

Fall 2025

michigan

A publication of the Michigan District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
and Church Extension Fund

IN TOUCH

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Extolling Congregational Life

by Rev. David A. Davis

As any reader of this article knows, congregational life can be a challenge. Work. Meetings. Disagreements. Seeming lack of resources. And so on.

And as any reader of this article knows, many of our congregations struggle. Across our District—and, for that matter, across the country—many congregations have faced significant decline. This year alone, nine of our congregations have closed.

And yet again, as any reader of this article knows, when God calls someone to faith, he calls that person into Christian community, into a

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Photo by Elisa Schulz/Michigan District, LCMS

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IN TOUCH

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congregation of other believers for strengthening of faith, consolation of believers, acts of love, and Gospel outreach to neighbors.

So regardless of the challenges, let us extol and celebrate our congregational life, accenting three key areas.

Immersed in the Word

Congregational life thrives on the Word of God. A robust ministry of the Word leads to robust life together and fruitful ministry beyond. Such a ministry includes:

- Individual members who have a habit of daily reading of the Bible. It takes 20 minutes a day to read through the entire Bible in a year;
- Widespread opportunities for Bible study in large, small, and home groups; and
- Sunday services centered on the Word and Sacraments rooted in Christian heritage and relevant to today.

For our life together to thrive, we must be immersed in, not dabbling with, the Word (See 2 Kings 22–23).

Recapture Biblical Membership

We should remember that the sort of membership the Bible teaches is not the sort of membership we think of when it comes to country clubs or Costco. Membership in a congregation is not about attendance, dues, and a roster.

Membership in a congregation is about being a part of a body. Like a finger or a kneecap is part of a body. To live out this biblical analogy, we need to keep in mind the following:

- Activities are more important than meetings, i.e., the body is meant for doing.
- Cooperation and coordination are essential for a body; conflict leads to dysfunction.
- No one is dispensable.

Being part of a congregation, then, is being part of an organism, not an organization. This understanding forestalls consumerism and breeds biblical community.

For our life together to thrive, we must recapture a biblical understanding of membership (See 1 Corinthians 12).

Loving Neighbors for Their Sake

While we want our congregations to grow, we must be careful that, when we reach out in love to neighbors, we do so for the sake of loving them in Jesus and not as a recruitment tool for the preservation of our congregation. Often congregations, especially when they are distressed numerically, see loving their neighbors as a way to

sustain their organization.

Rather, we are to love our neighbors from a Kingdom point of view.

- We love as an outgrowth of the King's love toward us.
- We love that others might come to know our King through the Word we share.
- We love so that the Kingdom of love might come to more.

There is an old song, now very old, that affirms “What the world needs now is love, sweet love.” Our being part of a congregation positions us individually and corporately to be an extension of love to a world that badly needs it.

For our life together to thrive, we must understand Christian love as a gift to our neighbors (See 1 John 4).

One More Thing

Your congregational life is not lived in isolation. It is part of the Christian Church. It is connected with all other Christian congregations either formally, as in being part of an organized Synod, or as being part of the One Holy Christian and Apostolic Church.

This past summer we experienced the benefit of life together in our District Convention. Representatives from our congregations across the state gathered for worship, encouragement, fellowship, and instruction. We were comforted, like Elijah, that there are more with us than we sometimes realize.

Each individual congregation does not need to—and, for that matter, cannot—“do everything” all by itself. It can work within a church body like The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and also with other local congregations. Of course, there are limitations to what sorts of things congregations can share and do together, but congregations should not exist in isolation from other congregations.

For our life together to thrive, our congregations need to see that they are part of a bigger whole, a Kingdom that transcends time and space (See Revelation 21).

Satan loves to corrupt gifts from God. The gift that is congregational life is not immune from attack. But such life together is indeed a gift, a gift to steward. May God's Spirit lead us to thrive within congregational life, extolling and celebrating it day by day. ■



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



Photo by Elisa Schulz/Michigan District, LCMS

A Worthy Use of Your Time:

The Michigan March for Life by Paul M. Clark

Many things command our attention. Our schedules do fill up quickly, don't they? Some items on our to-do list are quite important, while others are not quite so urgent. Of course, there may be a few items that are not worthy of our time at all. The **Michigan March For Life** is an event worthy of your time. This is an opportunity to take a stand on behalf of unborn babies who have no defense against the onslaught of abortion. This is a time to ensure that a strong and steady voice for the sanctity of human life will continue to be heard in our state.

Marching on the anniversary date of the infamous *Proposal 3 Constitutional Amendment* in Michigan that struck down nearly all protections for helpless babies in the womb, we are coming together to ensure that the battle for Life goes on. We will be here for the defenseless. We will continue to advocate for the lives of these precious little ones. Your presence at the **Michigan March For Life** makes a statement—that *these are little girls and boys who have been given the gift of life from our Creator God, the One who says, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you..." (Jeremiah 1:5).*

Even basic biology shows clearly that, from the moment of fertilization, these are human beings. A civilized society should treasure and guard the lives of its children, born and unborn. Yet, there is no group as voiceless and defenseless as that of unborn children. Their lives are being stolen away at a frightening rate. In addition, there is immeasurable harm—

sometimes physical, always spiritual—inflicted on the mothers (and fathers) who fall prey to the lies of the abortion culture. There are far better ways. Our *Pregnancy Resource Centers* throughout the state compassionately support women and their babies and help them to choose life.

