additionally, we equip our teachers with resources, assessment tools, manipulatives, training, professional development, and access to our network of special education directors and coordinators who are available to answer questions and support the ministry work of our programs.

Outside of the classroom, LSEM works with our schools and LCMS districts to provide professional development for classroom teachers at conferences or in individual school settings. 4 of the 16 LCMS districts in which we serve (Michigan, Ohio, North Wisconsin, and Central Illinois) have partnered with LSEM to provide consultative services to the schools within their district at no cost to the school. LSEM’s Director of Special Education Dr. Kara Bratton is also a regular contributor to print and online resources provided to LCMS teachers by the LCMS School Ministry Office and Lutheran Education Association. LSEM also partners with Lutheran churches in Detroit and Pontiac to provide after-school tutoring services for children in the congregation and community.

God has truly blessed the work of LSEM. We currently have 122 partnerships, the most in our 150-year history! Those schools are found in 16 states from Michigan to Texas to Florida to Alaska. We are also blessed to partner with Concordia International School in Hanoi, Vietnam. It is inspiring to see how God has chosen to use LSEM to serve His kingdom, and we are excited to see where He leads us into the future.

### Celebration

On June 15, 2023, Lutheran Special Education Ministries will be formally celebrating this ministry milestone by hosting our 150th Anniversary Celebration and Banquet. The event will take place at Detroit’s historic Gem Theatre. The evening will include many interesting and unique opportunities for attendees to congratulate our teachers (most of whom will be in attendance) as well as support the work of

LSEM as we continue to serve some of God’s most precious children.



As part of the evening’s

program, we will be welcoming former University of Michigan Men’s Basketball Coach John Beilein as our keynote speaker. Ticket and sponsorship information can be found on our website: [www.luthsped.org](http://www.luthsped.org).

Thank you to all who have supported LSEM over the years with your gifts, partnerships, and prayers. The challenges that face our students and our schools are great and seem to increase year after year. Thankfully, our God is greater than any challenge we face. It is our prayer that, with His guidance and your support, LSEM will continue to build brighter futures for its students for many years to come! ■

*Richard W. Schumacher is the Senior Director of Operations for Lutheran Special Education Ministries. To learn more about LSEM, be sure to check out Legacy of Love, a podcast episode with LSEM’s CEO Stacy McGhee at [michigandistrict.org/podcast](http://michigandistrict.org/podcast).*





Photo courtesy of Deaconess Pat Nuffer

## Hands of Mercy

The Eastern African country of South Sudan could be described as a huge sea of poverty, war, and lack of education. The lack of electricity or running clean water and the constant dirt and dust, as well as the limited variety of food grown, might discourage the visitor; but when you dig a bit beneath the surface, you find a people who love and trust the Lord beyond a question.

It is into this landlocked country that *Hands of Mercy*, a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS, brings the love of Jesus. HOM began as the internship project of Dcs. Patricia Nuffer in a partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Sudan (ELCS) to reach people with disabilities through two goals: bringing the tangible love of Jesus Christ and marketable skills training (such as raising chickens for eggs, tailoring, making local crafts, baking bread, taking and selling photographs).

Pat Nuffer travels to South Sudan once a year, bringing items like wheelchairs, pillowcase dresses, eyeglasses, sanitary pads and diapers sewn by volunteers, first aid kits, home health kits, prison kits, and more: “Often on the back of a motorcycle to get out in the bush, or in a nearby middle school classroom, or a walk to a familiar compound of friends, I get to be the bearer of your work and witness the impact ‘distribution days’ has.”

Nuffer continues: “Can the women in Indiana, or Michigan, or Texas, or a retired male engineer in Traverse City who collectively sewed hundreds of ‘girls’ pads’ understand the need of a young girl, embarrassed and fearful, who drops out of school because she got her first menstrual period in South Sudan? And the answer must be a ‘yes.’ Because each gave up time and money to make and send those pads to girls and women they will never know. And why? Because as Christians we believe all people bear the sacred image of God; as fellow ‘imago Dei,’ when they hurt, we hurt. So ‘distribution days’ is an integral part of why Hands of Mercy exists and provides the deep

