

January 2024

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IN TOUCH

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

HEALTHY WORKERS

Deeply at Home in Jesus?

by Rev. David A. Davis

As we begin a New Year, I invite you to heed Jesus' invitation to be deeply at home with Him.

Check out how often in John's Gospel Jesus invites us to abide in Him or in His Word. Actually, both are the same thing: to abide in Jesus is to abide in His Word. When Jesus invites us to abide, He is inviting us to be deeply at home in Him. (You should hear the word "abode" in "abide".)

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Too often we think about Jesus as a “one-room schoolhouse.” We focus a lot on Christ crucified. We even quote Paul in 1 Corinthians, “I decided to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). Christ crucified dominates our conversation.

Certainly, Christ crucified is, well, crucial to our faith. But Scripture, as reflected in the Creeds, invites us to think about many other aspects of Jesus’ ministry. So, instead of thinking about Jesus as a one-room schoolhouse, let’s think of Him as a mansion with many rooms.

We should start in the living room, reading all the passages about Christ crucified. That act of self-sacrifice provides for us the atonement we need to have reconciliation with God and life in Christ. This is our entrance into the house of God.

But then let’s go into the dining room. Dining rooms are for feasting and celebrating. When we

contemplate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, we are moved to celebrate. “*Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Corinthians 15:54b–57).

Daily life happens in the family room. There we experience the ups and downs of the present day. There, let’s consider where Jesus is now, in this day, today. He is no longer on the cross; He is at the right hand of the Father, reigning and ruling over all creation. There is much in daily life that causes us concern, heartache, and confusion. Strains and stressors abound. But we have no fear, for Jesus is reigning right now, building His kingdom in our day, and the gates of hell cannot prevail. He is at the Father’s right hand interceding for us.

Say, do you smell something in the kitchen? What is that aroma? Someone is cooking up something good. We enter the kitchen, where we see that the richest of meats is being prepared. Bottles of the finest of wines line the counter. Jesus promises to return and take us into His nearer presence. It is good for us to reflect on that. This world is not the end of it; we await at the consummation of all things a feast to consume. There are many, many passages about the return of Jesus. We should focus on them.

No mansion is complete without a music room. The songs that are the Psalms fill us with beautiful music about Jesus. “*The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want*” (Psalm 23); “*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble*” (Psalm 46); “*The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek*” (Psalm 110). Spending time in this music room will gladden the saddest of hearts.

Should we stop in the washroom? Think of all the passages throughout the Bible that speak to cleansing and washing.

And the bedroom? Maybe read again Song of Solomon.

What about the basement? In our basement we keep old family photographs and records. The archives of our family are there—documents that speak to where we have come from and how we fit into what came before. We dare not avoid spending time reading the Old Testament.

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Love Talks: *Daring* Conversations Toward Reconciliation



Sometimes silence is golden. Other times it is a relationship killer.

Two people are estranged. Angry. At odds. A friend intervenes with the suggestion, “Well, have you tried talking about it?”

Reconciliation takes conversation, verbal interaction, words. The world around us needs us to engage with others in the ministry of reconciliation, both with people and with God. At the very heart of all reconciliation is the Word Himself, the Word made flesh, Jesus.

The Michigan District, LCMS is pleased to announce that registration for the 2024 Theological Conference, *Love Talks: Daring Conversations Toward Reconciliation*, is now open. The conference will take place on February 3 at Our Savior, Lansing.

This year’s conference will feature a **range of speakers** who will share their insights on the vital role of love in fostering reconciliation. These presenters include Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies, Rev. Mark Schulz, Dcs. Tiffany Manor, and Rev. David Davis. Also included in the lineup is FLAME, the Grammy-nominated Christian hip-hop artist known for his powerful and uplifting lyrics. We look forward to the energy and passion on the topic these speakers will bring to our time together.

In addition to the keynote speakers and musical performances, the conference will also feature a **Compassion Ministry**, which will provide attendees with the opportunity to make a positive impact in the Lansing community through Our Savior’s Food Bank and St. Luke, Haslett’s Coat Closet.

We hope you will join us for this exciting event as we

come together to explore new ways of building bridges towards reconciliation with those in our lives, churches, and communities. Mark your calendars now for February 3, **share this with your friends**, and register soon!

Let’s get started with daring conversations of reconciliation. After all, love talks.

For more information, or to register, visit michigandistrict.org/theological24. ■

FEB 3
7:00 PM

FLAME

ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH - CHRIST CAMPUS
122 S PENNSYLVANIA AVE. LANSING, MI 48912
THIS IS A FREE EVENT, WITH LIMITED SEATING. TO RESERVE A SPOT, PLEASE GO TO
[HTTPS://MICHIGANDISTRICT.ORG/FLAME](https://michigandistrict.org/flame) OR USE THE FOLLOWING QR CODE:

Sanctity of Life

Sunday, January 21, 2024, has been designated by Lutherans for Life as Sanctity for Life Sunday: Just as I Am. We felt it was appropriate to include several articles written on the subject. For more information on how your congregation can observe Life Sunday, visit lutheransforlife.org.



