

April 2024

michigan

IN TOUCH

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

HEALTHY WORKERS

Let Us Pray

by Rev. David A. Davis

Much attention recently focused on the situation with Concordia University Wisconsin/Ann Arbor. A thing that heartened me as the Church worked through it was the focus on prayer. It has been my conviction in Christian ministry that, the more God's people turn to the Word (a drum I beat every chance I get) and to prayer, the more unified and effective the Church will be. So...

Pray a lot.

Prayer is one of the great responsibilities and opportunities of Christ followers, both public and private prayer. It is one of the "roll up your sleeves" duties. It is not a mere formality to start and end a

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day, a meeting, or a meal. It is one of the great things you can do for a person, family, community, congregation, or nation in time of trouble.

God gave great promises about prayer.

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:7–11 NIV).

Martin Luther made some of the boldest statements about prayer that I have ever read. Being people of prayer is our heritage.

“Prayer is one of the great responsibilities and opportunities of Christ followers.”

“For this we must know that all our shelter and protection rest in prayer alone. For we are far too feeble to cope with the devil and all his power and adherents that set themselves against us, and they might easily crush us under their feet. Therefore, we must consider and take up those weapons with which Christians must be armed in order to stand against the devil. For what do you think has hitherto accomplished such great things, has checked or quelled the counsels, purposes, murder, and riot of our enemies, whereby the devil thought to crush us, together with the Gospel, except that the prayer of a few godly men intervened like a wall of iron on our side?” Luther’s Large Catechism, Introduction to the Lord’s Prayer.

Let’s then pray persistently. They say Martin Luther prayed for two to three hours a day; Calvin prayed even more. A wise pastor I know counseled his pre-marriage couples that if they are too busy for sex, they are too busy. And so with prayer: if Christ followers are too busy for prayer, we are too busy.

How much is enough? Wrong question. Paul says, *“Pray without ceasing.”* We should develop our prayer life in a way that makes prayer the default setting in our life. Unfortunately, this passage has been construed in

a way that works against prayer. Some say that *praying without ceasing* means that everything a Christian does is covered with prayer by virtue of his being a Christian—so that he doesn’t really need to pray. Nonsense.

The following practices will help you *pray without ceasing*:

- *Intentionally devote a set time for prayer each day, maybe a half hour.* This is not an ending point; it is the starting point. This will get you in a groove for the day, not finished with a spiritual duty. A friend of mine once said you don’t really start praying until you have been at it for ten minutes. I was never sure exactly what that meant, but my experience is that it rings true. Like all relationships, there is a connection between quantity of time and quality time.
- *Learn to pray on your knees.* The Church and her congregations move forward on their knees. Remember, Christians are not dualists; we are “incarnationalists.” We believe that the body is a gift, although a broken one, from God and that it matters. So, our body as well as our spirit needs to be involved in prayer. There is no more humbled, and therefore powerful, position than on our knees with head bowed. (You might try praying standing with your arms lifted up to the Lord. You might try praying prostrate as well.)
- *Pray for your pastor.* Never underestimate the dynamic between God, pastor, and congregation when congregants pray for their pastor. Trust me, that helps lots more than complaining. Someone once said, if you want a good sermon at the start of the week, pray for your pastor the rest of the week. There is more to that than you might think.
- *Develop the habit of praying when you are talking with people.* Pray for God to guide your words, to help you really understand what the people you are talking with are saying, and to bring Kingdom impact on the conversation. Sometimes offer to pray with that person out loud. Such a practice will turn even trips to the store and greetings of people on strolls in the neighborhood into Kingdom adventures.
- *Never let a meeting at church happen without prayer.* Generally, prayer will be the most effective part of the meeting. Pray at the beginning. Pray in the midst (you can either do this silently or suggest pausing the business for a time of corporate prayer).

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“With Myriad Tongues— in One Great Anthem Blending”

by Jacob Ferns

Like many other urban congregations, St. Stephen, Detroit is a shrinking congregation in a neighborhood that is culturally and linguistically diverse. Unlike many others, St. Stephen took advantage of unique opportunities to reach out into its neighborhood.

St. Stephen formed a dual parish with Family of God, a uniquely successful urban ministry, and started hosting Pan de Vida, the only constituted Hispanic congregation in the Michigan District, allowing them to become a vital and essential voice for the Gospel in a broken and lost neighborhood. One of the challenges was to find unique means for these diverse congregations to worship together.

One method was to get the new bilingual hymnal *Santo, Santo, Santo* (GIA 2019). To introduce the new hymnal and help fund the acquisition, a hymn festival as conducted at St. Stephen on February 4.

