

2023

# Annual Ministry Report

for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2024.



Spring 2024

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus:

No matter what we see around us or don't see around us, we are people of hope. We have been loved and redeemed by Jesus into an eternal relationship with the Heavenly Father by the power of the Holy Spirit. We have a sure and certain hope that Jesus will return to make all things new and in the meantime is using us to have that Kingdom of faith break out across the state of Michigan and beyond.

To that end we work together in the Michigan District to steward resources, relationships, and opportunities. The Michigan District as an organization works to support local congregations, called workers, and laypeople in their ministry. We seek to build up great commission ministries and great compassion ministries. We seek to foster health in both church workers and congregations. To accomplish this, we have especially accented:

- Growth in daily Bible reading by encouraging reading through the entire Bible annually;
- Congregations working to advance mission by planting new congregations and building strategic alliances with existing congregations;
- Development of leaders through networking, conferences for called workers and laity, recruitment for church work (various routes to ordination, deacon training, teachers, youth workers, parish nurses, et al.);
- Advancement of parochial education through existing schools, development of micro-schools, and homeschool learning pods;
- All that we might be better equipped and enthused to connect to our local communities with the love of Jesus.

The following is a glimpse of the District's activity during the 2023 fiscal year.



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

2023

# President's Office

The **President's Office** implemented a staff recalibration and brought in new, critical staff: Director of Development Mrs. Laura Thomas, three part-time District Facilitators—Rev. Dan Meckes (Metro West Region), Rev. John Greig (Metro East Region), Rev. Mark Brandt (North and East Region)—and Commissioned Ministry Advocate Mr. Luke Esselman, DCE. The President's Office also added a part-time worker, Rev. Peter Nickel, who provides Call List Support.



# 72

Besides providing ecclesiastical supervision for the District, the President's Office *delivered 72 call lists* to congregations; held 9 Circuit Visitor Zoom meetings and 2 in-person meetings; and promoted 3 Board of Directors Listening Events.

With the help of various committees, the President's Office carried out 9 Pre-Seminary interviews (4 for M.Div.; 5 for SMP); reviewed 20 congregational constitutions, and worked with Circuit Visitors and the Regional Vice Presidents to *install 41 pastors* in our District. President Davis also prepared his strategic plan and indicators to update the District Board of Directors on progress at each board meeting.

# 41

## Development

District recalibration involved shifting the primary development focus to work with pastors and congregation leaders throughout the annual commitment process. Staff developed and scheduled circuit meeting presentations to promote engagement and seek feedback on effective ways to communicate District ministry growth and impact. The Birmingham circuit hosted the first presentation in January 2024!

# District Facilitators

Our **District Facilitators** provided the following services in 2023:

- Made 30 contacts with congregations in the call process for their next pastor;
- Assisted in forming 4 dual parishes;
- Assisted in the merger of 2 congregations;
- Worked with 10 pastors retiring during 2023 to prepare documents to streamline their transition;
- Consulted with 12 pastors regarding management of congregational needs;
- Met with 6 congregations about upgrading technology to increase live streaming or other ways of receiving worship; and
- Conducted *430 personal visits* to congregations.

430



## Education Department

Our **Education Department** served 131 early childhood centers, 73 schools (K through 12th grade), 1,300 educators (including 73 principals), and 16,343 students. Some of the highlights of the Superintendent's work: visited many of our schools/centers, led multiple Board of Education trainings, participated in our 8 monthly regional principal meetings, advocated in Lansing as a part of the Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools (MANS), and was blessed to lead chapel at 37 schools during this time frame.

The Commissioned Ministry Advocate worked with the four clusters of commissioned special ministry workers who meet periodically around the state and had many individual visits with our workers across the state.



134

The Education Department helped schools *fill 134 vacancies* (12 of which were for principals), and participated in the accreditation process of 8 schools, 3 of which for the first time. They also completed 23 call lists for special ministry positions.



# Mission Strategy

The **Director of Mission Strategy** oversees campus ministry, compassion ministry, church planting, A2E, and ethnic immigrant ministry.

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In 2023, there were *five active campus ministries*. Western Michigan University campus pastors baptized several Chinese students. An average of 5 students attend the weekly *Dinner and Discussions* faith formation program, and 39 students participated in the Bronco Buddy Mentoring Program by serving as mentors to grades K-5 at Tree of Life School in Edison. The Eastern Michigan University campus ministry hosted a weekly *Pancakes and Waffles TOO* event that has an average attendance of 280 students.



Acts 2 Enterprise strengthens the District's urban ministry goals:

In **Detroit**, Bethany Lutheran Church provided food to over 50 families through its food pantry. An outreach ministry served 13 boys through meetings every other Saturday to help them transition from boyhood to manhood with a biblical, Gospel-centered framework.

In **Flint**, Franklin Avenue Mission served meals each week.

Flint Mission Network conducted 5 *Taking Jesus to the Street* (mobile VBS) events, involving an average of 25 children from the community in each event.