As Lutherans, who believe, teach, and confess all that has been delivered once for all to the saints in the **Holy Scriptures**, including the miracle of God's creation and the gift of life, we must continue to be at the forefront of this battle. *God help us, we will!*

If you are able, whether a pastor, a deacon or deaconess, a teacher, a layman, single or married, with children or without children, old or young—please consider attending this year's MICHIGAN MARCH FOR LIFE. This will take place on THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, at the State Capitol in Lansing.

Here is the basic schedule of events:

10:00 a.m. – Pre-Rally Concert

11:00 a.m. – Rally

12:00 p.m. – March for Life

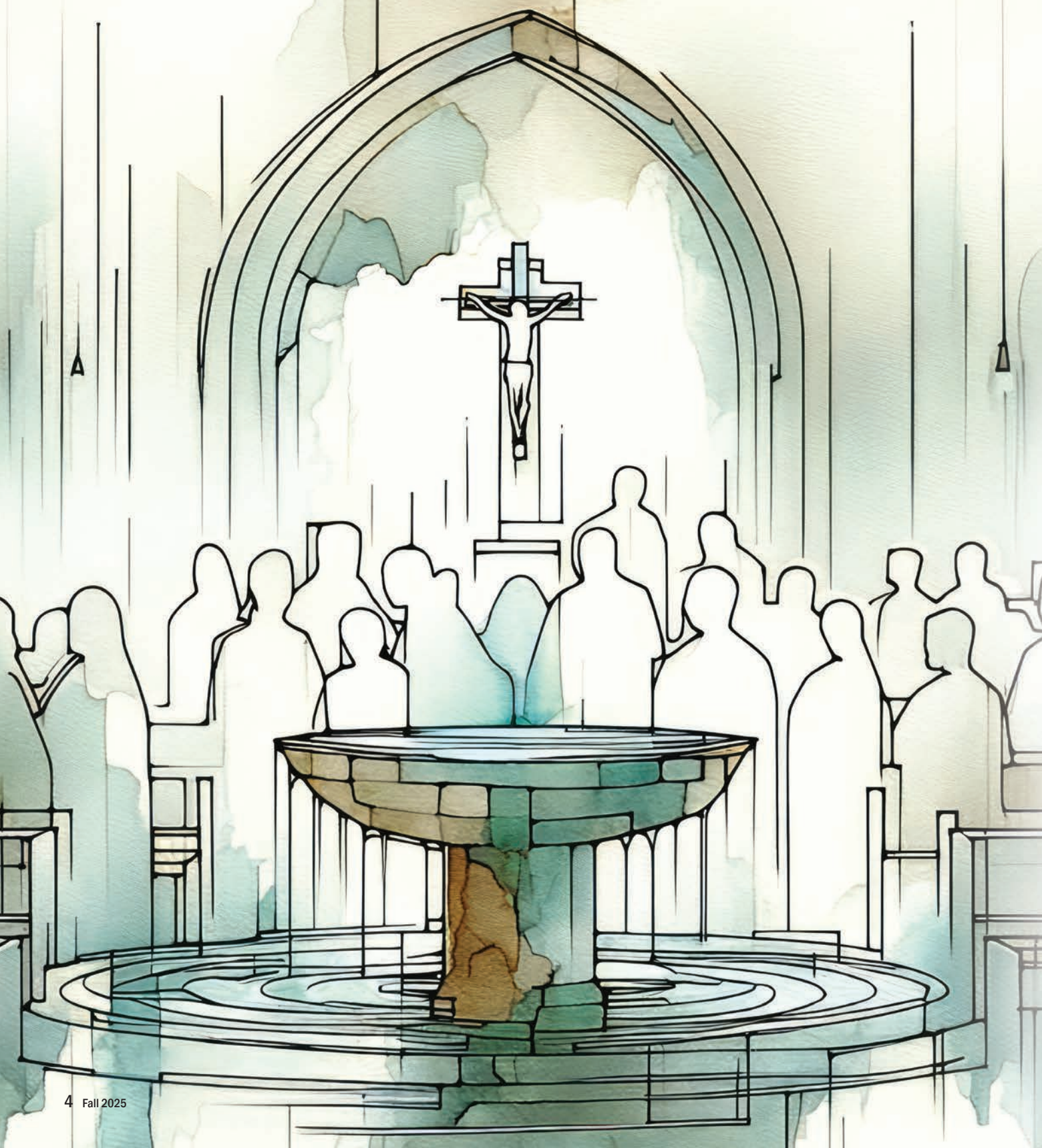
The march will take place outside the State Capitol building at 100 N. Capitol Ave., Lansing, MI 48933.

JOIN US! LET US COME TOGETHER TO MARCH FOR LIFE! ■

Rev. Paul M. Clark has served as Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Fowler for 37 years. He also serves as President of Lutherans for Life of Michigan, as well as the District Life Coordinator for the Michigan District, LCMS.