Themed “Let all the Nations Praise You,” the festival featured hymns including “A Mighty Fortress” (Castillo

Fuerte), “We Praise You and Acknowledge You” (Señor a Ti la Gloria) and Go My Children with My Blessing (No Están Solos, Vayan Lleven). Rev. Nick Gapski, associate pastor at Family of God, and Rev. Ricardo Granado, Michigan District missionary pastor for Hispanic ministries, assisted in leading the festival. It was deemed an unqualified success by all who attended.

One hundred hymnals were used and left for future innovative worship opportunities, so that with “*myriad tongues, in one great anthem blending,*” those who use them “*may praise and celebrate [God’s] gift of grace*” (LSB 836 st. 4).

We want to thank the many generous attendees and other donors who enabled the hymnals to be donated at no cost to St. Stephen, Family of God, and Pan de Vida. We also want to thank the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship for their support of the festival. ■

Jacob Ferns is a volunteer who assists with music and worship planning at Family of God, Detroit.



Winter Mission Trips in the Arctic

by Steve Schave

When you think of the ministry that LAMP does, you would probably first envision the smiling faces of children coming to Vacation Bible School. You think of snacks and crafts and giggling and fun. You think of teams traveling from across North America to spread joy and happiness in the beautiful summertime of Northern Canada. And that is how it should be: that image does truly exemplify our mission to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. But there is something very significant about spending time in the North in the dead of winter. Being in the height of coldness and darkness helps you to fully understand, even for just a glimpse, the experience of living in such remote and isolated communities.

One of our teams that brave a winter trip comes from Trinity Lutheran here in Utica, Mich. As team member Ray Pratt explains, *"It's always a joy to see the enthusiasm on the faces of the children when we arrive in the community. The recognition and remembrance of our*

previous trip brings out the delight and anticipation from these incredible young people. I sometimes wonder if we are really making a difference for Jesus to these fresh lives, but when we get reacquainted, and I see the joy in their eyes, and hear the excitement in their voices, I think that indeed we are showing them that Jesus loves them."

In the Utica team's most recent trip this past week, they had affirmations from a community member who said, *"You guys are a real bright spot during the winter."* Ten smiling young faces greeted them on their arrival and asked if they could help unload their gear. Indeed, the LAMP team from Trinity Lutheran has had first-hand experience of the joys and challenges of a winter mission trip in a remote arctic location beyond the Canadian Shield.

Winter trips can start with the challenge of weather delays. Even when it is unseasonably warm, there can be fog or haze, but still, severe winter storms can strike unexpectedly. I found this to be true for a recent spiritual

retreat that I had an invitation to participate in. I was asked to give words of encouragement and instruction, but it took me three days to travel there. And even when I did arrive, the event had to be postponed for a day. Unfortunately, a 14-year-old girl had committed suicide, and they held her funeral that week, which rightly puts a pause on everything else. Especially since this was the second teen suicide in less than a month, in a village with a population of less than 500. To be sure, the whole community was in mourning as I arrived.

So, my role changed from being just a guest speaker to also offering spiritual support. For example, there was a time of prayer for the community one evening. I was asked to pray for the chief of the community who was in attendance, and he was deeply moved. In my prayer for him, I prayed for all who were grieving from the tragedy that had struck our First Nations friends, and I prayed for God to protect all the little ones on the reserve.

Later, I also prayed for the mother of the daughter who had taken her own life, and she was visibly shaking as I gave words of comfort. Then later still, at a hymn sing, there was a little girl, not more than six, going around sharing her Reese's Pieces with everyone. And when she stopped next to me, she wanted to draw me a picture. In her picture was a girl in a box, and above the box there was an angel, and next to the box was a heart that was broken in two. It was a drawing of the little girl's sister, who committed suicide and was now in heaven. The little girl even drew a cross beside her sister as an expression of her faith.

Unfortunately, this is part of the story for everyone who lives in this community. And stories are so important to all the people who live in the North. At one point, during the hymn sing, the attendees wanted to stop for a moment and have the translator help them tell me their individual stories. One by one, I heard stories of trauma and tragedy. I



heard of families separated by residential schools, house fires that took the lives of loved ones, those who had frozen from falling in the ice, fatal hunting accidents, and addictions and diseases that resulted in the death of young adults in their families. It was so hard to hear all of these stories, but it truly helped me to appreciate all the more the need for LAMP's ministry in places just like this.