Photos by Elisa Schulz/Michigan District, LCMS

THE PRO-LIFE GENERATION AT THE MARCH FOR LIFE IN MICHIGAN

by Elisa L. Schulz

On a rainy Wednesday morning, approximately 5,000 people gathered in front of the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing to demonstrate their unwavering support for life at all stages.

The Michigan March for Life took place on November 8. Many Michigan District pastors (including two entire circuits), schools, and individuals were there, along with other non-Lutheran groups. There was a rally at 11 a.m. featuring several speakers, and the march began at noon. The rain held off for most of the rally and march, which was an answer to prayer.

The high number of youth present (high school students and youngsters) was a highlight for many, including Rev. Paul Clark, Pastor at St. Paul, Fowler, and President of Lutherans for Life of Michigan. After the march, Clark said, *“We think that everything went wonderfully. I could not be more pleased. Despite the weather, the turnout was awesome. It was so encouraging to see the number of young people who were at this rally and march. The speakers were great, the march itself was peaceful and well done and well organized.”*

After the rally, all Lutherans were invited to a gathering at Hope, DeWitt, where they were served a delicious lunch and enjoyed fellowship. Rev. Tony Sikora, pastor at Hope, said, *“I was glad to have a number of high schools and various churches and day schools and pastors participating in all of this, along with our own members and laity.”* Over 200 people came to the gathering.

After the meal, participants heard an inspiring address by Rev. Michael Salemink, Executive Director of Lutherans for Life. He said, *“Sanctity of life is not just a hobby. It’s not just a thing that we do, not even just a cause or a movement. We believe this is the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that God creates and redeems and calls every human being to be his own—precious, special, priceless—from fertilization to forever ... Advocating for the sanctity of life is our purpose. This is why we are here. It’s what life is about and it’s what makes life magnificent.”*

Salemink then encouraged participants to put their sanctity of life convictions into practice: *“After today, I want you to be able to take the energy and enthusiasm that has been generated by gathering together with life-minded Lutherans from across the state, as well as other pro-life voices, and use that as a springboard.”* Here are Salemink’s suggestions:

1. Learn. There is a lot of misinformation related to abortion in our culture.



- 2. Publicize.** Tell a family member or a friend about the difference that the gospel of Christ makes to you and to our culture. Lutherans for Life has lots of resources you can share and point people to, including a prolific YouTube channel.
- 3. Assess your own opportunities,** your interests, and abilities and how those could benefit people who are facing life issues.
- 4. Enjoy the blessings God has given you** by building relationships with the people whom He has put into your life. Open conversations and relate to the people around you.
- 5. Recognize God’s gifts.** Rejoice in the blessings of life and family. Encourage your pastor.
- 6. Engage.** Network and organize with other life-affirming voices such as you have done at the march and rally.
- 7. Donate.** Lots of ministries could benefit from your generosity.
- 8. Advocate.** Get familiar with your local school board or library board or city council proceedings.
- 9. Contact your state and federal representatives.**
- 10. Volunteer:** sort donations or perform maintenance at the pregnancy resource center; sit and sing or play and pray with nursing home residents; prepare meals at a soup kitchen; stock shelves at a food pantry; provide childcare for a single mom or teenage parent.

Salemink concluded saying, *“There are so many different ways in which you can put the sanctity of life into practice, and I want you to think of them not just as responsibilities, but as opportunities. After all, this is what makes life magnificent and why we’re here to share in the joy that God Himself has in receiving every neighbor as a gift and a privilege.”* ■

Elisa L. Schulz is a staff writer, copy editor, and photographer for the Michigan District, LCMS.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE: KILLING THE LIVING

by Madison Ford, St. Lorenz Lutheran School

(1st place winner, Lutherans for Life of Michigan [lflmi.org]; 2nd place winner in national Lutherans for Life essay contest)

“**I**n his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:10). Some people do not live by this Bible verse. Many believe that ending their lives before they die a natural death that God would want is fine. Physician-assisted suicide (PAS) is the voluntary termination of someone’s life by lethal substances given by a physician (Morrow). It is vital to be informed about why PAS is a problem, why it happens so often, and what Christians can do to help the situation.

PAS should be stopped because of the problems it causes. Firstly, the act of PAS is a sin because it devalues human life which is a gift from God. As Ephesians 2:10 says, “*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*” PAS puts those who are handicapped, elderly, and mentally ill in a vulnerable position (Smith). Finally, the biggest problem caused by PAS is that once this option becomes available to more people, doctors will not be able to stop the spread of suicides this way (Allen).

In order to understand why PAS exists, it is important to learn why people choose this option. Thousands choose PAS because of mental illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder and depression (Smith). When someone is diagnosed with a life-ending disease, such as cancer, they might choose PAS because they do not want to suffer. To stop PAS, people need to be educated on how to help those who may suffer from illnesses or disorders.