Bringing *Eternity* to Eastpointe

by Douglas M. Adams



Drive down Gratiot on your way into Detroit and you will pass through a community with a long history. Eastpointe, once called East Detroit, is a community that goes back to the pioneer days of our nation. St. Peter's has been a part of this community since 1847. As we prepare to celebrate our 180th anniversary, St. Peter's is looking to begin a new chapter in her long life of service to the Gospel. Over the last two years we have been striving to become a faith community that brings the love of Jesus into the messiness of life.

As we continue to share the Gospel, St. Peter's has seen an average weekly attendance grow from 178 to 250 each Sunday. Some have joined through our Early Childhood Center and day school. This new generation is being grafted onto the St. Peter's legacy. We have also taken in many families who once belonged to other congregations that have closed. These new families have added their own rich heritage and traditions to St Peter's. Many more have come to us having had no church background at all. With these new members, St. Peter's is getting a small taste of what the church must have been like in the book of Acts. What a joy it is to see the Holy Spirit calling and gathering 37 children and 14 adults in Baptism since 2022, with many more being scheduled for the fall.

Into the messiness of life, the people of St. Peter's have seen how the grace and greatness of Jesus can restore souls. The Christ-focused services, the fellowship opportunities, and a focus on a living faith have helped us understand that we are part of God's family. This family we call St. Peter's continues to grow and reach out to our neighbors in need. In the next several months we will be starting seven new ministry opportunities ranging from new adult Bible studies, member care, a renewed children's ministry, and several community outreach programs. Jesus said, "A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14). Believing this, the members of St. Peter's have joyfully renewed their calling to let the light of Jesus shine in the midst of Eastpointe.

This belief in sharing the Gospel has led St. Peter's to see that Jesus' love and compassion are for everyone. It is wonderful to see the pews beginning to fill with a beautiful diversity that mirrors the surrounding community. Bible studies continue to grow; our day school has 115 children enrolled; the ECC is growing as we work to provide Christ-centered childcare to the community. The congregation is in the process of converting an apartment complex into a community center providing a food pantry, counseling center, and rooms for community outreach. God's people

Photos courtesy of St. Peter's Eastpointe



are joyfully sharing with their neighbors the love of Jesus in the messiness of life.

Like so many of our communities, people in Eastpointe in many ways are hurting, hungry, and are overcome with a sense of hopelessness. The people of St. Peter's believe that Jesus has put us here to bring eternity to Eastpointe. We are a people of hope; a hope that comes from Jesus' cross and empty grave. A hope that we are seeing firsthand here at St. Peter's, beginning to transform people's lives in Christ.

So, if you're driving down Gratiot, stop by St. Peter's. We would love to show you around; to share with you the hallways full of children's laughter and the hearts of God's people being filled with hope. Come visit the family we call St. Peter's; the place where so many are calling home. Where real people grow in real relationships, learning to live in the messiness of life filled with the hope of Jesus Christ. ■

Rev. Douglas Adams is the senior pastor at St. Peter's, Eastpointe.

“We are a people of hope; a hope that comes from Jesus' cross and empty grave. A hope that we are seeing firsthand here at St. Peter's, beginning to transform people's lives in Christ.”



Photos by Elisa Schulz/Michigan District, LCMS

Adopt-a-Class Program

by Karen Brown

A number of years ago the Adopt-a-Class Program was started at Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Monroe, and it has been a real success. The program was designed to build a stronger bond between the church and school, the children and the congregation—our Trinity family.

Each year, members of the congregation are asked if they would be willing to sponsor one of the classes at Trinity. Sponsors keep their teacher and the class in their prayers and might even send notes of encouragement. They would come into the classroom as directed by the teacher to read, play games, and help with art projects or class parties. They might attend chapel services with their class or attend church services when the class sings. If the class participates in sports, they might attend a game to cheer them on.

The program was designed to build a stronger bond between the church and school, the children and the congregation—our Trinity family.

In addition, the sponsors provide a small monetary gift to assist the teacher with costs not usually covered by the school. One teacher used his funds to purchase new baseballs, volleyballs, and soccer balls.

The sponsor gets to know the teacher and the students, and they get to know the sponsor. As one of the sponsors, over the years I have received some of the most beautiful Christmas cards from my eighth-grade class, and some of the nicest ‘Thank You’ cards from all of the classes. One of the cards had nothing on the front—typical from the boys. Inside it simply

read, “Mrs. Brown, Thanks for the balls.” I loved it and have kept it all this time.

The program has become so popular that Trinity Lutheran School now has a waiting list of sponsors. ■

Mrs. Karen Brown is a member of Trinity, Monroe and one of the sponsors of the Adopt-a-Class program.



On May 23, Mrs. Brown taught the eighth graders how to make crepes in the school’s kitchen. Two of the students had been to her house to learn, and on the day the whole class was taught, they were helpers and wore special “chef” hats that Mrs. Brown provided. The love shared between Mrs. Brown and all the students was evident.

CONVERSATIONS
ON CULTURE & FAITH

The Influence of Family on Professional Church Work

by Adele S. Werner

Growing up in a family deeply rooted in church work, members of the Werner family shared their unique experiences and insights into how faith and service have shaped their lives in the first-ever episode of *Conversations on Culture & Faith*. This new podcast series focuses on talking about topics from our current cultural moment with an eye towards the Lutheran faith.