As much as I tried to sit and listen, and then minister to others, it was I who had been ministered to even more. After hearing of all that tragedy and trauma, trials and tribulations, what stood out the most was the strength of their faith. An elder told me how she responds to the younger members of her family amid events that would test anyone's faith. She tells them to not be angry at God, and not to blame God for the results of a fallen world. Instead, she spoke of how she lives her life, guided by the words of Christ when He says, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33 NKJV). Even in the worst of daily tribulations, each and every day, she lives in good cheer. Because on the cross, Christ overcame the world: over sin and death and the devil. She taught me that we can always be of good cheer because of the empty tomb and a risen Savior.

This is why winter trips are challenging to be sure but can also be so very rewarding: to truly share in life and suffering and faith and healing. And for me, it is a reminder of just how significant our work is when we go in the summer to work with the children. To serve in the summer is to see so much joy and happiness, all the fun and laughter, but it is also good to understand why it is so important, and why people are literally begging us to come, and to visit, and to teach the Good News. And of course, no matter what time of the year, what a boost it is for our own faith, to witness the faith of those who have so many afflictions and yet live a life of good cheer! ■

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





Always Only Jesus

Girls of Grace Celebrates 22 Years in Ministry

by Rachel Siemen

Girls of Grace Dance Ministry is celebrating its 22nd year of service. Linda Nuechterlein founded this volunteer ministry which is now continuing through a core leadership team of instructors and many volunteers. Presently, Girls of Grace has 65+ dancers, all affiliated with St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth. The dancers range in age from 4th grade through college students. Girls of Grace Dance Ministry also includes an apprentice group called Future Girls of Grace (Grades 1-3), a dance group for those with special needs (By God's Grace), and a group of young men (Guys for God).

In the past 22 years, these dedicated volunteers have offered Bible study, mentoring, and worship dance instruction for hundreds of girls. Annual worship concerts take place once a year in the spring. The dancers have participated in over 200 worship services at St. Lorenz Church and School and provided over 100 additional performances, including community events, conferences, and worship services throughout Michigan and Ohio. They have given back to those in need through many service projects and a tithing program.

The St. Lorenz Girls of Grace Dance Ministry is excited to announce its annual concert, "Always Only Jesus," based on Hebrews 13:8 which says, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*" What comfort that verse can give! In our world, where things are constantly in motion, changing from one day to the next, knowing we have a God not altered by these earthly ideas can bring peace.

At the concert, the stage will come alive with over 200 participants. Worshipful dance, drama, vocalists, media presentations, and personal testimonies bring this inspirational message of God's unconditional love and faithfulness. As the girls express worship through dance,

the audience will be taken through yesterday, today, and forever. These three sections will help us remember the Gospel lesson through Jesus' birth, life, and resurrection, how to apply that same message to our lives today, and the joy of eternal life with Him.

After a past concert, one attendee shared, "*I have been through a lot and seen a lot. I have never seen anything as powerful as this show. That was the most powerful, touching show, church service, movie, or book I have ever seen play out. Amazing for the kids and adults as well. So strong ... thank you!*"

The Girls of Grace concert will occur on Saturday, April 13 at 1 and 5 p.m. and on Sunday, April 14 at 3 p.m. at the St. Lorenz Worship and Event Center on West Genessee Street in Frankenmuth. General admission tickets are \$10/person and can be purchased at stlorenz.org (click on Ministries and then Girls of Grace) or by calling the church office at 989.652.6141. Girls of Grace Ministry also offers FREE TICKET VOUCHERS for those in need. Social organizations or churches that have outreach ministries, please call 989.652.0770 for more information.

Join us for a night that will boost your spirit with love, peace, and the Holy Spirit.

For more information about Girls of Grace ministry, visit stlorenz.org, or like them on Facebook (St. Lorenz, Girls of Grace Dance Ministry). You can also view and share a promotional video found at [youtube.com/watch?v=1DzQXzAsubs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DzQXzAsubs). ■

Rachel Siemen has had the privilege of being a part of Girls of Grace since its formation; first as a dancer and now as an instructor. She is also a crisis counselor at a child advocacy center where she gets to do therapy with kids who have experienced trauma.

Photos courtesy of Debbie Darragh



grow
your
US



Ministry to Married Couples

by Rick and Debbie Darragh

Everyone who gets married has the goal to be in a happy, healthy marriage. Whether a couple is newly married or married for 50 years, they still want that happy, healthy marriage. Not only is this beneficial to the couple, but it also provides a good example for their children, the church, and the community.

Marriage ministry isn't a new concept in the church; everyone knows how vital it is to have a healthy marriage. Too often, however, we think of marriage ministry as premarital counseling or addressing issues when a marriage is in crisis. So, what can be done during the years in between to encourage strong marriages to help avoid that crisis stage?