St. Paul Community in **Pontiac** continued a weekly food distribution and built a pavilion to serve as a community events location.

In **Dearborn**, the Atonement Lutheran church building was used by POBLO for outreach to Muslims through sewing and ESL classes.



The District supported multiple initiatives in ethnic immigrant ministry by providing funds for two key leaders in Congolese churches to enroll in the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology program (EIIT). Additionally, Rev. Johannes Zerit (Lansing) met with as many as 18 Congolese leaders to teach them the Lutheran Confessions and to mentor them as they prepare their worshipping communities for membership in the LCMS. Also in Lansing, Rev. Moses Dangba reached the South Sudanese population surrounding his congregation by offering worship services in English, Swahili, and Arabic. In Detroit, Pan de Vida grew from 15 to 35 worshippers in the last year. The District and Family of God supported Pan De Vida's Hispanic Heritage Festival, which had *nearly 500 attendees*.

500



# Leadership Development

The **Director of Leadership Development** seeks out and promotes avenues towards lay leadership and oversees the path to professional church work and the Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM).

# 19

The Michigan School of Missional Formation (MSMF) had *19 active students* preparing to become deacons or ministry assistants. Two students graduated in 2023. The MSMF launched the “Classic Plus” program for Deacon/Ministry Assistant training. This is a non-degreed “hybrid” of recorded content and in person meeting with fellow students and instructor.

The District conducted two IIM Continuing Education Conferences in 2023: spring, with 24 in attendance; and fall, with 28 attendees. Thirty-five church workers and spouses registered for the Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI) Leadership Essentials program.

The **Community Engagement and Worship Arts Director** established the framework for ongoing leadership development to offer support and learning opportunities as well as create community for those involved in worship and community engagement. He helped plan and promote two Community Worship Network Gatherings to assist musicians, A/V techs, and other leaders and volunteers in the District.

**Stewardship** - In 2023, 3 congregations participated in an intensive weekend introduction to *Stewards by God's Design* (SBGD) facilitated by the Director of Stewardship Ministries and a member of the District Stewardship Committee. SBGD aims to change the steward culture of a congregation through ongoing Bible studies. One congregation doubled its Bible study attendance. The SBGD was downloaded 32 times from the District website.

The District's **Mental Health Case Manager** had a total of *103 initial contacts* with church workers, either by email or by phone. Thirty-eight church workers (10 of whom were new in the period reported) received financial help to pay for counseling. The District's General Fund provided the means for this financial assistance.

# 103

The District *provided \$210,000* in **financial aid** to students pursuing church work careers at Concordia University System schools and seminaries. In 2023, 148 students received financial aid from the District—80 of them were seminary students and 68 were undergraduate students in various Concordia Universities.



# \$210,000

# Business Office

The **Business Office** manages human resources and all the business, financial, and legal affairs of the District. It oversees properties (3 campus ministry sites and 2 inner city churches) and subsidies given to support campus ministry, cross cultural ministry, urban ministry (A2E), new mission and ministry starts, and nativity grants. In 2023, the Business Manager had *over 400 contacts* with congregations regarding consultation on employment, tax, budgeting, and governance issues.

400

**Continuing education** is one of the primary responsibilities of the District staff. Each given conference involves not only the Business Office and the Event Coordinator (budget, contracts, negotiating with venues and vendors, coordinating speakers and exhibitors, registration, etc), but also collaboration with Communications (publicity, registration, website, booklets, slides and signage, videography, photography, etc), Leadership Development (guiding committees in setting themes and goals), President's Office (approval of speakers and worship services), Development (fundraising to help keep costs low for attendees), several other staff (mailing, registration, name tags, A/V support), and volunteer committees.

56

In 2023, the District planned or at least *supported 56 different events*. One such event was the Theological Conference for laypeople, which had 264 attendees on site and 220+ people online (196 personal livestream views and 27 simulcast transmissions to groups). The video content resulting from the conference has received 1,041 views on YouTube to date.

Another noteworthy event in 2023 was the Professional Church Worker Conference, which takes place every 6-7 years. In 2023, 1,220 attendees came from 168 congregations/schools in the District.



# Communications Department

Besides providing materials and support for all conferences, the **Communications Department** also published 36 podcasts and 75 blogs, sent out 391 bulk emails to constituents, and *produced 70 videos* to be published on YouTube, plus 40 additional videos as direct communication to churches and ministries. Our E-newsletter reached over 5,000 people every week.

70

Through the **Digital Footprint Initiative**, websites were launched for six churches and one school in 2023. **The Hymnal Project**, which is funded by the District, had a total of 88,747 visits world wide in 2023. Only 58% of those were from the United States.