From childhood memories of spending countless hours at church to the influence of family involvement, the interview with the Werners delves into how their lives were molded by the church and how their professional careers came to be. Here are some key insights they shared during our time with them.

Family Influence on Church Involvement

Reflecting on how their upbringing as children of church workers made church work a natural career path, Leah Tweedale recalled: “*We spent the majority of our day at church.*” She and her siblings highlighted how their father’s role in youth and family ministry exposed them to various church roles beyond the traditional pastor or teacher’s role. As Zack Werner noted, “*Being in a church worker’s home, it’s like, oh yeah, this is just life.*”

The Normal Nature of Church Work

For the Werner siblings, church work seemed like it was always an option. Being part of a church worker’s

family made the idea of serving the church feel attainable and normal. This perspective was reinforced by seeing family members and peers actively involved in church activities. “*I think seeing people go through the process made it more attainable,*” Pastor Joel Werner shared as he recalled when his father decided to go to seminary.

Challenges and Misconceptions

Despite the rewarding nature of church work, each family member acknowledged common misconceptions, such as the belief that church work is easy. “*Church workers work hard. They work a lot of nights and weekends,*” Pastor Mark Werner stressed, highlighting the sacrifices made by those in ministry. Our conversation also emphasized the importance of supporting church workers and encouraging future generations to consider church work as a viable career path.

These professional church workers’ stories are a testament to the profound impact of family involvement in church life. Their journey highlights the importance of nurturing faith within families and communities, ensuring that church work remains a viable and fulfilling path for future generations. You can listen to the full episode at michigandistrict.org/category/podcast-episodes/ at your preferred streaming platform. ■

Adele S. Werner is the Video Journalist/Digital Media Manager for the Michigan District, LCMS.

SAVE THE DATE! SUMMIT CELEBRATION

1 Peter 3:15-16

FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND LUTHERAN HOUR RALLY PREACHER

Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler
Speaker of *The Lutheran Hour*®



Please join us at St. Lorenz to
praise the name of our Savior,
Jesus Christ in preparation to
share the Good News to others.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 31
+ SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1**

**St. Lorenz Lutheran
Worship and Event Center**
850 W Genessee St • Frankenmuth, MI

Saturday, January 31

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Congregational Ministry Summit

Sunday, February 1

2:00 p.m.

Lutheran Hour Rally Worship Service

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!

Michigan LLL District in partnership with the Michigan District, LCMS



LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

www.lhm.org

The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their
food in due season.
You open your hand;
you satisfy the desire of
every living thing.
Psalm 145:15-16



**Lutheran
Women
in Mission**
MICHIGAN DISTRICT

www.lwmlmichigan.org

SAVE THE DATE

**2026 LWML Michigan District
41st Biennial Convention
Fri, Jun 26 - Sun, Jun 28, 2026**

**Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center
Michigan State University
219 S. Harrison Rd.
East Lansing, MI 48824**



Greetings from Church Extension Fund!

As the summer winds down (can you believe it?!) I am looking forward to a busy fall full of conferences. In the course of six weeks, there are three major conferences that I will be attending, including CEF's own Fall Leadership Conference. These conferences typically take place around the same time each year, and are kind of baked in to my schedule when I'm planning the year ahead. I also know that each one is important to me in a different way.

One is a very helpful conference for professional development, another is very important to our business at CEF, and yet another is special to so many people across the district. All these conferences mean a lot of time away from home and my family, it means significant travel, and it also means lots of planning and execution. However, these conferences touch on so much of what drives me from a missional standpoint that the six weeks, while busy, is also incredibly edifying.

Do you ever find yourself in a position where you know things are going to be hard, but you know they'll be good for you in the long run? I recently saw a PSA that said, "saving money takes courage". It took me a while to fully process that statement. Why does it take courage? Because it's hard! It means saying no to things you're used to. It means holding off on that special purchase. It means preparing for the unexpected—from car repairs to rising daycare costs.

I want to assure you that while it may take some courage to cut your expenses and save just a little bit more than usual, CEF is here to be a courageous partner! We offer numerous investment options for all phases and stages of life. We recently began our Ministry Worker Extension Plus account, which offers the highest available interest rate for this tiered-rate product, exclusively for ministry workers in Michigan. We have IRA's for those looking to have a little more predictability with their retirement funds. We also have term notes to save intentionally for the short term, long term, or anything in between.

For nearly 125 years, CEF has been a trusted ministry partner with churches, schools, and other ministries across Michigan. If you or your church are looking for a way to save a little bit more each month, please visit our website or give us a call - we want to be a partner in ministry with you!

Andrew Sohn
Vice President – Strategy & Marketing

Church Extension Fund Welcomes New Board Members

“Everything rises and falls on leadership,” says noted author, speaker, and proud Michigander John C. Maxwell. Whether in a business, a nonprofit, or even a family, the success or failure of any organization hinges on the strength of its leaders.

At Church Extension Fund (CEF), we partner with hundreds of ministries, pastors, vestries, building committees, and lay leaders each year. One truth remains constant: effective leadership—whether from called workers or lay members—is essential. God places leaders in our midst to help build up the Body of Christ.