*abiding satisfaction so many people receive from mission work. And now people with disabilities are at work assembling kits, to show they, too, have a heart for others in need—becoming themselves ‘givers,’ not just ‘takers’ in this life.”*

According to Nuffer, a wheelchair is a “ticket out of the dirt” for those who have mobility issues. People who are born with cerebral palsy or even children who are born healthy but then are impaired by malaria are usually relegated to living on the ground. She says, “What does a wheelchair mean in South Sudan? Yes, it can mean mobility, being off the ever-present red dirt in the dry season, or mud in the rainy half of the year. Yes, it can mean hope for an opportunity to be a valuable part of a community or school. But most of all, I think it means people care. And for us, here in America, it is easy to care—our used wheelchairs or eyeglasses, or even a toy, get a second life that puts skin on the word ‘care.’”

*Hands of Mercy* owns a couple of buildings which house a classroom, a shop, storeroom, office, photo studio, and an Adult Learning/Deaconess

Training Center. On Fridays, people with disabilities come to the center to get soap, and they get to make things with donated beads to take home and sell for their own personal income. Nuffer adds: “Once every few months we [also] have ‘capital’ day. This was inaugurated last trip to help share in the income HOM receives from its rental buildings. We buy and give each person a basin with beans, rice, sugar, a plastic cup, plastic bags, water bottles filled with cooking oil, and several long bars of soap—all for each to set up his/her own little selling business.”



All the work of the students is sold in the shop, where basic math and bookkeeping skills are learned.

The center also offers solar recharging, processing ground nuts, quilts for widows, first aid and hygiene kits, and literacy instruction.

To learn more about HOM and see donation wish lists, visit [handsofmercymission.org](http://handsofmercymission.org). ■

Photos Courtesy of Revive Fest



# Revive Fest: *Saturated in Prayer*

If you were a witness to any of the civil unrest of recent years or only saw reports of it on the news, the language of this year’s main headline act at Revive Fest may sound eerily familiar.

*Spirit fall down, start a holy riot  
Fill this place now with the tongues of fire  
Oh, break the strongholds  
Come and unleash heaven  
Burn within us, make us bold as lions\**

They are powerful words that call to mind recent events and compare them with the day of Pentecost 2,000 years in the past. Unlike some of our most recent exposure to riots that included burning cars and buildings, the song “Revival Anthem” calls to mind the fiery flame of the Holy Spirit resting on the disciples gathered in the Upper Room. Contrasted with all of hell breaking loose, Rend Collective describes heaven being unleashed as the Holy Spirit works divine conversion, transforming a mob of 3,000 into the one holy Christian Church.

This song is more than just an exercise in comparing and contrasting. It is a prayer that God would pour His Spirit into the church today and make us bold as lions. Even now, just a few months away from the festival, a team of intercessors are praying fervently for those attending the festival, that God would revive His church. Limbani Chikaipa is the director of this year’s prayer team. He is leading that team into bold prayers for every

aspect of the festival, that it would glorify God and be used powerfully by Him.

We request your prayers that:

- The harassed and helpless will know again or for the first time Jesus as their Good Shepherd (*Matthew 9:36–38*).
- The church will be inspired, and the Spirit’s gifts will be fanned into flame (*2 Timothy 1:6*).
- Seeds sown at the festival will bear fruit a hundred-fold in each attendee, and they will return revived and reviving (*Matthew 13:8–9*).

The festival is July 21–22 in Leonidas, Mich. Friday night features main stage artists Sanctus Real and We Are Messengers. Saturday artists include Sidewalk Prophets and Rend Collective. Join the prayer team, volunteer, become a sponsor, or buy tickets at [myrevivefest.com](http://myrevivefest.com). Prayers are always appreciated and welcome.



*This is our revival anthem  
Can you feel the darkness shaking?  
Oh, we are the dry bones rising  
This will be our great awakening  
This is our revival anthem\* ■*

Lyrics to Revival Anthem by Rend Collective used with permission.

MAY 2023

## Staff Spotlight: Rodney Barodte

Rodney Barodte has always been a big believer in connecting people. And that's exactly what he gets to do as the new Director of Relations at Church Extension Fund. Within his first week on the job, he had already met his first investor, a long-time supporter of CEF's mission that finds great joy in helping to Build the Kingdom with CEF.