As Christians, it is essential to know how to help stop PAS cases. An important way to help people is to provide hope to those who have been diagnosed with a life-threatening disease because many times doctors are wrong about how long someone will live (WebMD). For example, my aunt had blood cancer and lived for seven years longer than the doctors had predicted. Instead of choosing PAS, she had the opportunity to live the rest of her life to the fullest.

Ecclesiastes 3:1–2a says, “*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die.*” PAS is not the way God would plan for lives to end, so in order to stop PAS, learning about why it is a problem, why people choose it, and how to prevent it is crucial. God is the ultimate Creator, and it is vital that Christians take action and follow His command. ■

THE UNBORN ARE HUMAN

by Daniel Hudeck, Trinity, Reese

(2nd place winner, Lutherans for Life of Michigan)

“**E**ach unborn life isn’t a potential person, it’s a person with potential” (Roman et al.). Everyone can agree that it is unconscionable to kill a toddler. However, our society finds it acceptable to end the life of the unborn. Why? What is the difference between a toddler and an unborn human being? Perhaps it is because some people do not view the unborn as human beings. The unborn are most certainly human. “*According to the science of embryology, from the earliest stages of development you were a distinct, living, and whole human being*” (Klusendorf and Feldhahn). Only four differences distinguish the unborn from a toddler or adult and those differences do not affect their value. The unborn are human and have great value!

Size is the first difference. We would find it ridiculous to consider a large person more valuable than a smaller person. Yet this reasoning happens during abortion when a toddler’s life is protected while a smaller unborn child’s life is not. Level of development is the next difference. Each person has a unique set of abilities which vary based upon their age and situation, but this does not determine their inherent worth. Environment is the third difference. Are people in different places more valuable than others? No! How can your value change with a seven-inch trip through the birth canal? God declares us valuable before we were born. “*Before I [God] formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you*” (Jeremiah 1:5). Degree of dependency is the last difference. We are all dependent on others to some degree for our basic needs. For example, we do not grow all our own food and make all our own clothing. As Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 12, we each have a unique and important role to play and need each other to function well.

The unborn are definitely human and the four qualities that make them different from a toddler or full-grown adult do not affect their value. “Just as I am” in my size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency, I am valuable to God. “*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them*” (Ephesians 2:10). Each unique human being has value and a purpose designed by God before we were even born. How much potential has been missed because of abortion? ■

LUTHERAN HIGH NORTH CHERISHES LIFE AT ALL STAGES

by John Brandt

Neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow, nor blustering winds could dampen the spirits as students from Lutheran North High School in Macomb joined many others at the March for Life at the Michigan State Capitol on Wednesday, November 8.

Lutheran North students, and all who attended, heard excellent speakers encouraging everyone to cherish life at all stages. One of the speakers, State Representative Jaime Greene, is a parent of a Lutheran North student. This made the day, the encouragement, the purpose even greater.

Alyssa, a Lutheran North junior, commented on one of her favorite speakers: *“Genecia Davis told us her story on how she had multiple abortions and didn’t realize what she was doing was wrong. This was inspiring because she was able to turn her life around and realize that what she was doing was hurting not just her but was going against God’s plan and killing many lives. She was able to completely turn her life around and now she helps countless others. That is truly amazing.”*

Chloe, a Lutheran North junior, offered a great reflection that emphasized the important purpose of the November 8 march and in the future: *“I think more young men and women should be involved in March for Life next year because for me, personally it opened my eyes to worldly issues that are not talked about enough or are looked over today. With more individuals educated and concerned about the issue of abortion, more changes are likely to take place.”*

Following the march, students headed over to Hope, DeWitt for food and fellowship.

It was wonderful to see so many grade school and high school students attend the March for Life. One of the best parts of the day was hearing from Rev. Paul Clark and Rev. Michael Saleminck. Their pro-life, pro-family messages centered on the grace, comfort, forgiveness, and salvation that is ours in Christ our Redeemer. It was the perfect way to conclude a perfect day.

Everything about the day was encouraging and inspirational. Praise be to God! ■

John Brandt teaches English at Lutheran High School North, Macomb.

LIFE SUNDAY SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION

A Life Sunday Service of Commemoration will be held January 21, 2024, 2 p.m., at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, 585 W. Burr Oak St., Centreville, to accord honor to the more than 64 million babies whose lives have been taken in abortion in the past 51 years in the United States. This event will be a collaboration with Right to Life of St. Joseph County, which meets on the third Tuesday of each month at St. Paul’s church. All are invited. A memorial, “Garden of Hope,” is located at St. Paul’s church.



Photo courtesy of Lutheran High North, Macomb

JANUARY 2024

CEF Investment Rebate Program

Jim Saalfeld loves his job. As the CEO of Church Extension Fund, he wakes up every day eager to have CEF help grow the Kingdom throughout Michigan.