CEF is deeply blessed by the leaders God provides, including the faithful men and women who serve on our Board of Trustees. These individuals bring a wealth of experience and diverse backgrounds to their work, helping to guide and govern CEF’s mission to Build the Kingdom in Michigan.

New Trustees Elected

At the Michigan District Convention this past June, three new trustees were elected, along with one incumbent, to serve a six-year term beginning October 1, 2025. The CEF Board holds ultimate governance authority—approving large loans, reviewing policies, and fulfilling fiduciary duties on behalf of our investors.

Per the CEF bylaws, board members serve in one of two categories: Rostered and Called or Lay. Of the nine board members, three must be Rostered or Called, and six must be Lay.

We are pleased to announce the re-election of:

- Rev. Eric Majeski (Grace Lutheran Fellowship – Romeo)

Rev. Majeski was appointed to the board in 2022 to complete the term of Rev. Dr. Ryan Peterson following his move out of the Michigan District.

We also welcome the election of the following Lay members:

- Dr. Amy Engelhardt (St. John – Rochester)
Chief Medical Officer, Henry Ford Hospital – Detroit
- Mr. Al Kaul (Immanuel – Frankentrost)
Executive Director, Valley Lutheran High School – Saginaw
- Dr. Julian Petzold (Trinity – Clinton Twp.)
Educator and owner, Lion Safety Consulting – Metro Detroit.

These leaders bring not only deep expertise, but also a heart for ministry. The CEF executive management team is eager to begin working alongside them.

“We knew we couldn’t go wrong,” said CEF CEO Jim Saalfeld. “The nominee slate was exceptionally strong. We trusted God to place the right people on our board, and we’re confident He did just that. We’re excited to get started.”

Gratitude for Outgoing Board Members

For nearly 125 years, Church Extension Fund has benefited from the wisdom and dedication of its trustees. We extend heartfelt thanks to three outgoing board members whose terms concluded this year:

- Mr. Tim Haberling (Immanuel – Grand Rapids)
- Mr. Jeff Roscoe (Faith – Bay City)
- Mr. David Eberhard (Historic Trinity – Detroit)

These individuals have served faithfully, offering their leadership, insight, and time for the good of God's Kingdom. While their official roles have come to a close, we know they will continue to serve in many meaningful ways. We are grateful for their combined 39 years of service to CEF and will surely miss their presence on the board. Thank you Tim, Jeff, and David – and welcome to Amy, Al, and Julian!



Rev. Eric Majeski



Dr. Amy Engelhardt



Mr. Al Kaul



Dr. Julian Petzold



Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy...

Hebrews 13:17



This year, keep 10% of your church's investments at **CEF**.

It's good stewardship and it helps build churches!



Church Extension Fund

800-242-3944 • www.mi-cef.org

Historic Trinity Celebrates 175th Anniversary

In the fall of 1850, under a small, framed chapel on Larned Street near Rivard in Detroit, Historic Trinity became a congregation. Over the next 175 years, this congregation has served the Lord and the people of Detroit through every trial and tribulation.

Much like the city of Detroit itself, through good times and bad, Historic Trinity still stands and thrives. Over the years, it has faced radical cultural changes, urban flight, race riots, and economic collapses. Historic Trinity has prayerfully stood guard over this our city through the years and continues to “*seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you ... and pray to the Lord on its behalf*” (Jeremiah 29:7).

On Friday, November 14, the members of Historic Trinity will celebrate its 175th anniversary as a congregation with a Gala at the Gem Theatre in Detroit. The evening festivities include a cocktail hour, a jazz quartet, buffet, and concludes with dancing and fellowship featuring the unique performance of Detroit’s *Mainstreet Soul*. Tickets are \$100/person. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit historictrinity.org/events/175th-anniversary-gala on or before November 1.

Free Resources from Lutheran Heritage Foundation

Does your church or school have families whose first language isn’t English? Why not share a Lutheran book about Jesus with them in their heart language? Get FREE resources from the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, including children’s Bible storybooks and Luther’s *Small Catechism* in more than 180 languages! Lutheran Heritage Foundations has over 1,678 publications ... by 244 authors ... in 186 languages ... totaling 6,269,775 books printed, plus 327 additional publications in process! Visit lhfmissions.org to learn more.



Photos courtesy of Lutheran Heritage Foundation

New FREE Arrangement by Anne Krentz Organ

Download a new free arrangement from Lutheran Summer Music 2025 by Anne Krentz Organ: *Beach Spring* for solo instrument with keyboard accompaniment. Based on the well-known shape-note

hymn tune, this versatile work is this year’s installment in the LSM Hymn Tune Project and can be performed either in full or as individual movements. Listen and download for free at LSMacademy.org/lsmpress.



Photo courtesy of Lutheran Summer Music

Fourth Annual White as Snow Women’s Conference

The highly anticipated *White as Snow Women’s Conference* is back for its fourth year and will take place on Saturday, January 24, 2026. Prepare to start the new year grounded in faith, community, and biblical truth.

Hosted at St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth, this powerful one-day event has brought together women from over 70 churches across 8 states—all with one shared mission: to start the year centered on Christ.

This year’s conference promises another unforgettable experience featuring inspiring keynote speaker/author Lee Nienhuis. Breakout sessions include Navigating Grief; Living with a Winning Attitude; Suicide Awareness & Hope; Prayer Journaling; Restoration in Your Marriage; In His Image: Loving All People as God Does.

