

Spring 2026

michigan

IN TOUCH

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



Photo by Adele Werner/Michigan District, LCMS

FROM THE PRESIDENT

What Grace Is by Rev. David A. Davis

A dump was dumped.

Someone left a broken-down mess of a trailer here at the District office. Driving in on a Monday morning, we all saw it. In a little turnaround in the driveway sat a 32-foot trailer. A dump. Shabby. Old. Ratty. A wreck.

Dumped.

Obviously, someone wanted to get rid of this mess of a trailer. And that person decided to just dump it here at the District office, figuring that “the Church” would take care of that mess.

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And we did. We called the authorities to see what was up. Then we called the tow truck. Ultimately, we paid to have it towed away. That person's problem was paid for by us.

Someone else's mess. We paid.

You see where this is going? Isn't this the story of the founder of our Church? We have nothing but a dump of a life to drop at the feet of Jesus. Through sin, our lives are shabby, old, ratty, often a real wreck. But Jesus paid the price. He stood before the authorities on our behalf and then paid the cost of what it takes to remove what's wrong.

That dumped trailer turned out to be an amusing and ultimately not that expensive of a lesson about the grace of God in Jesus. Our mess. He paid.

But let's extend that lesson beyond Jesus and us and beyond this little event at the District office. Let's extend it to your congregation and your community.

I bet there are any number of people in and around your congregation who have made a mess of their lives. You might say a lot of dumpster fires on two feet. Often in the Church we inadvertently give off signals that such people are not really welcome. We think about love for all, but we really like the people who come to us already pretty cleaned up. Their sex life, their language, their relationship with money, their taste in music, are already in pretty good order.

We don't want to go through the time and expense, the effort of building relationships and bearing with one another's failings, to be patient enough for the Holy Spirit to bring them into faith. It can cost a lot to love other people. They have made a mess of their lives, and we don't want to "pay for it."

And yet, that is exactly what Jesus calls us to do as His Body in the world. He calls us to seek and save the lost. That would be not just to suffer through someone dumping a dump of a trailer in the parking lot, but putting up signs that say, "Dump your junk here. We're glad to get rid of it for you."

This time of year, people do a lot of cleaning and throwing out of stuff. I know for a fact that often neighbors will drive by a church that has a big dumpster and dump their stuff there. And I know for a fact that that irritates people in the church. "Hey, why do we have to pay for getting rid of their trash?"

Next time that happens, instead of being annoyed, be reminded that, as beneficiaries of Jesus, the One who has paid to take all our "stuff" away, we embrace the "cost" of connecting with the wrecks of lives in our midst and serve them, bless them, share Jesus with them. Even if we have to pay for it.

Try this on your church sign: "Dump your stuff here."

Remember, forgiving others means absorbing a cost, hurt, or loss. As *People of Hope*, one of the ways we vigorously make known the love of Christ is exactly that. ■



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

“... forgiving others means absorbing a cost, hurt, or loss. As *People of Hope*, one of the ways we vigorously make known the love of Christ is exactly that.”

Photos courtesy of Immanuel, Macomb



Night to Shine by Karen L. Reincke

In February, Immanuel, Macomb had the joy of hosting its third annual Tim Tebow Foundation Night to Shine event. It was an unforgettable evening centered around the love of Christ for people with special needs. It was more than a prom—it was the chance to share that every life is precious, every person is crowned with dignity, and every guest is seen and celebrated.

Each year, nearly 300 volunteers fill the building with joy and compassion for 110 honored guests. From the moment they arrive, the message is clear: “*You are wonderfully made*” (Psalm 139). Volunteers serve as buddies, paparazzi, hair stylists, shoe shiners, dancers, limo ride companions, and more. The dance floor was full of laughter and fun with our many volunteers.

Guests posed with characters from Star Wars and princesses and other fun characters who even joined our guests on the dance floor! Comfort dogs were available for hugs and a calming presence. The karaoke room was especially loved by all as they sang their hearts out to cheers.