One of his favorite programs offered by CEF is still relatively new and one he wishes more churches knew about. The CEF Investment Rebate Program allows CEF to give a portion of a congregation's loan payment back to the church. And Saalfeld hopes the number of congregations participating in this program will increase in 2024.

A Rebate that Gives

The CEF Investment Rebate Program has existed for almost five years. "It's one of the more unique and intriguing programs we offer because everyone in a congregation can contribute to the success of their church through this process," says Saalfeld.

Saalfeld explained it this way: "Let's say a church has a loan of \$1,000,000 through CEF. And if the total of what the church and its members have invested with



CEO Jim Saalfeld

CEF totals to \$750,000, that would be 75% of the loan balance. Through the Investment Rebate Program, the church would receive a 0.75% annual cash rebate, or \$7,500. That money can be used for anything. It can be viewed as reducing the interest rate on the original loan or as a bonus to help the congregation do something it otherwise could not afford."

The program thresholds are 50% (0.50%), 75% (0.75%), and 100% or greater (1.0%).

Sharing the Blessing

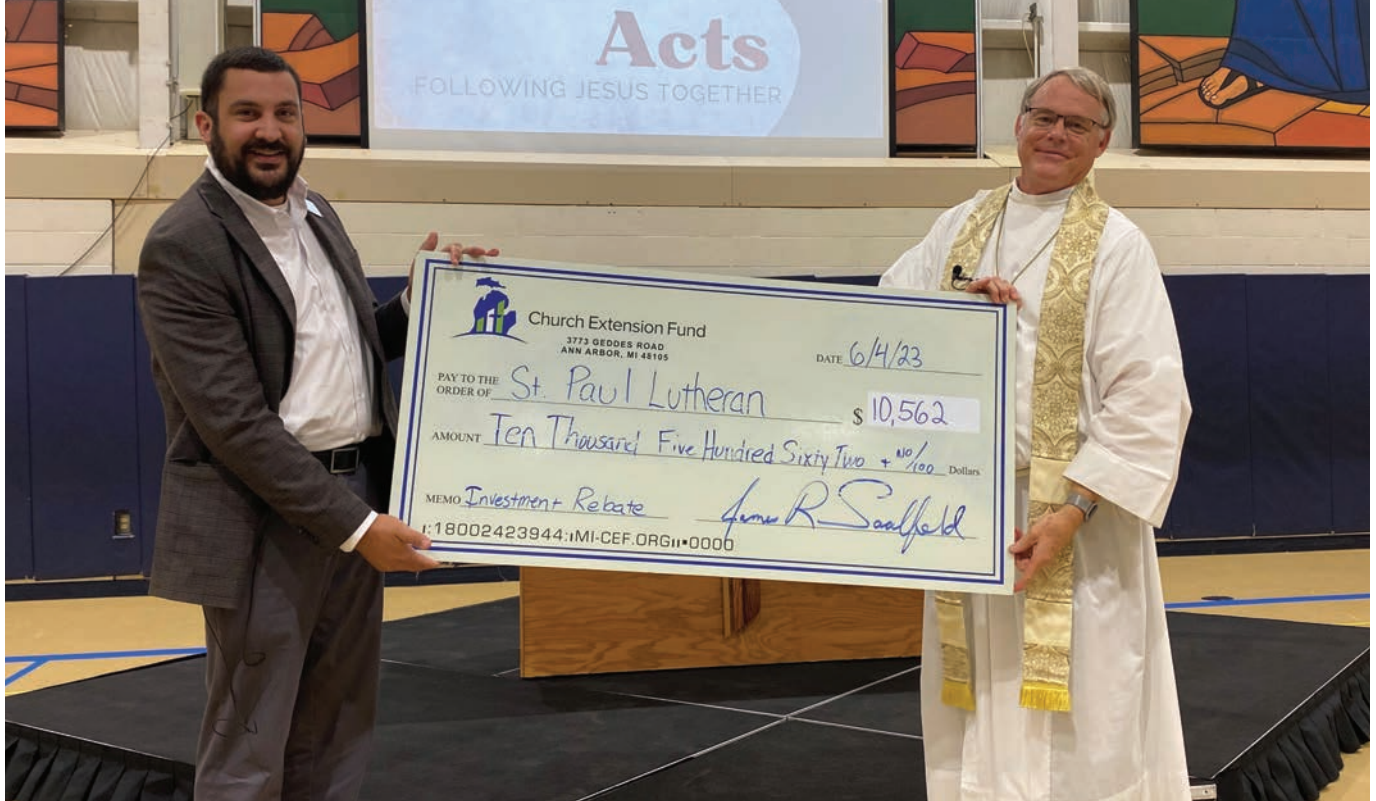
As has been true with every program offered by CEF, Saalfeld is impressed by the creative ways churches decide to spread their wealth.