Your \$45 ticket includes all sessions, event materials, coffee, snacks, and a delicious lunch from the Bavarian Inn Restaurant. Register at stlorenz.org/womens-conference.

Gather your friends, tag your group, and don’t wait—come and be refreshed, restored, and renewed as we begin 2026 together in the presence of God.

Mt. Hope Celebrates 75th Anniversary

God had a unique plan for Mount Hope, Grayling long before any person ever knew. Two friends from Mount Hope Lutheran Church in Allen Park, Mich., the Hoerl and Bidvia families, moved up north with thoughts of starting their own businesses. Supported by the friends they met in Grayling, they chartered a new church with the help of Pastor Ralph Claus of both Bethlehem, Lewiston and Trinity, Gaylord.

Mt. Hope has come a long way since February 8, 1950. At that first service, on a Wednesday, there were only about 30 people in attendance, and the first collection was \$10.63. The church, led by Pastor Claus, initially held services during the week. Within five years, Mt. Hope had its own building, and within five more years, an additional sanctuary wing was built.

The 75th Anniversary service of Mt. Hope took place on Sunday, June 22, 2025. The church building was filled with returning pastors, special guests, members, and friends for the long-awaited celebration. Former pastor Rev. Paul Weber of Marquette gave a memorable



message and current pastor, Rev. Kurt Klingbeil, led this beautiful service. Afterwards, a delicious meal was served, and pastors and current and past members gave short testimonials of what interested them in joining Mt. Hope at the time they did.

Today, Mt. Hope is heavily into outreach programs, Bible studies, community services, and hosting a local nursery and preschool. For more historical information, a book about Mt. Hope's entire history, *Little Church, Big God*, is available by contacting the church office at 989.348.5921.

St. Mark Breaks Ground for Campus Expansion

St. Mark, Battle Creek broke ground for campus expansion in August. This groundbreaking is an essential step to make room for continued growth and to update the campus. Since 2022, St. Mark has been one of the three fastest-growing Lutheran churches in Michigan, and this expansion enables that growth to continue into the future.

"This is not only an important moment for St. Mark," said Pastor Chris Paavola, *"we're excited to make a space that allows us to better serve our community."*

The ceremony included a shovel-turning with church leaders, Schweitzer Construction, and Slocum Associates, Inc.

Since 1957, St. Mark has served the community of Battle Creek with a mission to *"lay down our lives so as many as possible experience Jesus."* The campus was expanded with a new sanctuary in 1973 and again in 2002. *Our World for Children* provides exceptional care for children ages 6 weeks to Junior Kindergarten.



2026 Synod Convention Call for Nominations

The Committee for Convention Nominations (CCN) seeks nominations to fill the important offices that govern the Synod and its agencies on behalf of member congregations. These nominations are in preparation for the synodical convention to take place July 18–23, 2026. The full call for nominations for positions to be elected by the 2026 Synod convention may be found at lcms.org/nominate. **Nominations for more than sixty offices are due by October 18.** Any member of a member congregation with a valid e-mail address will be able to establish an account and submit a nomination.

Experience Ministry in Action: Join the Detroit Metro Ministry Bus Tour

You're invited to join the Michigan District and Gifts For All God's Children (GFAGC) for a special guided tour of impactful ministries serving the Detroit Metro area. This one-day event, happening on Thursday, October 30, will highlight both Michigan District ministries and organizations partnered with GFAGC that are making a difference in the lives of local children.

Cost is \$25/person and includes lunch. Can't make it on October 30? Don't worry, another tour is planned for Spring 2026! To register visit: www.michigandistrict.org/urbanbustour.

Come see firsthand how God is working through these ministries to bring hope and transformation to our communities.

Educators of the Year 2025

We are grateful for the hundreds of educators serving our Lutheran schools across the Michigan District. Each spring we recognize some of them with our Educators of the Year Awards. These individuals were nominated by their colleagues as being outstanding and going above and beyond in serving students, families, and their congregations. It is a joy to celebrate the wonderful teachers, principals, and directors that make our Lutheran schools a place where Christ's love is shared on a daily basis!



Kitty Sweitzer – 2025 Michigan District Early Childhood Teacher of the Year

Kitty serves at Redeemer, Birmingham. Her passion for teaching, unwavering dedication, and love for her students have made a profound impact on countless young lives. Here are some comments shared by those who nominated her:

For over 40 years she has loved and cared for the children placed in her care. She has an amazing ability to connect with the children and with the parents. I can't imagine that she will ever retire because the children give her life and energize her ... even at the age of 82!

She often meets after hours with parents to help with whatever parenting needs they have. She can also laser-focus on anything her little ones might need.

Kitty gets her children ready for the rest of their education. My other staff who teach the 4 and 5-year-olds often say that they can tell the students who have been "Kitty trained"!

She is a legend in our area and people love her for her ability to make the other person feel loved and cared for. Both young and old. They remember her far after they leave our three-year-old preschool. They remember her love.

Congratulations, Kitty!