One story in particular captured the heart of the night. A sister brought her brother, who uses a wheelchair, for the first time. By the end of the evening, she told us it had been the best night of her life. He was celebrated, danced with friends, and loved being brought down the red carpet to cheers by the volunteers.

That same care extended to their caregivers. While their loved ones were having a great time, caregivers were



invited to a separate respite room where they were served a beautiful dinner, encouraged in conversation, and given a chance to rest. For a few hours, they were not on duty—they were cared for by our volunteers.

At Night to Shine, the truth that our worth is not earned but given was evident to all. The love of God was shown through all involved—guests and volunteers. Immanuel was humbled to serve and is grateful for our congregation that embodies Christ’s love in such tangible ways. By God’s grace, the crowns will be packed away until next year (February 12), but the joy and memories of the evening will remain. ■

Mrs. Karen L. Reincke is the lead family life minister at Immanuel, Macomb.





Sharing Jesus **through Hmong Ministry**

by William R. Wangelin

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ gave the Great Commission to “go and make disciples of all nations...” A number of Lutheran churches in the 1970’s had a unique opportunity to do exactly that by sharing the Good News of Jesus with Hmong immigrants. Our Savior, Lansing is reflecting on 47 years of Hmong Ministry that saw 389 souls baptized into Christ. It is a remarkable chapter in this congregation’s history and the history of the Michigan District which demonstrates the power of the Gospel to transcend language and culture as it reaches people with the Gospel.

During the Vietnam War (1965–1973), the U.S. military was aided by a local ethnic group called the Hmong, who lived in the mountains of Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand. The Hmong were a freedom-loving people who were fighting against the communist takeover of these countries. They fled persecution from the Chinese in the 18th and 19th centuries and maintained their unique language, culture, and identity. They are a people without a homeland. In the 1960’s, tens of thousands of Hmong men were recruited by the CIA for their secret operations in Laos. Others assisted the American military in Vietnam, guiding soldiers through the thick jungles, interpreting, and infiltrating the Viet Cong. They were known to be courageous and loyal. When the U.S.

withdrew from Vietnam, the communists retaliated against the Hmong by trying to kill them. Many families fled across the border into Thailand by swimming across the Mekong River, often under gunfire. Several of them lost family members there in the river. Those who survived were gathered into refugee camps before being sent to the United States. The U.S. gave veteran status to the Hmong who assisted in the Vietnam War and the Secret War in Laos, and allowed their families to settle in America. Refugee agencies and immigrant ministries prepared themselves for the arrival of 30,000 Hmong in 1978. This is when the Lutherans stepped up in a big way.

Churches like Our Savior in Lansing prayerfully considered helping the Hmong resettle in the United States. At Our Savior, a ministry team was formed to welcome the Hmong at the Detroit airport as they arrived on American soil. They helped the refugees find initial housing, get jobs, and fill out the paperwork. Their children were welcomed as students in Our Savior Lutheran School. The language barrier was significant, and most Hmong families had never left their village before that point. With patience, love, and commitment, the Lutherans in Lansing welcomed and assisted these families. The first family in 1978 was the Nao Lu Lee family. They were followed by dozens

of others. Those who came to faith in Christ were baptized, renouncing their animist religion, sometimes whole families at a time.

A Christian Hmong interpreter named Zhong Houa Yang came from Pennsylvania to Lansing to assist with Hmong ministry at Our Savior. He helped Pastor Bickel share the Christian faith with the Hmong, young and old, and by 1984, around 100 Hmong had been baptized by Pastor Bickel. Zhong Houa Yang received theological training first through the Lay Training Institute in Wisconsin and then through Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, and was ordained in 1993. He and Pastor Bickel translated Bible passages into Hmong, as well as other religious literature. Our Savior would produce numerous translations and materials for Hmong Ministry used around the country. Pastor Zhong Houa Yang served as the Hmong pastor at Our Savior until 2004 when Lang Yang, a vicar serving the Hmong Ministry at St. Michael's, Richville took charge of the Hmong Ministry at Our Savior.