"We've seen rebates be used to fund vacation bible schools over the summer, help replace an ailing boiler, or pay down debt. The options are endless and totally up to the congregation."

Saalfeld also pointed out that giving more financial resources to churches through the investment rebate program helps CEF reach more members in the pews since their investments make all the difference: "CEF works through four main channels to build the Kingdom: loans, investments, grants, and services. The investment rebate program best fits under the services umbrella. We like giving these rebates away because we know how much each check helps churches and their ministries grow."

No Downside

But arguably the real beauty of CEF's Investment Rebate



CEF's Director of Relations Rodney Barodte presents an Investment Rebate check.

Program is its simplicity. The only requirements to be eligible for the annual rebate are to be an LCMS congregation in the Michigan District and to have a loan with CEF.

And Saalfeld promises they leave no stone unturned in helping congregations benefit from this opportunity: "The only downside we've ever seen to this program is when a church is so close to hitting a rebate

tier and they aren't aware of it. That's why CEF will work directly with churches to take advantage of this opportunity. If a congregation is only a few dollars short of one of the program's tiers, we see it as a great conversation starter about further opportunities for the church and its members to invest with CEF.

"Some of our best programs at CEF empower individual church

members to do more than make financial contributions toward their church. We help them put their personal savings directly into action in helping address their church's needs."

To learn more about the CEF investment Rebate Program, you can check out the CEF website, or you can contact the CEF office directly at 800-242-3944.



*"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."
Luke 12:48*

Countless Reasons to Attend the Lutheran Adult Gathering

by Patti Bogema

With a clear night sky, the smell of fall in the air, and a hint of crispness, the waters of the Straits of Mackinac softly lap on the shore. The Mackinac Bridge is lit in the distance. Friends sit on white rocking chairs as the air is filled with quiet conversation and laughter. The day spent at the Lutheran Adult Gathering becomes a magical memory kept forever.

The Lutheran Adult Gathering occurs approximately every other year in October. My husband, Don, and I have attended this event for many years and have encouraged our family and friends at Trinity, Muskegon and the West Michigan area to attend the weekend described above. We still urge people to attend. The reasons are countless! It's a weekend to unwind, take in the beauty of the island, listen in a relaxed setting to speakers who enlighten our lives, and worship with fellow believers. Oh, the worship and praise! It is one of my favorite parts.

For some, there is one sticking point: the cost. We understand! Don and I look at the "cost comparison factor" when encouraging people to attend the Lutheran Adult Gathering.

Once on a beautiful autumn weekend, Don and I decided to take a ride Up North, as we Michiganders will

do. We stayed at a well-recognized resort in Northern Michigan. The cost of that overnight stay was \$250 a night plus fees and taxes. What we received for the cost was a room to sleep, but not even a cup of coffee in the morning! Compare that to the world-renowned Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island where you receive excellent service and food, including a five-course dinner and a full breakfast menu and buffet. (Bring your loose clothing!) You will never experience the Grand and all it has to offer at such a discounted rate. The Gathering is complete with relevant worship, fellowship, and fun! It's a place to build new relationships and treasure those long-standing ones.

Our next Gathering will be October 11–13, 2024 at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.

Please genuinely consider attending. Our theme for this Gathering is "New Beginnings in His Presence!" For more information, visit michigandistrict.org/lag24.

Patti Bogema is the Administrative Ministry Assistant at Trinity, Muskegon.

New Beginnings
IN HIS PRESENCE
Revelation 21:5

SAVE THE DATE
Lutheran Adult Gathering
October 11-13, 2024
Mackinac Island, Mich.

LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

LHM – Uganda

The ministry center in Uganda distributes Bibles, brochures, topical booklets, and other Christian literature to those with specific needs or concerns in their lives. Individuals who respond to LHM – Uganda's outreach often enroll in Bible Correspondence Courses (BCC).

In addition to literature and BCC, LHM – Uganda organizes film video rallies for rural communities. Illiteracy prevents a large part of Uganda's population from reading the Gospel, so LHM – Uganda enters these communities to visually present the Gospel. The film/video ministry continues to gain popularity among the people, as do choir and drama groups.

Serving as dynamic witnessing tools for evangelism, the choir and drama groups travel to villages where they perform traditional Gospel music and plays for large audiences.

LHM – Uganda ministry programs: 15-minute Radio Program; TV Holiday Specials; Text Messaging; Email; Christian Music CDs; Booklets; Bible Correspondence Courses; Drama/Storytelling Performances; Concerts and Film Showing; Youth Ministry; Small Group Ministry; Equipping the Saints Workshop; AIDS Care & Support Initiative.

LHM – Mexico

The LHM ministry center in Mexico is locally known as Cristo Para Todas las Naciones (Christ for all Nations). LHM – Mexico works closely with local Lutheran missions and pastors to support the outreach of each mission church, and to build a collaborative effort among all Lutheran agencies working in Mexico. LHM – Mexico publishes booklets each month that address a variety of everyday subjects from the Christian perspective, encouraging the reader to apply the teachings to his or her own life. The ministry center distributes the booklets through volunteers working within the various missions, outreach stands, city-wide fairs, festivals, and schools involved in Project JOEL.