In the fall of 2022, St. Luke, Ann Arbor saw the need to encourage strong marriages and was led to offer a new ministry that would support the married couples in the congregation. Through the leadership of David Nelson, Director of Youth & Family Discipleship, DCE, a committee was formed and the Married People Ministry was set in motion. The purpose of this ministry is to integrate opportunities that will help give couples a strategy to be proactive toward building a healthy marriage.

Amid our busy lives, school, jobs, children (children's activities!), church responsibilities, etc., there is one thing that can easily be overlooked or put on the back burner in a couple's relationship ... FUN and LAUGHTER! That's where the Married People Ministry comes in!

Our theme for 2023 was "Take a Step CLOSER," and we've already begun this year's theme of "Becoming Your Best US" with the focus being "Time for Your US" and "Grow Your US." Each theme incorporates one of these four Core Habits: 1) Love God First; 2) Have Serious Fun; 3) Respect and Love; 4) Practice Your

Promise. To continue the focus on marriage and keep the fun festivities rolling throughout the year, we create and offer three Date Night Kits, a spring and a fall Large Group Event, the Married People Monthly email, and a 6-week marriage study held on Sunday mornings during the Bible Class hour.

When we first began the Married People Ministry, we weren't sure how the congregation would respond or what to expect. But after our first Large Group Event in the spring of 2023, it was evident that it was God's perfect timing for this ministry! Couples were looking for fun ways to spend time with the love of their life.

Here are a few written comments we received following our first Married People Large Group Event ... *It was great! Great message, fellowship, and time together! ... Practical inspiration to make more time for us ... Thank you, Thank you!* And more positive feedback after handing out our first Married People Date Night Kits ... *We enjoyed our surprise box. Thank you! ... Sparked some great conversation (22 yr. anniversary date) ... The element of surprise and anticipation worked!*

St. Luke also sees this ministry as an opportunity to reach out to the community and other local congregations, so an announcement for each upcoming event is emailed to about 18 other sites or handed out to local businesses. It's been wonderful to meet others who have attended the Large Group Events or picked up Date Night Kits.

Regardless of age or years married, we welcome ALL married couples to participate with St. Luke Married People as they continue their journey together to a happier, healthier marriage! ■

Rick and Debbie Darragh are the directors of the St. Luke Married People Ministry.

APRIL 2024

Circuit Convocation Grant Available in 2024

CEF recently had the opportunity to sit down with President David Davis of the Michigan District, to discuss the Circuit Convocation Grant.

THE GRANT

The Circuit Convocation Grant is a mission-minded grant of up to \$5,000 for food, lodging, or travel needed for community and mission-focused events.

This grant is being provided by Church Extension Fund in combination with the Michigan District.

The CEF Grant Program has been providing funding to ministries since the 1980's and has funded many unique grants. This grant brings together CEF and the Michigan District to provide a circuit with an opportunity to go outside of its comfort zone and try something new. CEF wanted the congregations in the circuit to have the opportunity to put their heads together to plan something that would not only be edifying to the pastors in the circuit, but also to engage with their members and the community.

FOLLOWING THE BYLAWS

The LCMS handbook and bylaws state that on a non-convention



Michigan District President David Davis

year, a convocation or gathering should be held of the congregations and members that make up an LCMS circuit (e.g., eight or so congregations that are geographically connected). In the Michigan District, the purpose of the convocation is to create an event that demonstrates that we are people of hope who vigorously share the love of Christ.

Because CEF is continually focused on "Building the Kingdom," the convocation opportunities made for a great opportunity to partner with the

Michigan District to promote the convocations with a grant. The convocation events can be a great first step to bring a neighbor to a church event and learn about all the ministries and programs the congregations offer. Involvement from lay members is so important to outreach in the community that it is part of the grant requirements.

In addition to a conference or a community event, a convocation might also be a project that serves the needs of people in a community. Some examples of grants that have already been approved include an Oktoberfest gathering (a celebration of German food, beverages, and music); an informative talk on human trafficking awareness to help protect members of a particular community; and a regional pro-life event detailing the sanctity of human life.

Eligible events may be wide-ranging in scope, and may involve speakers or activities that engage people from all different backgrounds. The events should also be geared toward the community. For example, a rock and roll band may not appear to everyone or be very family friendly. Likewise, an academic lecture may not reach into the community very well.



The Circuit Convocation Grant events should focus on gathering people together from all walks of life.

FOLLOW THE THEME

This grant is designed to do more than simply create fun events. Instead, the theme of this Circuit Convocation Grant is reconciliation. This theme is so important because God tells us that we should love one another as He loves us. We need to forgive each other so that we do not walk around angry, but

instead encourage one another and build each other up. We need to reflect God's love and help others know that we are Christians by seeing how we love one another.