Lang Yang came to the United States in 1979 when he was 11 years old. He moved from North Carolina to Richville in 1996 and was involved with the Hmong ministry at St. Michael's Lutheran Church. He graduated from the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 2008 and was ordained as a Lutheran pastor, serving the Hmong members of both St. Michael's, Richville and Our Savior, Lansing. His position was funded by a three-way partnership between St. Michael's, Our Savior, and the Michigan District. In 2012 he organized the Hmong Mission Society that connected Hmong Lutheran ministries in North America and southeast Asia. He led mission trips to Alaska and Thailand and worked on several translation projects for the LCMS, including the Hmong Hymnal Project. Pastor Yang also served in many chaplaincy roles for



the Tuscola County Sherriff Department, the Civil Air Patrol, and U.S. Army Reserve. He holds degrees and certifications in numerous fields, including law, criminal justice, education, an M.Div., and a D.Min. As a tireless missionary, Pastor Yang drew Hmong members to Our Savior from across the state of Michigan, worshipping first in the Bickel Chapel and then, when they outgrew that space, in the Music Room. At one point, 30–50 people were worshipping each week, with a Bible Study, youth group, choir, and children's ministries. They held monthly Hmong potlucks and put on Egg Roll Sundays twice a year. Hundreds of Egg Rolls were fried up early on a Sunday morning and sold in all the services as a fundraiser for Hmong ministry. The number of Hmong immigrants arriving in the U.S. eventually slowed down

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Healthy Boundaries *Start with Me!*

by Elizabeth Wagner



“If you’re feeling convicted or overwhelmed about your boundaries, let’s focus on simple, positive goals to move in the right direction.”

There has been a lot of talk in pop culture recently about healthy boundaries and having boundaries. The word “boundaries” has become synonymous with who you interact with, how you interact with them, and what behavior you will and will not tolerate. Often, we think about boundaries as a way to manage other people’s behavior.

This conversation about boundaries, while enticing, ignores one crucial truth: You can only truly control your own actions. If you have a boundary and someone crosses it, what then? You can only control how you respond, not their behavior. In this way, boundaries are much more about how we interact with the world around us than how others interact with us.

When working on your boundaries, it can be helpful to start with your boundaries with yourself. Here’s an exercise to try. Take a minute to sit down with a pen and paper and jot down a few things that are important to you. These reflect your values. Maybe you start with faith and family. Your career, education, or health might be important to you. Perhaps you value community or volunteer opportunities.

Don’t overthink it. Try to list three to five things you truly value and want to spend your time on. Next, take each of those values and list three ways you could improve your boundaries related to each one.

Let’s start with faith. How often do you attend church when it’s not required? Do you go out of your way to read a devotional, spend time in the Bible or pray? What about your family? Do you want to grow closer to family members or maintain some distance? Could you make intentional time together or find a way to step back when needed?

Now think about your career or education. Do you find yourself spending more time on work or school at the expense of other important areas of your life, like family? Is it affecting your faith or your health?

Speaking of health, the apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:19–20: *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”*

How are you honoring God with your body? Are you

eating nutritious foods? Are you moving or exercising regularly? Are you getting adequate, restful sleep? Are you managing your screen time and paying attention to your mental health? If you are struggling with your health, are you seeking medical care? Too often, we ignore our bodies until they interfere with the rest of our lives.

If you’re feeling convicted or overwhelmed about your boundaries, let’s focus on simple, positive goals to move in the right direction. Look at your list and choose one or two things that feel doable. Set a specific goal that is moderately easy to achieve. Make it something you will do, rather than something you will not do. For example, go to bed at 10 p.m. instead of saying you won’t stay up late.