Project JOEL endeavors to be a force for the development of Christian values and biblical understanding within the youth of Mexico. Classified ads in newspapers are used extensively, along with distribution of a newspaper supplement.

Bible Correspondence Courses are an important part of outreach. LHM supports the church through training and education of lay ministers. One local group of facilitators studies the training course developed through the Hispanic Institute of Theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE

TASTE AND SEE THAT
THE LORD IS GOOD



PSALM 34:8

SAVE THE DATE

LWML Michigan District
Convention
2024

Fri, Jun 28 - Sun, Jun 30, 2024

Held at the Amway Grand
Grand Rapids, MI



<https://lwmlmichigan.org/>

Holy Cross, Saginaw Celebrates 175th Anniversary

Holy Cross, Saginaw, has set aside the first 175 days of 2024 in celebration of its 175th anniversary. The theme for Holy Cross' anniversary is Jesus' words recorded in John 12:32: *"But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."* The anniversary hymn is *Drawn to the Cross, Which Thou Hast Blessed* (LSB 560).

The commemoration will begin at 10:30 a.m. with a festival worship service on Sunday, January 28, 2024, the date closest to its founding on January 29, 1849. Rev. Dr. Richard J. Wolfram, pastor of Holy Cross from 1989–1999, will preach the anniversary sermon. A catered dinner will follow the service. Commemorative displays recounting Holy Cross' history will be on display. Throughout 2024, the congregation will continue its celebration via service and educational activities to benefit the church and its community. The 175th day of 2024 will be Sunday, June 23. A special time of worship is also planned for that date.

Rev. Ferdinand Sievers regularly made trips from St. Paul, Frankenlust, to minister to a small group of Lutherans in the rowdy, raucous neighboring lumber-town of Saginaw. On Monday, January 29, 1849, Pastor Sievers made his way along the Saginaw River to the home of Gardner Williams where he met with six individuals. Thus, Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saginaw was launched in the name of God, securely anchored in the Word of God and the confessions of the Lutheran Church.¹

On October 17, 1849, ten Holy Cross' voters extended a divine Call to theological candidate Ottomar Cloeter of nearby Frankenmuth. After receiving a colloquium with Pastor Sievers, Candidate Cloeter accepted the Call and was subsequently installed as the first of what would be twenty-two resident pastors of Holy Cross. Due to the flourishing lumber industry, Saginaw experienced significant growth, which was subsequently reflected in the growth of the young congregation. By 1865, Holy Cross had expanded to 90 voting members.

In 1851, Holy Cross established a Christian Day School in keeping with the Lord's exhortation to *"Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6). Through the following years, 109 individuals have taught in one capacity or another at the school. Today, the school continues to fulfill its mission of "Helping Children Grow in Faith, Knowledge, and Service." Holy Cross played a significant role in organizing and helping with the initial funding of Saginaw's Valley Lutheran High School, which opened in 1977. Today, the congregation supplies VLHS with students, is active in the school's association, and has a member sit on Valley's governing Board.



Photo courtesy of Lauren Jahnke

Holy Cross is regarded as the "Mother Church" of Saginaw, having provided members and monetary funds to help establish several Lutheran congregations in the Saginaw Valley: Trinity Lutheran Church, founded in 1885 (Trinity has since merged with another congregation); Bethlehem in 1914; Redeemer in 1930; Peace in 1941; Faith, Bridgeport in 1948; Good Shepherd in 1955; and Carrollton's Lutheran Church of the Messiah in 1964, which completed a merger with Redeemer Lutheran Church.

The Lord of the Church has richly blessed Holy Cross during its 175 years of providing Word and Sacrament ministry. Not desiring merely to take pride in their rich past, the members of Holy Cross are determined, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to look ahead and be Christ's witnesses by fulfilling the church's mission statement, *"As We Grow in Christ's Love and the Word, We Will Share Christ's Love with the World."*

For further information on Holy Cross' anniversary activities, contact the church office at 989.793.9723 or church@hclc.org.

¹ Emil H. Voss, *Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church U. A. C. Saginaw, Michigan 1849-1949*, 10.

Hearts, Hands, and Voices Workshop in Lansing

The Association of Lutheran Church Musicians is hosting a one-day workshop on February 10 at Our Savior, Lansing. Music directors, worship leaders, ringers, singers, instrumentalists, and pastors are invited to come for a day of application-based learning to help develop and refine skills for leading the church's song.

With sessions focused on organ and handbells, explore the possibilities of leading psalms and hymns in worship with handbell and organ accompaniment.

All are welcome to attend and will have an opportunity to get something out of the day's activities. Cost is \$45/person, \$20/student. Scholarships are available. For more information, or to register, visit alcm.org/event/lansing-mi/ or contact John Horak at 517.882.8665.