Michigan and not see the impact of CEF on Lutheran organizations.

But even though Rodney has spent his entire life in the Michigan District, he didn't always see himself in his current role. Rodney actually began his professional life in the hospitality industry, attending culinary school to become a chef. He made the transition to a career in retail banking soon after he got married and was preparing to buy a house and start a family.

Since beginning his work at CEF, Rodney has begun to realize he never fully understood the full scope of CEF support to ministries. Knowing now that CEF is more than a financial institution, Rodney sees CEF as a growing network of believers. He works daily with churches, pastors and volunteers, Lutheran school principals and their faculty, as well as CEF congregational representatives. During each interaction, he listens to the individual needs of each group, and connects these important partners to CEF to help customize a solution that best meets their needs.



Rodney has grown up surrounded by Lutheran ministry. As the youngest of four, he attended Lutheran schools from preschool to twelfth grade in Macomb, Michigan. He has been a member of both big and small Lutheran congregations in the state. He has even seen the impact of CEF loans, which have recently helped fund a new fellowship hall, nursery, and classrooms at his current home church, New Hope - Hudsonville. In fact, Rodney would argue it's hard to go anywhere in





As Rodney put it, “I get to focus on closing the gap between the investor and those who benefit from CEF loans, whether they be schools, churches, or other Lutheran ministries. Every organization is a little different. And through my job, I can take the time to explore the unique needs of each group that CEF serves. I get to connect the dots and understand the story behind their individual ministries.”

Rodney’s favorite part of his new job? He gets to spend everyday hearing how others are Building the Kingdom in Michigan. And along the way, he gets to empower laypeople to directly get involved in Lutheran ministries happening in their neighborhood. “The real work starts with educating others on what they and CEF can accomplish when we work together,” he says.

Rodney has been married to Alisha for seven years, and has two boys, Judah and Gabriel. When he’s not working, he’s completing home renovation projects on his family’s fixer-upper or spending time outdoors doing yard work. In the future, Rodney looks forward to raising his own children in the faith with the support of his home congregation. He is so thankful that CEF is part of what daily makes that possible.



*“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”  
Psalm 133:1*



Church Extension Fund  
3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-3098  
[www.mi-cef.org](http://www.mi-cef.org) ■ Offices: 800-242-3944

## LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

### Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Klaus Called to Glory

The Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Klaus, Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour® radio program, died March 23 at his home in Texas. He served as Speaker of The Lutheran Hour from 2002 until his retirement at the end of 2010. Following his retirement as full-time Speaker, he continued recording one sermon a month for The Lutheran Hour before returning as interim Speaker in 2017 and 2018. Using stories, parables, and common-sense messages, Pastor Klaus was known by listeners for one thing: preaching Christ crucified and risen.

He preached frequently at LCMS churches in the Michigan District and was a frequent speaker at the LLL Men's Retreat in Arcadia. In addition to his weekly sermons on The Lutheran Hour, Pastor Klaus initiated the writing and recording of Lutheran Hour Ministries' popular Daily Devotions, a resource that shares God's love in Jesus Christ with readers and listeners worldwide. He also developed and hosted several LHM Bible studies, spoke at conferences and events across the United States and Canada, led ministry tours internationally, and published many works, including volumes one and two of *Stories from The Lutheran Hour: A Changeless Christ in a Changing World*, and two prayer books (one for use by people in the military and a companion book for loved ones at home).

*"Tens of thousands of listeners have been blessed to learn from and be strengthened in the faith through the powerful messages delivered by Pastor Klaus,"* says LHM President & CEO Kurt Buchholz. *"We give thanks for his faithful service as we remember his family and friends in our prayers."*

*"In 2004, I was serving in the military, praying to see*

*if God wanted me to be a pastor,"* says Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Speaker of The Lutheran Hour since 2018. *"Hearing Ken Klaus on The Lutheran Hour and seeing some of the materials he had written for military members encouraged me to take the next steps to become a preacher."*

Before taking the Speaker's microphone, Pastor Klaus was administrative pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Dallas, Texas, and served the International Lutheran Laymen's League as its pastoral advisor from 1996 through 2000. During his more than 30 years of parish ministry, he held pastoral positions at Lutheran churches in Texas, Minnesota, Illinois, and South Dakota.