Providing funds for events that people of the community can attend, whether they know the Lord yet or not, is a great way to spread the gospel and create a

space for people to reconcile with one another - and that is why CEF and the Michigan District are so excited about this grant.

Applications will be available through the end of the 2024 calendar year, but receipts for reimbursement must be submitted by January 24, 2025, so don't delay in planning!



Want to learn more about the Circuit Convocation Grant?
Visit mi-cef.org/about/grants or michigandistrict.org/circuit-convocation-grant-application/



Church Extension Fund

Church Extension Fund

3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-3098

www.mi-cef.org ■ Offices: 800-242-3944

LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

Energizing Mission

Join the Michigan Lutheran Laymen's League District at its annual convention hosted at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church Worship & Event Center in Frankenmuth on Saturday, May 11, 2024. All are welcome to attend.

Guest speakers are Lutheran Hour Ministries staff members Jeff Craig-Meyer, President, U.S. Ministries, and Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies, Vice President, Ministry Engagement. Their presentations will focus on energizing mission. Join the League for a day of spiritual growth with inspirational presentations to encourage and equip you as a partner in His mission.

Doors open at 9 a.m. The convention begins at 9:30 a.m. There is no cost to register. A freewill offering will be gathered during the event to assist with meal costs in addition to supporting the Michigan Division of the Orphan Grain Train (ogt.org/branches/michigan/).

Please register no later than May 3 for meal and seat count. Download the registration form at michigandistrict.org/enewsevents/ and return it to Philip Krauss, MI LLL District Treasurer; 112 Marshall St. PO Box 74; Brooklyn MI 49230. If you

have any questions, please contact Dennis Engelhard, MI LLL District President at 989.670.8028 or dennisengelhard59@gmail.com.

The convention theme verse is *"I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands forever; that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself"* (Psalm 89:1–2).



LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE



Sarah Crowder



**2024 Convention
Keynote Speakers**

June 28-30,
2024
Grand Rapids,
Michigan

Look for registration link here:
lwmlmichigan.org/convention/district



Rev. Mark Frith

Director of Champions
for Liberty Network for
Lutheran Center for Religious
Liberty

Winkel Observations

by Laura Thomas

I've spent the last few months traversing the state and visiting with pastors during their monthly "Winkels." This is a word derived from both German and Dutch that means "corner" or "place." Pastors meet in single circuits of 8-10 congregations or in dual- or tri-circuit gatherings. There are different formats that incorporate worship, prayer, study of God's Word, discussion about theology and church management, good food, and fellowship. Without question, they are a source of encouragement and spiritual sustenance in the pastor's life.

What I'm learning as I observe and make presentations at these gatherings is far more than head knowledge. God is giving me an opportunity to see into the hearts of His under-shepherds. He is their First Love. From this First Love, all else in their ministries and vocations flows.

A visitor to a Winkel witnesses joy in learning and frustrations in conversation about daily tasks. Yet, there are invigorating discussions about how something is understood and satisfaction in both the simple and difficult work that pastors do. It is a brotherhood of sharing that is never the same from Winkel to Winkel but gives each person there the assurance that wherever two or three are gathered in His name, there He is among them. Visits to school breakrooms, church offices, and all places where church workers gather for encouragement and spiritual sustenance would result in

the same observations.

Because we identify healthy congregations and healthy church workers as two of our critical targets in the Michigan District, our resources are focused on strengthening and uplifting them. Each member of the District staff has a unique role in supporting the spiritual care and lives of those who serve and the ministry interests of congregations and schools.

What does that look like? It might be a visit with a congregation beginning the call process, a conference for school principals and early childhood directors, work with a task force or board to determine how a mission can serve a community, installing a church worker, preaching or teaching in a church or school, consulting on human resources and financial statements, advising on fund development and stewardship, and writing and publishing stories about all of these things in District media. It means meeting the needs of our Michigan District church workers and congregations in all ways possible through Christ who strengthens us. It means "synod"—walking together.

Laura Thomas is the Director of Development for the Michigan District, LCMS. If you would like to learn more about how you can support the work of the district, contact her at 734.213.4264.

New Beginnings IN HIS PRESENCE Revelation 21:5

Lodging, meals,
and gratuities at
the Grand Hotel

\$390

per person based on
quad occupancy.



Lutheran Adult Gathering | Mackinac Island, Mich.