Elder Training Workshop

Salem, Coloma, and the Michigan District are hosting *Extending the Shepherd's Reach: Spiritual Care in the Congregation* for pastors and their elders on February 17.

This one-day workshop is designed for pastors to bring lay leaders who have been identified as spiritual leaders in their respective congregations and therefore have been elected or appointed to serve as extensions of the pastoral office for the care and nurturing of God's people. This is important work and a high calling from God through His Church. Through this workshop, elders will be well prepared and encouraged to continually grow in relationship to Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, and in effective service to His people with their pastor.

Registration is \$10/person and includes lunch and programming. Space is limited, so register early. For more information, visit michigandistrict.org/events.

Parish Nurse Conference

Are you looking for Christ-centered care for your staff, congregation, and/or community? Are you a parish nurse looking for new ideas? Join Dcs. Christie Hansard in Frankenmuth on February 24 to learn more about how a Parish Nurse Ministry or Congregational Health Ministry would look in your church or organization.

Current parish nurses and all others who are interested are invited. Learn how to get started, maintain, and move forward in caring for others in Christ-centered practices.

Cost is \$25/person and includes lunch. For more information, or to register, visit michigandistrict.org/parishnurseconf.

Pre-Retirement Conference for Church Workers

All church workers (55+) are invited to attend the Pre-Retirement Conference taking place at Holy Cross, Flushing on Saturday, March 2, from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. This conference is intended for all professional church workers and their spouses as they prepare for their future retirement (whether it be three, five, or ten years down the road) and their next stage of ministry.

Presenters include Paul M. Snyder and Amy Klein of Concordia Plans. Early bird registration is \$35/person (\$45/person after January 21). For more information or to register, visit michigandistrict.org/retirement.



Quilters Donate Nearly 90 Blankets Around the World

Peace, Saginaw pastors led a *Blessing of the Quilts* during morning worship services in October. A total of 75 standard quilts and 14 baby quilts handmade by the Piece by Piece Quilt Club were prayed over before they headed off to keep dozens of people warm this winter.

"We've been blessed with many hands this year," said Piece by Piece Quilt Club member Cheri Morgrette.

After the blessing, quilts were shipped through Lutheran World Relief, and others were donated locally. The Piece by Piece Quilt Club wishes to thank Thrivent, whose Action Cards helped purchase supplies such as batting, fabric, and thread.

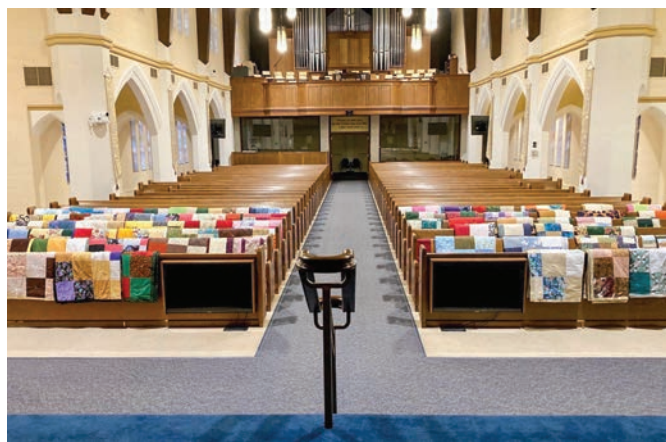


Photo courtesy of Peace, Saginaw

Engage Your Community

Mr. Peter Prochnow, Director of Worship Arts & Community Engagement for the Michigan District, invites you to come with him to *Beyond the Breakwater* in Midland on February 6 or March 5.

At Messiah, Midland you will learn what *Beyond the Breakwater* is all about—mobilizing the church and caring for your community. To be the church is to reach one more life with Jesus by throwing out a lifeline to those who would never walk through the doors of your church and otherwise drown. After an introduction at these events, you will spend some time in the community to observe and experience *Beyond the Breakwater* in action. You will gain knowledge of the structure, driving force, and activities within Messiah's ministry to the community. You are encouraged to make a return trip and bring others with you, so they can experience for themselves what it means to go *Beyond the Breakwater* in their community.

For more information, visit michigandistrict.org/events and click on *Beyond the Breakwater*.

Special Recognition

Zucker Installed

Rev. Tyge C. Zucker, pictured front row center, was installed as pastor of Holy Cross, Flushing in October. Prior to accepting the call to Holy Cross, Pastor Zucker served St. Paul and Zion Lutheran Churches in LaValle, Wisc. (1997–2000), St. John Lutheran Church in Glendale, Wisc. (2000–2009), and Concordia Lutheran Church in Red Wing, Minn. (2009–2023).

Pastor Zucker and his wife, Denys, have two grown sons and reside in Flint.