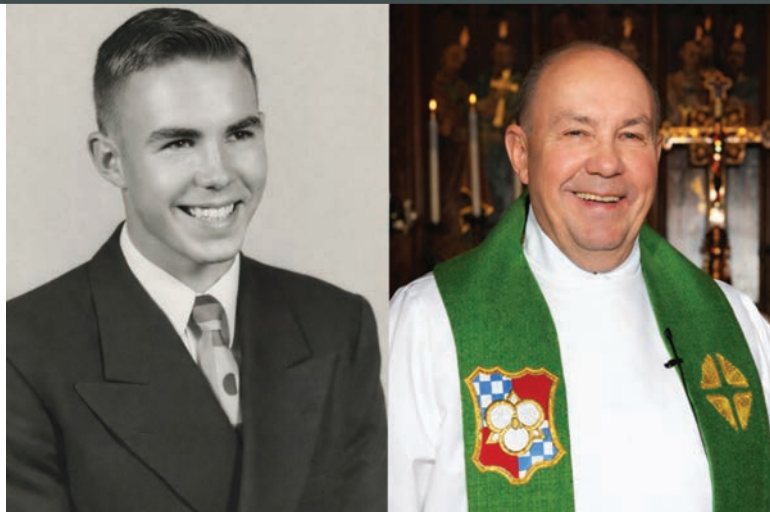
If you made changes or gave something up for Lent and found it beneficial, consider starting there. Maybe you commit to exercising three times a week. Maybe you read your Bible and journal five mornings a week. Remember, habits take time to form. Add a time frame, such as a month or six weeks, to allow yourself time to build consistency.

Once you have one or two realistic goals, share them with someone you trust. Think of this person as a boundary accountability partner. If they want to work on their boundaries, even better. Plan to check in with each other regularly. Sharing your goals makes them feel more real and increases the likelihood you will follow through.

After a couple of months, re-evaluate. Did you meet your goal? Look back at your values and see how things are aligning. If you didn’t meet your goal, give yourself grace. We are all human and fall short. You may need more time, a different approach, or a new focus. Adjust and try again.

While boundaries can feel complicated, your boundaries with yourself do not have to be. You can live in a way that aligns with your values and your faith. With slow, sure steps, you can learn to better manage your time and energy. As you gain experience holding boundaries with yourself, it often becomes much easier to hold boundaries with others. ■

Elizabeth Wagner, MSW, LMSW-Clinical is a Wellspring therapist serving Lutheran schools in the Saginaw Bay Region.



A Steady Calling

by Darryl L. Andrzejewski

Now in his 72nd year of preaching, Rev. Ronald H. Guettler has stood in pulpits large and small with a single concern: that every hearer might leave knowing Jesus Christ as Savior. His ministry has spanned generations, congregations, and profound changes in church and culture—but his calling has remained steady.

Born on February 11, 1934, in Columbus, Neb., to Armin H. Guettler and Clara H. Genz, Rev. Guettler's journey into the pastoral office was shaped early by faithful Lutheran schools and a deep love for the Church. After graduating from Immanuel Lutheran School and Kramer High School, he earned an Associate of Arts degree from St. John's College in Winfield, Kan., in 1952, and completed his pastoral formation at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 1957.

During his vicarage at Bethany Lutheran Church in Vacaville, Calif. (1955–56), he helped build his first church—already learning that pastoral ministry often involves both proclamation and construction. Ordained on July 7, 1957, at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Columbus, Neb., he went on to serve congregations throughout Michigan, including St. Mark, Flint; Faith, Grand Blanc; and later St. Paul, Royal Oak, where he served until his retirement in 1996. Since October 27, 1996, he has continued assisting at Historic Trinity in downtown Detroit.

Married to Marilyn Janet Pasche in 1958, Rev. Guettler is the father of four children and grandfather of twelve—a family legacy that runs alongside his ecclesiastical one.

What follows is a conversation reflecting on preaching, faith, and a lifetime in the pulpit.

Q: When was your first sermon? Do you remember the verse or topic?

A: Good Friday, 1954.

Q: Do you have a favorite topic or Bible verse to

preach on?