Pastor Klaus is survived by his wife, Pam, and their three adult children, Kurt, Kirsten, and Kristianna. He was a beloved grandfather as well as a friend to many people around the world.



Photo courtesy of LHM



Michigan District, LCMS presents

**2023 Professional Church Workers Conference**

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

[michigandistrict.org/pcw23](http://michigandistrict.org/pcw23)

**ABID** *In Jesus*  
John 15:4-5



# Michigan District

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

People of Hope ... Vigorously Making Known the Love of Christ

*Transforming Spirits, Stories, and Cities*  
A2E Initiative

Spring 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

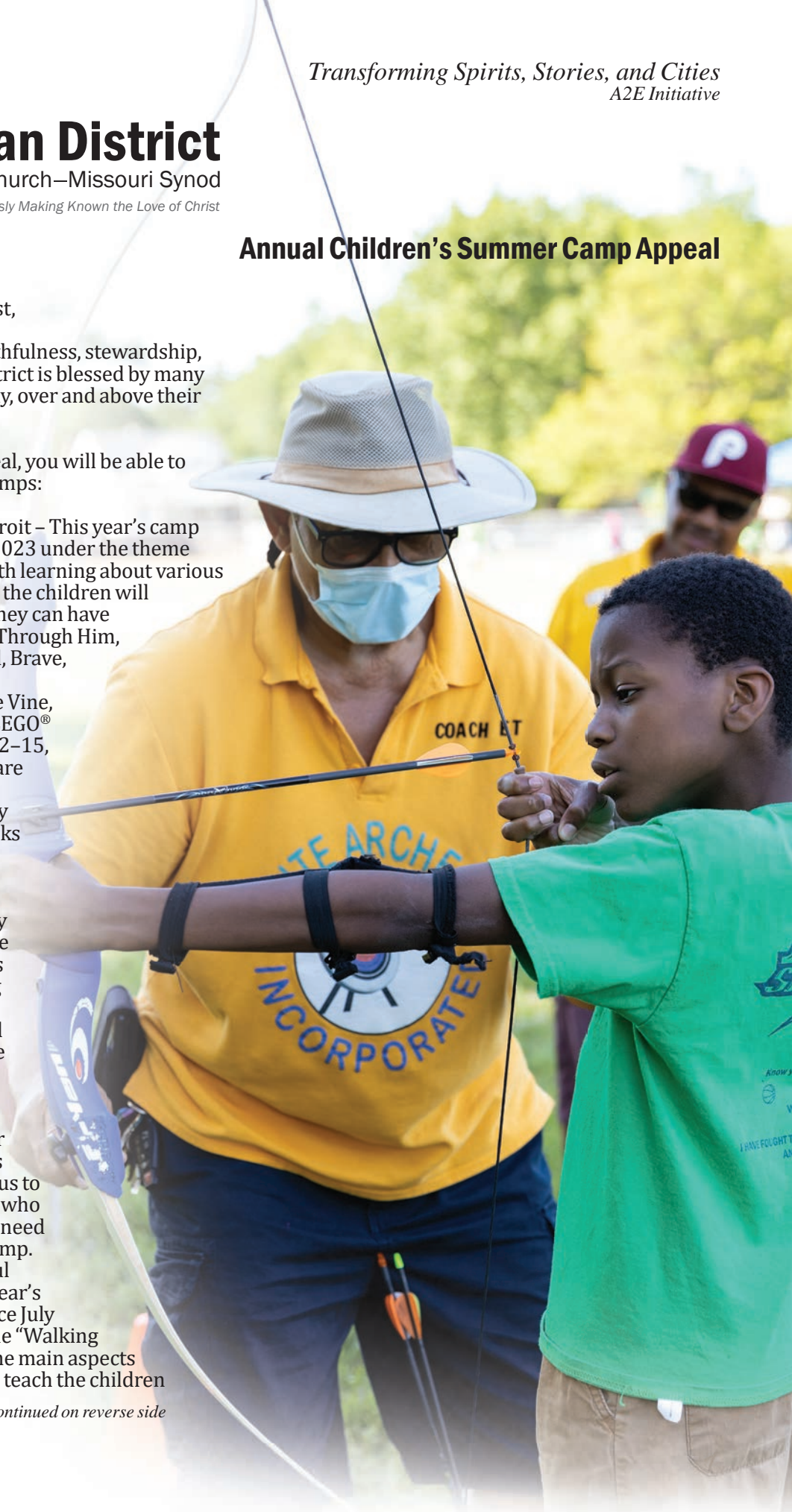
Thank you for your continued faithfulness, stewardship, and generosity. Our Michigan District is blessed by many who financially support us directly, over and above their regular congregation offerings.