Photo courtesy of Holy Cross, Flushing

Kaul Installed at VLHS

In November, Al Kaul was installed as Executive Director of Valley Lutheran High School (VLHS) in Saginaw.

Kaul began serving on the VLHS Board of Directors in the early 90's and was the first alum to serve on the board. In subsequent years, he was the first alum to serve as Board Chair. Later he served

on Valley's Foundation Board until he was hired into his new role as Executive Director.

Kaul's education includes a BA from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (psychology major), where he also earned his Master of Social Work-Clinical Practice Major/Business Administration. Professionally, he has served Wellspring Lutheran Services/Lutheran Homes of Michigan, Child & Family Service of Saginaw, and Lutheran Child & Family Services. His professional associations include Leading Age Michigan/Aging Services of Michigan/Michigan Association of Homes and Services for the Aging and Association of Lutheran Development Executives Michigan-Indiana Chapter.

VLHS is Kaul's alma mater and is where he met his wife, Beth. They have three sons (all graduates of VLHS as well) and are members of Immanuel, Frankentrost. They are current stewards of the Kaul Centennial Farm, which has been in the family since 1876.



Photo courtesy of Valley Lutheran High School, Saginaw

2024 Theological Conference
February 3, 2024 | Our Savior, Lansing

Love Talks: *Daring*
Conversations toward
Reconciliation



Speakers:
Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies
Rev. Mark Schulz
Dcs. Tiffany Manor
FLAME

\$30 | GENERAL
\$20 | STUDENTS
See event page for Livestream details.

michigandistrict.org/theo24

Deeply at Home in Jesus

There we find hundreds and hundreds of prophecies that tell us who Jesus is and how He is the fulfillment of all that came before.

The word “abide” in Greek is related to the word “mansion” in English. When Jesus invites us to abide in Him and His Word, He invites us to be deeply at home with Him and His words. So let’s move in and roam around the entirety of Scripture; there we find something far more than a one-room schoolhouse. We find Jesus and the comfort of a mansion filled with love and every good thing.

Many have said much to me about the impact of reading through the entire Scripture annually. It is a game changer. If this is your practice already, read on! If not, consider adopting it in 2024. There are all sorts of manageable reading schedules that will take about 20 minutes a day. Heed Jesus’ gracious invitation to be deeply at home in Him by being deeply at home in His Word. ■



Rev. David A. Davis serves the Michigan District, LCMS as its president.

This article was first published on November 26, 2023, on Rev. Davis’ blog, Toward Significance, towardsignificance.com.

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Calendar of Events

For more information about these and other events visit:
michigandistrict.org/events

JANUARY 2024

- 1 New Year's Day
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 6 Epiphany
- 9 Board of Directors Meeting
New Life, Swartz Creek
- 21–27 National Lutheran Schools Week

FEBRUARY 2024

- 3 Theological Conference
Our Savior, Lansing
- 6 Beyond the Breakwater
Messiah, Midland
- 14 Ash Wednesday
- 15–16 Snow Tire Conference
Frankenmuth
- 24 Parish Nurse Conference
Frankenmuth

MARCH 2024

- 2 Pre-Retirement Conference
Holy Cross, Flushing
- 2–3 State Basketball Tournament
Lutheran High North, Macomb
- 18 Board of Directors Listening Event Metro West
Trinity, Monroe
- 19 Board of Directors Meeting
Trinity, Monroe
- 24 Palm Sunday
- 28 Maundy Thursday
- 29 Good Friday
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 31 Easter Sunday

APRIL 2024

- 12–14 The Katie
DoubleTree by Hilton, Bay City
- 20 Community Worship Network
Our Savior, Lansing
- 28–30 Office Personnel Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth

Calls and Roster Update

ORDAINED

Calls Accepted

Rev. Eric Black (Kalkaska, MI) to Messiah, Grand Rapids

Status & Title Changes

Rev. Kevin Jones (Bay City, MI) to Emeritus
Rev. Samuel Sherouse (Richmond, MI) to Emeritus
Rev. Kenneth Spence (Westland, MI) to Emeritus
Rev. Jonathan Trinklein (Shelby Twp., MI) to Emeritus

Transferred Into District

Rev. Jonathan Meyer (Edmond, OK) from Oklahoma District

COMMISSIONED

Change of Status

Alexander, Jason (ISJ Academy, Grand Rapids) to Candidate
Mead, Katherine (Immanuel, Macomb) to Candidate

Transferred Out of District

Cashmer, Leah (Candidate) to Northern Illinois District
Grese, Susan (Emeritus) to Northern Illinois District
Major, Cynthia (Emeritus) to Florida-Georgia District
Pfeil, Nathanael (Candidate) to Iowa District East
Schultz, Andrea (Reinstated) to North Wisconsin District

Reinstated to the Roster

Buesing, Richard
Earle, Sarah
Wentzel, Anne

Called Home

Bauer, Nancy
Moldenhauer, Herbert

School Closings

Ionia, St. John Preschool

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



Michigan District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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