October 11-13, 2024 | www.michigandistrict.org/lag24

Speakers:

Rev. Dr. Jeff & Renee Gibbs

Rev. Dr. Ryan Tinetti - Chaplain

Lizzie Boeck - Entertainment

100 White Flag - Music

Cost:

\$50 Registration + Lodging



A Life Summit

On Sunday, April 28, a Life Summit will take place from 2–5 p.m. at St. Paul, Fowler. Dr. Roni Grad will be the keynote speaker. Dr. Grad serves as a board member and secretary on the Lutherans for Life Board of Directors and is Life Coordinator for the English District, LCMS. His two presentations include: *Intricately Woven* and *Organ Donor and Determination of Death*.

Rev. Paul Clark, Lutherans for Life of Michigan Federation President and Life Coordinator for the Michigan District will share his presentation, *The Splendor of Life in a Broken World*. He will also give an update on the current situation, especially here in Michigan.

Join others and learn how you can be involved in continuing to share the message of the value of every human life. The event is free and light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP your attendance by contacting Rev. Clark at revpmclark@gmail.com or 517.420.4826. Walk-ins are welcome.

Camp Lu Lay Lea Season Opens



Camp Lu Lay Lea is a summer camp affiliated with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for boys and girls ages 8-14. The Saginaw Valley Zone of the Lutheran Laymen's League previously owned and operated the Camp for 75 years, providing week-long sessions that offer

structured programs in a positive Christian environment. Children play, learn, and grow in faith through various activities including swimming, boating, arts and crafts, daily chapel services, singing, campfires, devotions, and so much more! Most campers thoroughly enjoy their stay and continue coming back year after year. Lifelong friendships are built as well as a strengthening of their Christian faith.

Camp Lu Lay Lea is located on picturesque Henderson Lake in one of the state's loveliest regions, near Rose City, Michigan. Campers can choose from five one-week sessions (Sunday to Saturday) from June 23 – August 3, 2024. Camp Lu Lay Lea is licensed by the State of Michigan and utilizes highly trained, enthusiastic, and caring staff. The cost per camper for the regular full week is \$430 which includes 17 meals, 11 store and concession stand opportunities, cabin and

Deaf Ministry in Michigan

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Hartland hosted a Christmas Eve service for 28 Michigan Deaf Lutherans and the southeastern Michigan Deaf community. This was a partnership between the English and Michigan Districts. Pastors Thomas Dunseth and Tyler Walworth of the Michigan District led the service of lessons and carols which included a Deaf choir. For more information about Deaf Ministry in Michigan, including the International Lutheran Deaf Association Event taking place this summer in Dearborn, visit michigandistrict.org/deafministry.



Photo courtesy of Rev. Thomas Dunseth

bed assignments, cabin counselors, camp staff certified in various positions, along with a wide variety of camp activities and resources. Payment plans are available with a \$100 deposit and the remaining balance due 30 days prior to camper drop-off.

Get ready for an unforgettable experience while growing your relationship with Jesus Christ. Registration is now open for the 2024 camp season and can be done quickly and easily online at CampLuLayLea.org. For more information, email Director@CampLuLayLea.com.



Photo courtesy of Camp Lu Lay Lea

Students Organize Community Christmas Project

Sharing God's love last December, the second and third grade students from St. Peter's, Eastpointe organized a community Christmas project to donate socks and mittens to Elli's House in Detroit. In addition to the socks and mittens, the children began bringing in coats and sweaters. To encourage the excitement of giving, an announcement was made in church for donations. The response was overwhelming as the pile began to grow. With all the donations from the students and others, they gathered over 25 bags of coats, hats, gloves, and clothing, filling more than two cars. Miss Deborah Pierce and the students thank everyone who lovingly donated to this project. To God be the glory!



Photo courtesy of St. Peter's Eastpointe

Nominate Young Musicians for Lutheran Summer Music

Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival (LSM) is a residential academy for high school musicians. Students study with nationally recognized faculty and are immersed in musical experiences through large ensembles

(choir, band, and symphony orchestra), chamber music, private lessons, elective classes, ongoing recitals, and concerts. Students also experience a welcoming and joyful community that worships together daily, offering musical gifts through Lutheran liturgy and hymnody.

LSM 2024 takes place at Valparaiso University in Indiana from June 30–July 28, and is open to students who have completed grades 8–12. Spots for LSM 2024 are filling fast! Nominate a student today at LSMacademy.org/nominate.



Photo courtesy of Lutheran Summer Music

Ministry Transition: Wellspring Lutheran Services Takes Over Programs for Adults With Developmental Disabilities

Michigan's Wellspring Lutheran Services and Wisconsin's AbleLight (formerly Bethesda) signed an official Letter of Intent to facilitate the transition of four programs serving adult disabled persons from AbleLight to Wellspring. This decision comes after months of thorough exploration and negotiation, aimed at ensuring the smoothest transition possible for individuals served and the current Michigan-based team from AbleLight.