Lisa May – 2025 Michigan District Early Childhood Director of the Year

We are blessed with many early childhood centers throughout the Michigan District, and they all have administrators that play a vital role in the success of Lutheran education. Lisa serves at Bethlehem, Saginaw. Here are just a few of the heartfelt words shared by those who nominated her:

Mrs. May has grown our preschool over the last six years to the biggest numbers ever, with ten employees under her leadership. She is an amazing leader!

Lisa has taken on a challenging and exciting opportunity with the expansion into the GSRP program, and it has been a blessing. All the while she continues to make sure all areas of our early childhood program are thriving.

Lisa has a heart for serving students and families so they are able to hear the love of Jesus every day. We are grateful for her continued leadership here at Bethlehem.

Congratulations, Lisa!



Penny Pfeiffer – 2025 Michigan District K-8 Teacher of the Year

Each year we lift up outstanding educators who are doing extraordinary things in the classroom. Penny serves as the first grade teacher at St. Peter, Macomb. Here is what peers had to say about her:

Penny is a thoughtful listener and takes time from her busy schedule to see how her fellow teachers are doing and ask if they need anything. Penny is a true example

of a Christian, sharing the love of Christ with those God puts in her path.

Penny goes above and beyond for her students!! When you think of a dedicated teacher, you think of Mrs. Pfeiffer! Every student knows how much she cares about them and continues to care for them as they complete first grade and continue through our school. Her classroom is full of joy in Jesus!!

Her positive attitude and servant's heart make her an invaluable member of our St. Peter community. Through her dedication, faithfulness, and love for her students and colleagues, she embodies what it means to be a Lutheran educator. She is a blessing to our school and a shining example of Christ's love in action!

Congratulations, Penny!



Doug Braun – 2025 Michigan District High School Teacher of the Year

It is our privilege to recognize Doug Braun as the 2025 Michigan District High School Teacher of the Year. He teaches theology at Lutheran High School Westland. Here are some comments shared by those who nominated him for the award:

Doug is an exceptionally thorough and hardworking educator who is deeply passionate about teaching theology and making an impact in the lives of his students. His dedication to his students is evident in the way he consistently goes above and beyond to support their academic, personal, and spiritual growth.

Mr. Braun takes the time to get to know his students and encourages them to do their best.

Mr. Braun has a lot of theological knowledge and teaches a great foundation and application of Christian life.

Doug truly embodies the Lutheran Westland mission—Learning for Life! Leading in Truth! He is an exceptional master educator.

Congratulations, Doug!



Roger Wolter – 2025 Michigan District Principal of the Year

Each year we lift up an outstanding principal who exemplifies what it means to be a servant leader. It is our privilege to recognize Roger Wolter as the 2025 Michigan District Principal of the Year. Roger serves at Holy Cross, Saginaw, and this is what people had to say about him:

Roger's dedication, wisdom, and passion for Lutheran education make him an extraordinary principal, but even more than that, he is a mentor, encourager, and champion for every principal and educator he encounters.

He is a man who puts Christ first in his own life and promotes it for others ... It is a blessing to have him in leadership of the school and as a leader in the Church.

Mr. Wolter leads with compassion and conviction, ensuring that every student is given the opportunity to grow in both faith and academics. He models what it means to serve Christ through leadership, and he does it with humility and grace every single day.

Congratulations, Roger!

We will begin the nomination process for our 2026 annual awards at the end of February 2026.

McNeil Ordained

This past summer, Rev. Sean R. McNeil was ordained and installed at Saint John, Au Gres. He is a Concordia University Ann Arbor/Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne, Ind. graduate. His home church was Hope, DeWitt and he grew up at Faith, Whitehall. He and his wife, Kathryn, have one daughter.



Photo courtesy of St. John, Au Gres

Convention

Michigan District, LCMS Holds 104th Convention, Re-Elects President and Addresses Key Resolutions



Remember, Renew, Return,” was inspired by 1 Kings 19 and emphasized spiritual renewal and faithful service.

Delegates re-elected the Rev. David A. Davis as district president on the first ballot, affirming his leadership for a second term. The convention also re-elected the following vice presidents:

- Rev. Darryl L. Andrzejewski (Metro East Region) – First Vice President
- Rev. Eric K. Cloeter (North and East Region) – Second Vice President
- Rev. Craig L. Bickel (West Region) – Third Vice President
- Rev. Andrew D. Gruenhagen (Metro West Region) – (newly elected) Fourth Vice President

Delegates also adopted several key resolutions, including:

- A request to pause implementation of Lutheran Identity and Mission Outcome Standards to allow for further discussion and response to concerns;
- An expression of deep lament and sympathy over the reduction of operations at CUWAA’s Ann Arbor campus;
- A memorial to the LCMS urging greater clarity and transparency in the process of approving faculty and presidential appointments at Concordia universities and seminaries.

The Convention Proceedings publication includes lists of officers, boards and committees, registrants, congregations by circuit and region, and advisory

delegates to convention. It also includes the president’s report, transcriptions of the essayist presentation, minutes, resolutions, and Bylaws of the Michigan District and Church Extension Fund. You can download the publication at michigandistrict.org/convention/business/.

The convention served as a time for delegates to gather for decision-making as well as a time of fellowship, worshiping together, reflection, and discernment of God’s direction for ministry in Michigan and beyond.