By responding to this spring appeal, you will be able to support the following summer camps:

- Sports Camp at Bethany, Detroit – This year’s camp will be held on June 12–16, 2023 under the theme “Good VIBES Only.” Along with learning about various sports throughout the week, the children will learn about the confidence they can have because it comes from God! Through Him, they are Valuable, Influential, Brave, Encouraging, and Selfless!
- Summer LEGO® Camp at The Vine, Walker – The “Master Built LEGO® Camp” will be held on June 12–15, 2023. Many kids and adults are fascinated by the television series “LEGO® Masters.” They will use LEGO® building blocks to teach how our Master, Jesus, builds us up and gives us life abundant and eternal through the Gospel. The daily schedule will also have a time of STEM learning. LEGO® has done a great job of providing activities that teach science, technology, engineering, and math to kids. This STEM time will reinforce that fact that our great God has created a complex and orderly world for us to take care of with our Master and Builder. New this year—The Vine will have a bus to pick up some of the children who live in low income areas and need transportation to come to camp.
- Summer VBS Camp at St. Paul Community, Pontiac – This year’s camp at St. Paul will take place July 24–28, 2023 under the theme “Walking with Jesus.” It will focus on the main aspects of Jesus’ life here on earth, to teach the children

*Continued on reverse side*

## Annual Children’s Summer Camp Appeal





who Jesus is and what He came to do. The days' themes are: Christmas, Jesus in the Temple, Jesus' Baptism, The Crucifixion, and The Resurrection. St. Paul Community, Pontiac is excited to formulate a program that is more focused on Jesus and relates to the children's everyday faith.

As you know, we have a number of fine Lutheran residential camps available for students, and of course we support those. The reason I bring the above three camps to mind is that they are directed at students who would be unable to attend any other camp because their families do not have the funds needed to pay their cost to attend. Our prayer is that we will again be able to fund the attendance of every child at zero cost to them.

You remember what Jesus said: *"Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs to the Kingdom of God"* (Mark 10:14 ESV). Through these experiences, indeed we will be doing so.

Your prompt and generous support for these efforts is greatly appreciated. The cost to sponsor one child is \$55. Two children is \$110. \$550 sponsors ten children; and \$1,100 sponsors twenty. Please use the enclosed remittance form and return it in the pre-addressed return envelope.

Again, thank you for your prayerful consideration and generous response as you help to make our 2023 camp programs a reality for many children. Please know you are a wonderful blessing to those who will attend a camp because you care. Thank you for helping to make the words of Mark 10:14 ring true in the lives of many children this summer.

*...eyes on Jesus...*

*Rev. David A. Davis*  
 Rev. David A. Davis, President  
 Michigan District, LCMS



*P.S. These camps are always looking for volunteers! If you or someone you know would like to get involved, please contact each congregation directly.*

*P.S.S. As Sports Camp/VBS gifts are received, if the A2E ministry is blessed to receive more sponsorships than needed to sponsor every child, any funds exceeding that need will go toward the general support of the A2E urban ministries.*



**Yes, President Davis, I would like to support the A2E Summer Camp Ministry!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

My gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

Donate online at [michigandistrict.org/springappeal](http://michigandistrict.org/springappeal) or please make checks payable to Michigan District, LCMS and send to:

Attn: Development Department  
 Michigan District, LCMS  
 3773 Geddes Rd  
 Ann Arbor, MI 48105

### Emeriti Pastors Conference

Emeriti pastors, their wives, and widows are invited to attend the 2023 Emeriti Pastors Conference, under the theme *Biblical Perspective on People, Places, and Practice*, September 5–6, 2023. While we may grieve work routines, people contacts, and energies lost because of retirement, the void is filled by new graces of God in our increased times of reflection and meditation. Pondering several texts, the Old Testament becomes more than pre-Jesus history. It is a rich but often untapped source for waxing devotion in our waning years. Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer and Rev. Dr. Chad Foster are the guest speakers. For more information or to register, visit [michigandistrict.org/emeriti23](http://michigandistrict.org/emeriti23).