The programs consist of four of AbleLight's Michigan-based operations, including two programs in Saginaw and two programs in Frankenmuth. Collectively, these programs provide essential supportive services to approximately 22 individuals annually, tailored to meet their individual needs and promote the most independent lifestyle possible.

This agreement initiates a four-month period of further exploration, focusing on a seamless transition with minimal disruptions to clients and staff.

Wellspring President and CEO David Gehm said, "AbleLight's commitment to quality care for people with developmental disabilities, particularly those affected by this transition, aligns with the Wellspring mission, creating synergy for a successful transition. While this venture represents new territory programmatically for

Wellspring, it resonates with our longstanding history of serving overlooked or underserved populations across Michigan. With AbleLight's ongoing support, we anticipate a smooth transition and a promising future."

AbleLight Chief Financial Officer Brian Savoie shared insights into AbleLight's decision: "When we made the difficult choice to exit our work in Michigan, our Board of Directors and senior leadership immediately sought a mission-focused, faith-based partner aligned with our mission. We were delighted to discover Wellspring, with its rich history of service throughout Michigan and a strong presence in Saginaw County. We believe this transition to Wellspring will perpetuate AbleLight's legacy for many years to come."

The operational control of these four programs by Wellspring is expected to be complete by June 1, 2024. For more information, visit wellspringlutheran.com.

Special Recognition

Adams, 2024 Lutheran Layman of the Year

Mr. Howard Adams, a member of Our Shepherd, Birmingham, was named the 2024 Lutheran Layman of the Year by the Lutheran Luncheon Club of Detroit and will be honored at a banquet on April 28 at Historic Trinity, Detroit.

Adams has been extremely active in his home congregation as well as numerous civic and charitable endeavors. Adams is a proud alumnus of Purdue University earning a degree in Civil Engineering and received a post graduate degree from the University of Michigan in Solid Waste Management. He was employed at Ford Motor Company in the Tractor Operations division where he met his future bride, Martha Sue Wolfe. They were blessed with one daughter, son-in-law, and three grandchildren.

As a member of Our Shepherd, Adams serves as a Family Elder and a member of the Board of Resources and Connections.

His civic accomplishments include serving on the City of Troy Tax Review Board, Board of Historic Preservation, the Troy Historic Village and Past President of the Council of Homeowners Association. In Oakland County he served on the Senior Advisory Council and additionally served as Chairman of the Board of Directors for T & I Credit Union.

Adams also serves on the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Luncheon Club and is involved with Concordia University Ann Arbor.



Photo courtesy of the Lutheran Luncheon Club

SMP Pastor Vicarages

In February, two out of ten students in the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo. received vicarage assignments to serve in the Michigan District. Vicar Matthew Emery will serve Trinity, Arcadia and Vicar Jonah Schutte will serve St. John, Houghton Lake.

“Those entering into the SMP Program as vicars will be adding course work and vicarage responsibilities to their already full and busy lives of work and family responsibilities and other life vocations God has given to them,” said SMP Program Director Dr. W. Mart Thompson. *“While the program is demanding and requires significant sacrifice and commitment, their hard work will certainly bear fruit for the sake of the Gospel as they are formed for the Office of the Ministry to become pastors in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.”*

The SMP Program is a four-year distance-education program in which men receive theological education in the setting in which they will continue to serve—as pastors of congregations or in other ministries of the LCMS—followed by certification, call, and ordination. Local pastor-mentors work with SMP students to provide day-to-day guidance, encouragement, and prayer.



Vicar Matthew Emery



Vicar Jonah Schutte

Photos courtesy of the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

St. Andrew, Portland Celebrates 40th Anniversary

In October 2023, St. Andrew, Portland celebrated its 40th Anniversary. A worship service was led by Intentional Interim Pastor Roger Straub and Pastor Ed Filter, retired Pastor of St. Andrew.



St. Andrew was founded in 1983 by lay workers Fred and Valerie Dicks, who were trained through the Michigan Lutheran Ministries Institute. The ministry was overseen by Rev. Charles Burhop. The congregation met in rented spaces for a while. In 1985, they purchased property and

built a sanctuary, which was dedicated in December of the same year. After the Dicks left, Pastor Burhop continued to serve as a dual parish pastor. By 1989, the congregation was showing a steady growth and called their first full-time pastor, Rev. Ed Filter. That same year they also dedicated an addition to their facility. Rev. Filter served St. Andrew until his retirement in 2022.

The congregation thanks everyone who helped make this celebration a success. It was a special service followed by a potluck luncheon. They were blessed to have founding members, current members, and visiting guests in attendance. It was a day of wonderful worship, food, and awesome fellowship.