The convention committee, chaired by O. Dennis Sohn, wishes to extend its heartfelt thanks to all who served



during the convention, including preachers, musicians, parish nurses, and our super-hero volunteers. Special appreciation goes to those who helped create a festive and welcoming atmosphere by providing meals, snacks, and hospitality—Rev. Dr. Jeff Schrank (Christ Church, Phoenix, Ariz.); St. John, Rochester; St. Paul/Christ the King/Ephphatha, Flint; Christ Our Savior, Livonia; St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth; Redeemer, Jackson; St. Paul, Ann Arbor; Our Savior, Lansing; and St. Paul, Hillsdale. Many thanks also to our sponsors: Church Extension Fund, Fellowship Development, Concordia Plans, Lutheran Benefits Group, Lutheran Trust, and Wellspring Lutheran Services. We also thank St. Paul Lutheran School, Ann Arbor for facility support and the Concordia University Ann Arbor staff for hosting.

More information can be found at michigandistrict.org/convention.





Live to Tell About It!

1 Peter 3:15-16



**Michigan District, LCMS presents ...
Congregational Ministry Summit
St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth, Mich.
January 31, 2026**

Keynote Speaker
Rev. Dr. Michael Ziegler
Lutheran Hour Speaker



A conference for church members and workers together.

Registration opens Nov. 2025.

For more information, visit michigandistrict.org/cms26.



**Michigan District Lutheran Laymen's League/Lutheran Hour Ministries
Summit Celebration Worship Service - February 1, 2026**



Michigan District

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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

2025 Christmas Appeal

On a cold night centuries ago, a husband and wife made their way to the only shelter available. They bedded down with cows and sheep as the mother labored and gave birth to a baby boy and laid him in the manger. They were far from family, home, and anything that felt normal. *What does God expect of us? How do we protect this Child?* They gazed at Jesus and thanked God for what they knew and what they didn't yet know. And in the father's dream that night, God said, "You are not alone."

Christmas is a season of joy for many—and of anxiety and deep sadness for many others. The loneliness epidemic that grips our world becomes more evident at a time when we're socially expected to get together with family and friends. But what if we don't have anyone? Or what if our circumstances don't allow us to be near our loved ones?

Congregations across the state are helping to meet the needs of their communities. Together we are supporting the mom who is trying to find food for her children. We are helping a dad who wants to give gifts for Christmas. We are caring for people with all sorts of hurt. It happens in small towns and big cities. Together we proclaim, "You are not alone. The Kingdom of God is at hand."

Earthly struggles are real to people that live and work beside us. Jesus came into a broken world to know and redeem our struggles. In the midst of our challenges, God's Word reminds us that we are loved and cared for as His children. And He also moves us to recognize others who need this life-giving Word.

The Michigan District supports church workers and congregations as they provide Great Commission and Great Compassion care in their communities and the world. **Your gift today helps equip church workers and congregations to share Christ's life-changing care and compassion. Will you help us deliver this gift to those who need to know that they are not alone?**

May God's blessings of peace, health, and joy be yours in Christ.

...eyes on Jesus...

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

Yes, President Davis, I would like to support the Michigan District, LCMS!

Enclosed is my tax deductible gift of : ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ Other _____

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Congregation/City _____

I would like my gift to support: ☐ Greatest Need (Unrestricted)

☐ General Endowment ☐ Mission & Ministry ☐ Leadership Development ☐ Prof. Church Worker Scholarship
☐ Lutheran Education ☐ A2E ☐ Church Worker Care ☐ Other _____

☐ I'm considering including the Michigan District in my estate, please contact me.

To donate via credit card visit michigandistrict.org/christmasappeal

For a listing of additional funds visit: michigandistrict.org/donate/ways-to-give

Return to:
Attn: Development Department
Michigan District, LCMS
3773 Geddes Road Ann Arbor, MI 48105



Michigan District

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-3098

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

Michigan In Touch Fall 2025 Issue



Calendar of Events

OCTOBER 2025

- 2–4 Lutheran Educators Association Conference
St. Louis, Missouri
- 6–8 All Pastors Conference
Boyer Mountain
- 13–15 Ministry Specialist Conference
Drury Inn, Grand Rapids
- 21 Board of Directors Meeting & Listening Event
Historic Trinity, Detroit

NOVEMBER 2025

- 7–8 Spiritual First Aid
Faith, Grand Blanc
- 27–28 District Office Closed

DECEMBER 2025

- 24–26 District Office Closed

JANUARY 2026

- 1 District Office Closed
- 12–13 Board of Directors Meeting
St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth
- 31 Congregational Ministry Summit
St. Lorenz Worship & Event Center, Frankenmuth

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

FEBRUARY 2026

- 1 Lutheran Hour Rally
St. Lorenz Worship & Event Center, Frankenmuth
- 5–6 Snow Tire Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 28 State Basketball Tournament
Lutheran High Westland

MARCH 2026

- 1 State Basketball Tournament
Lutheran High Westland
- 17 Board of Directors
St. Luke, Haslett

APRIL 2026

- 17–19 The Katie
DoubleTree by Hilton, Bay City
- 26–28 Office Personnel Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth

Roster updates can be found at
www.michigandistrict.org/callsandvacancies