### Winter Whiteout Retreat 2023

The unseasonably warm winter this year was even cozier for a group of sixty northern Michigan Lutherans on the first weekend in March. At Camp Daggett, nestled on Walloon Lake, just south of Petoskey, youth from six different congregations “in the north”—Immanuel, Alpena; Zion, Petoskey; Trinity, Traverse City; Immanuel, Leland; Redeemer, Interlochen; and Trinity, Arcadia—gathered for the annual Winter Whiteout youth retreat (see Psalm 51:7) organized by Brian Horning, Director of Family and Youth Ministries at Zion, Petoskey.

There was the typical retreat stuff—pizza, games, and late nights. One could also tackle an adventure challenge course with high ropes, low ropes, and climbing walls. Or one could choose to ascend the slopes of Nub’s Nob

### Church Worker Wellness Conference

Concordia Plans, in partnership with Church Extension Fund and the Michigan District, is providing a free, one-day workshop for active church workers and their spouses on June 29, 2023. The workshop includes pertinent information about your Concordia Plan Services financial benefits (e.g., pension, 403(b), how to support your overall financial wellness), and ways to improve your physical and mental health. Guest speakers include Laura Scheer, Amy Klein, Kelly Menke, and Rev. Dan Ramthun. There is no cost to attend and lunch is included. To register, visit [michigandistrict.org/churchworkerwellness](http://michigandistrict.org/churchworkerwellness).

Ski Resort on Saturday evening. In addition, the entire group spent valuable time worshipping together. It was a great way for these Michigan Lutherans who straddle both sides of the forty-fifth parallel to fight the typical (or atypical!) bleak midwinter.



Photo courtesy of Rev. Joshua LaFeve

# UNCOMMON IN CHRIST

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY  
WISCONSIN & ANN ARBOR

[CUW.EDU](http://CUW.EDU) | [CUAA.EDU](http://CUAA.EDU)



### Thomas Wrege Wins 1st Annual Charles A. Winterstein Administrator of the Year Award

Photo courtesy of LSEM



Thomas Wrege, principal of Zion Lutheran School in Walburg, Texas, has been named the winner of the 2023 Charles A. Winterstein Administrator of the Year. Presented by Lutheran Special Education Ministries, the award is designed to recognize the efforts of principals in Christian schools who demonstrate a commitment to meeting the needs of students with learning differences in their school.

Wrege has been a Lutheran educator for thirty-eight years, serving schools in Kansas, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan, and Texas. For twenty-three of those years, Wrege has served as principal. Over the years, Wrege has worked hard to grow in his abilities as he served God through his schools and is well respected among his peers throughout the Missouri Synod. An outstanding leader, Wrege was named a 2013 winner of the National Distinguished Principal Award, presented annually by

the United States Department of Education. He was also a finalist for the Texas District (LCMS) Educator of the Year in 2021.

Wrege, along with his wife Keven, will receive the award on June 15, 2023, at the Lutheran Special Education Ministries' 150th Anniversary Banquet in Detroit. The award is named after Charles Winterstein, a distinguished educational leader who served within Lutheran K-12 schools and universities as well as at the district and national level. Winterstein was a friend and mentor to many who serve in Lutheran schools today, as well as a staunch supporter of the ministry work of LSEM.

For more information about Lutheran Special Education Ministries or the 150th Anniversary Banquet, please visit [luthsped.org](http://luthsped.org).

### Adams Installed in Eastpointe

In March, Rev. Douglas Adams was installed as Senior Pastor at St. Peter's, Eastpointe. He has served at St. Paul, Hillsdale; Emmanuel, Britton; and Trinity, Berrien Springs prior to accepting the call to St. Peter's. Over the years, Pastor Adams has served beyond the congregations as an LWML Zone Counselor, PALS and Quest programs, and currently serves on the Michigan District Stewardship Committee. In the community, he has served as a Cub Scout Chaplain, HOPE ministry for developmental disabilities, and was a community host to the Red Cross National Night Out. He and his wife, Robyn, have five children.