Hughes Installed

In February, Rev. Michael W. Hughes was installed at St. Matthew, Spring Lake. Rev. Hughes completed the colloquy program in 2023. He became an ordained LCMS pastor upon his assignment by the Council of Presidents and subsequent installation at St. Matthew. Rev. Hughes and his wife, Cory, have two children, Brennen and Emelyn. The members of St. Matthew are so grateful that God led Pastor Hughes to shepherd their congregation.

St. Matthew Lutheran Church was founded in 1969 by a small group of devoted followers of Christ from surrounding congregations. They serve their community by sharing the Gospel, supporting various local charities, providing a Christian childcare and preschool, and hosting a men's Bible breakfast and coffee break Bible study.



Photo courtesy of the St. Matthew, Spring Lake

Let Us Pray

continued from page 2

Pray at the end.

- *Find extended times for fasting and prayer on a regular basis.* I have often wondered what Jesus experienced when he went off to pray through the night. Try it.
- *Keep in mind that spending time in prayer is never wasting your time.* The time spent in prayer for family, work, the community, and your congregation may be multiplied in effectiveness.
- *Avoid prayerful sentiments.* Never say, "I'll pray for you," unless you will. Never say, "You've been in my prayers," unless they have. Prayerful sentiments are irrelevant at best and deceptive at worst.
- *Keep a prayer list.* I keep mine in my head. There is probably a better place.

Remember, when we pray, *Someone is* on the other end.

Pray a lot. ■



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

This article, featured after the introductory paragraph, first appeared on Rev. Davis' blog [Toward Significance](https://towardsignificance.com/on-prayer-2/) (towardsignificance.com/on-prayer-2/).



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Calendar of Events

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

APRIL 2024

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

MAY 2024

- 6–7 North and East Pastors Conference
DoubleTree by Hilton, Bay City
- 14–15 South and East Pastors Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 15–16 Circuit Visitors Conference
St. Lorenz Worship & Event Center, Frankenmuth
- 18 Regional Track Meets
Lutheran High North, Macomb
Concordia University Ann Arbor
Valley Lutheran High School, Saginaw
- 20–21 West Pastors Conference
DoubleTree by Hilton, Grand Rapids
- 21 Board of Directors Meeting and Listening Event
St. Matthew, Grand Rapids
- 22–23 Intentional Interim Ministry Conference
Michindoh Conference Center, Hillsdale

JUNE 2024

- 1 State Track Meet
Concordia University Ann Arbor
- 4–6 Next Generation Pastors
Shelby Twp, Grand Haven, Bay City
- 15 Community Worship Network
Concordia University Ann Arbor
- 18–20 FLAME Conference
Ann Arbor
- 28–30 Michigan District LWML Convention
Grand Rapids

JULY 2024

- 4 Independence Day
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 15–19 Special Friends Camp
Camp Copneconic
- 29–31 Higgins Lake Conference
Higgins Lake
- 30–Aug 1 Junior High Gathering
Frankenmuth

Calls and Roster Update

ORDAINED

Calls Accepted

Rev. Jake Bellinghausen (Vestal, NY) to Sole, Cross of Christ, South Lyon
Rev. John Carrier (Fort Gratiot, MI) to IIM, Sr., Trinity, Monroe
Rev. Gerald Corbett, SMP (Macomb, MI) to SMP, Vacancy, St. Paul, Pontiac
Rev. Jeffrey Heimsoth (Saint Johns, MI) to IIM, Sr., Faith, Grand Blanc
Rev. Paul Pollatz (Garden City, MI) to Sole, Mt. Hope, Allen Park

Status & Title Changes

Rev. Roger Kilponen (Hassel, MI) to Emeritus
Rev. Keith Lemley (Washington, MI) to Emeritus
Rev. Ronald Nieman (Dryden, MI) to Emeritus

Transferred Into District

Rev. Larry Dean Wright (Midland, MI) from Indiana District as an Emeritus

Called Home

Rev. Paul Young

COMMISSIONED

Calls Accepted

Bosman, Bailey (St. Paul, Munster, IN) to Christ the King, Southgate
Homrich, Kaeleen (Cq. Concordia, Ann Arbor) to St. Peter, Hemlock
Kosciuk, Sarah (Our Shepherd, Birmingham) to Immanuel, Macomb

Transferred Out of District

Biermann, Heather (Candidate) to Missouri District
Cody, Katelyn (Candidate) to Nebraska District
Locke, George (Emeritus) to South Wisconsin District

Reinstated to the Roster

Brenner, Renee

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