A: No matter the subject, I want everyone to hear enough about Jesus the Savior—in case they have never heard it before. Years ago, a man from Persia was baptized at Historic Trinity. He once brought a friend. I've worried ever since whether that friend heard enough about Jesus in my sermon to believe in Him. I've prayed for him often.

Q: How long does it take you to prepare a sermon? How has that changed over the years?

A: For many years, I started Sunday afternoon, added through the week, and wrote a working brief on Saturday. Usually, I already had it in my head. Since retiring, I start much earlier—often ten days in advance—and then tweak it. I have rarely written full manuscripts in sixty years; I rely on detailed outlines.

Q: How would you describe your preaching style?

A: Probably persuasive—to get people to think, believe, grasp, understand, and do something the Holy Spirit can work with after they leave church.

Q: Which book of the Bible have you preached on the most?

A: Maybe Luke.

Q: Over 70 years, how many sermons do you think you've preached?

A: At least 4,000—maybe 4,300, including weddings and funerals.

Q: What has changed the most in the world over the past 70 years?

A: Christianity and the unbelieving world have taken clearer stands. More public figures now acknowledge their faith, and hostility toward Christianity is more obvious.

Q: What has changed the least?

A: People are lost without Jesus—whether they

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John Bates retiring after 41 years at Church Extension Fund



I began working at Church Extension Fund in 1984. I had just graduated from college with a degree in business. I read in my church's bulletin that CEF was hiring a bookkeeper and I figured it would be a good way to pay the bills while I looked for my "real" career.

Fast forward more than 41 years, and at the end of April 2026, I will be retiring from a faithful, satisfying, and truly blessed vocation at CEF.

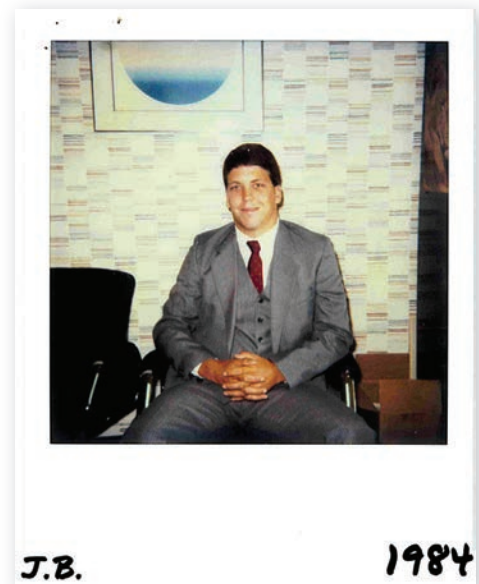
In those many years, I have held the roles of bookkeeper all the way to President and Chief Financial Officer. If you had asked the young man in the gray three-piece suit interviewing for his first job out of college if his plans were to stay that long, he would have told you were crazy! But it turns out these were never my plans being lived out — they were His, and it has been a privilege to serve the Lord through the ministry of Church Extension Fund.

I have witnessed God's faithfulness to churches in the Michigan District in innumerable ways. I've seen how simple tools like investments and loans can have eternal impact on thousands of souls, changing eternities through bricks, mortar, and compounding interest.

I will miss coming to work everyday and seeing my coworkers at CEF. I will miss interacting with pastors and teachers of the more than 350 ministries in the Michigan District. I will miss attending the CEF Fall Conference and the numerous District events that CEF supports each year. But most of all, I will miss the opportunity to build relationships with all the faithful investors and borrowers who have put their trust in CEF to fulfill its mission.

I will, however, enjoy my retirement! I have lived in Ann Arbor for 60 years and it will remain home. You may see me on the golf course more often, or at our lake home in Arcadia - and if you do, feel free to say hello. I'll be able to tell you that CEF is better off than I found it, and that it is in excellent hands with the next generation of leaders already in place. I won't, however, be able to tell you what is going to be happening with interest rates in the future - and that may be the greatest retirement gift of all!

God's blessings to you!



Is an Endowment Fund Right for Your Church?