Photo courtesy of St. Peter's, Eastpointe



### Haak Installed in Fraser

Rev. Joel D. Haak was installed as Associate Pastor at St. John, Fraser in March. He previously served in the LCMS Minnesota District. He is pictured here with attending pastors. Back row (l-r): Rev. Fritz Schmitt, Rev. Daniel Howard, Deacon John Wulff, and Rev. Darryl Andrzejewski; Front row (l-r): Rev. Bradley Smith, Rev. Joel Haak, Rev. Alexander Garber, and Rev. Douglas Adams.



Photo courtesy of Jim Shields



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## University Lutheran Chapel

*intentionally communing with others and being present,”* said Gontjes, who noted that there was always a task to complete as a volunteer, but sometimes the best thing he could do was be present and attentive to the guests.



Photo courtesy of ULC

*continued from page 3*

Located in the heart of Ann Arbor, ULC’s building is a hubbub of activity. As The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod campus ministry for the University of Michigan, the church owns *The Common Cup*, a coffee shop ministry widely used for studying, projects, and meeting place for students and area organizations. About 30 organizations regularly use spaces within the building each month in addition to ULC ministries and events.

*“Having just a little bit of time to get to know a group of people who are kind enough to let us into their lives for a week and have fun while doing it, it was really humbling and cool to see,”* said Hasper. *“They really didn’t have to be as open with us as they were and it made us recognize the dignity that every person has. God was at work; we were just His hands and feet.”*

Learn more about University Lutheran Chapel Ann Arbor at [ulcannarbor.org](http://ulcannarbor.org). ■

*Rachel Thoms is the Director of Communication and Production at University Lutheran Chapel Ann Arbor.*

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– Joel Keup,  
Director of Facilities and Safety at  
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# Calls and Roster Update

# Calendar of Events

## ORDAINED

### Calls Accepted

Rev. Kurt Lambert (Garden City, MI) to IIM, Lutheran Church of the Lakes, Addison  
Rev. Michael Saylor (Convoy, OH) to Sr., Zion, Kalamazoo

### Change of Status

Rev. Richard Collin (Ewart, MI) to Emeritus  
Rev. Robert Mikkelson (Pinckney, MI) to Emeritus

### Transferred Out of District

Rev. Simeon Cornwell (Terre Haute, IN) to Indiana District  
Rev. Marvin Griffin (Selma, AL) to Southern District  
Rev. Michael Lutz (Youngsville, NC) to Southeastern District

## COMMISSIONED

### Calls Accepted

Gehm, Rebecca (Concordia, Mequon, WI) to St. Michael's, Richville  
Johnson, Leah (Concordia, Seward, NE) to Christ the King, Southgate  
Schroeder, Lydia (Concordia, Ann Arbor) to St. Paul, Ann Arbor  
Traska, Keith (Trinity, Saint Joseph) to St. John's, Norwood Young America, MN  
Unger, Allison (Candidate) to LHSA, Rochester Hills (Westland)  
Yakimow, Miriam (Concordia, Fort Wayne) to St. Paul, Hamburg

### Transferred Out of District

Griffin, Shirley (Emeritus) to Southern District  
Hackbarth, Richard (Emeritus) to Iowa District East  
Hausch, Michael (Emeritus) to English District  
Loren, John (Candidate) to Texas District

### Transferred Into District

Flanick, Meghan (Missouri District) as Candidate

### Called Home

Thunder-Haab, Keturah

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

Please check the District website for the latest updates and detailed information as COVID-19 concerns continue.  
[michigandistrict.org/events](http://michigandistrict.org/events)

## 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 (Whitmore Lake)
- 23 Board of Directors  
St. Paul, Hamburg (Whitmore Lake)
- 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
- 5–7 1517 Craft of Preaching Workshop  
St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth
- 9–12 Synodical Convention Floor Committees
- 12–15 A2E Master Built Lego Camp  
The Vine, Walker (North Grand Rapids)
- 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
- 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
- 29–Aug 3 LCMS National Convention  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- 31–Aug 2 Higgins Lake Conference  
Ralph A. MacMullan Conf. Center, Roscommon