# Looking Ahead

## 2024 District Goals

1. Take **next steps** in strategic plan for mission strategy, parochial education 2.0, and leadership development.
2. Implement a revised **funding plan** for mission work.
3. Complete **assessment of vitality** of all congregations.
4. Review and revise as necessary **all ministries** led by workers called to the District.
5. **Contact** 100% of all pastors or congregations.
6. **Review and refine** the following systems: calling of workers; communication; congregational support of District/Synod.
7. Develop a system to **identify potential leaders** for ministries in the District and Synod.

These are great days to be “The Church.” People are divided. People are discouraged. People are distracted. People around us need the great gift that we have to offer: reconciliation to God and one another through Jesus Christ.

Having been ourselves reconciled to Christ and to one another, let’s work together in this ministry of reconciliation while it is day until the night comes and no man can work.

*...eyes on Jesus...*



**David A. Davis**

District President

Michigan District, LCMS



# Summary of Financial Activities

For the fiscal year ending January 31, 2024

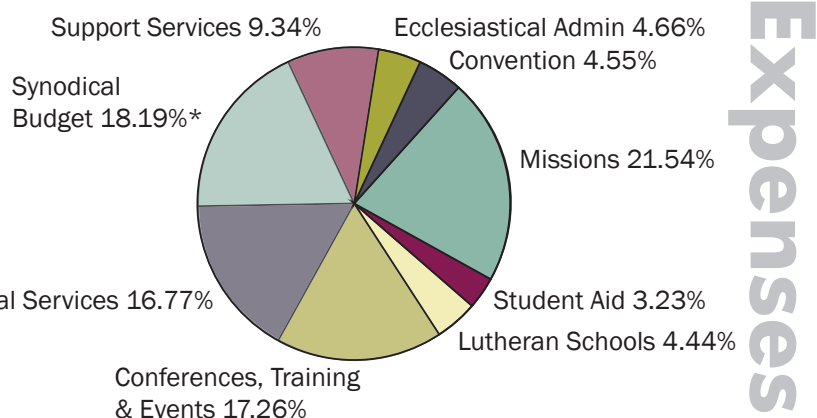
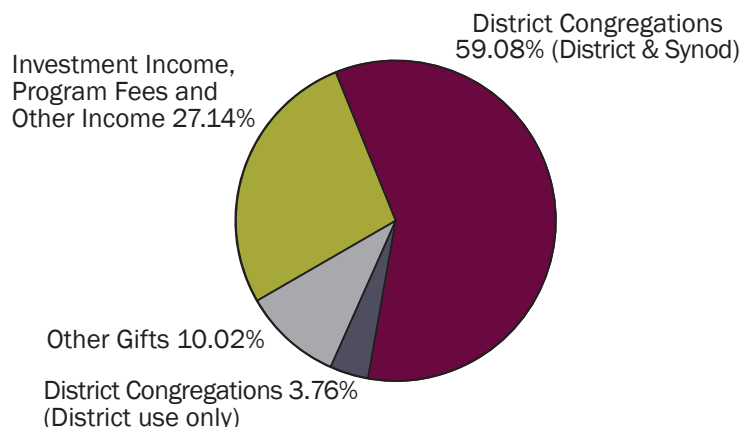
## Support, Revenues, and Gains

District Congregations (District and Synod).....	4,264,277
District Congregations (District use only).....	271,233
Other Gifts.....	723,379
Investment Income.....	702,206
Program Fees and Other Income.....	1,256,642
Total Support, Revenues, and Gains.....	7,217,737

## Expenses

Synodical Budget*	1,495,303
Program Services	
Ecclesiastical Administration.....	383,086
Convention.....	374,143
World & National Missions.....	1,770,910
Student Aid.....	265,688
Lutheran Schools.....	365,207
Conferences, Training, & Events.....	1,418,828
Other Congregation Program Services.....	1,378,579
Support Services	
Management & General.....	514,168
Fundraising.....	253,831
Total Expenses.....	8,219,743
Change in Net Assets.....	(1,002,006)

Revenue



Expenses

Information is taken from the audited financial statements of the Michigan District, LCMS. Copies of the audit report, which include all integral parts of the financial statements, are available from the District Office.

\*The Michigan District sent 32.56% of its unrestricted cash receipts from congregations to national Synod during the fiscal year and 2.44% to Concordia University Ann Arbor and several Recognized Service Organizations. The numbers on the financial statements reflect adjustments based on pledges from congregations and to the Synod as required by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

## Support for National and International Ministries

For the fiscal year ending January 31, 2024, the Michigan District remitted \$1,467,303 to Corporate (national) Synod, which represents 32.56% of the District's unrestricted gifts from congregations. The 35 districts of the Synod contribute approximately \$12 million of undesignated revenue to Corporate Synod annually in support of national and international mission and ministry. The balance of the \$81.7 million 2023/24 budget of Corporate Synod was expected to come primarily from restricted gifts and sales of materials and services.

Additional information on Corporate Synod's budget and finances can be found at [www.lcms.org/giving/transparency](http://www.lcms.org/giving/transparency).

For Stories, Staff Listing, or More Information Visit

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