A question I often hear from congregations goes something like this: “We’ve just received a large legacy gift, and we think we should start an endowment fund.” That reaction is understandable - and very common. However, it may not be the right move for your congregation.

Over the past ten years, I’ve worked with hundreds of churches across the Michigan District. Through that experience, I’ve come to an important conclusion: **endowment funds are not always a good fit for congregations or ministries, and in some cases, they can create unintended challenges and complications.**

Certainly, it is wise for a church to build reserves for emergencies, future building projects, or other capital needs. But using an endowment fund to do so carries some often-overlooked risks. Below are four important considerations for congregations thinking about an endowment fund.

Four Considerations

A Long-Term Tool in a Short-Term World:

Endowments are designed for the long term. For congregations facing current or near-future financial needs, an endowment may limit flexibility when funds are most needed.

Restricted Funds Can Limit Ministry:

Many endowment dollars are “restricted,” meaning the congregation cannot access them for urgent or alternative needs - even during financial hardship or emergencies.

Management and Administrative Costs:

Effectively managing an endowment requires time, expertise, and often professional services. These services can involve ongoing fees that may not apply to simpler investment options such as term notes or certificates of deposit.

Congregational Perception:

When a church has an endowment fund, members may assume the church has “plenty of money” and no longer needs financial support. This perception can especially complicate capital campaigns and building projects.





St. John – Rochester's Foundation policy requires the first 15% of donations be invested at CEF!

A Real-Life Example

Let me share a true story from one Michigan congregation. After many years of growth, demographic shifts led to declining membership. Today, the church struggles to cover basic expenses (maintenance, utilities, staff wages, etc.) and is even questioning whether it can remain open. Yet the congregation still holds a seven-figure endowment established during its years of abundance. Those funds could be a tremendous blessing today. Sadly, they remain almost entirely inaccessible due to the restricted status. This congregation may ultimately close while its endowment sits largely untouched.

A Thoughtful Pause

So, the next time an endowment fund is suggested for your church, it may be wise to pause and reflect. An endowment is not automatically the best solution. There may be other ways to save, grow, and steward funds that provide greater flexibility, lower costs, and fewer administrative hurdles.

In May, Church Extension Fund will introduce a new investment instrument designed specifically to grow legacy gifts, prepare for building projects, and maintain reserves for unexpected expenses – all while avoiding some of the risks and costs associated with traditional endowment funds.

For 125 years, Church Extension Fund has been a trusted steward of financial resources for churches across Michigan. We would be honored to talk with your congregation about your ministry's needs and help you discern the best path forward in meeting your financial goals.



*Jim Saalfeld
Chief Executive
Officer*

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LUTHERAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

Lutheran Hour Ministries Sunday



Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) Sunday is an opportunity for Michigan District churches to celebrate the critical partnership between churches, individuals, and LHM in *Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the*

Nations to the Church. Hosting an LHM Sunday gives church members an opportunity to see how God is changing lives with the Gospel at home and abroad; it also allows them to discover new resources that can help them grow in their faith.

Although the official date was February 1, 2026, you are welcome to host an LHM Sunday on any date that best fits your church's schedule.

How to designate LHM Sunday:

1. Determine the Sunday that works best for your church.

2. Download materials to help assist your celebration.
3. Include these materials in your services on LHM Sunday.
4. Visit lhm.org/lhmsunday to download resources. Thank you for including LHM Sunday in your church's plans!

LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE



LWML Michigan District Convention
June 26-28, 2026

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



He Is RISEN!
Happy Easter from
the Michigan District LWML!



Registration is OPEN!

Join us in Lansing in June!
Find all the registration details
and register now for the early bird price!
www.lwmlmichigan.org/convention/district

High School Gathering 2026 Mighty Waters

High school students and their chaperones will gather from June 28–July 1 at Mission Point Resort on Mackinac Island. Surrounded by the waters of the Straits, students will explore the theme *Mighty Waters*, focusing on God’s Word as the living water that renews and sustains us (John 4:14).



Together, they will attend worship, servant events, and activities such as carriage tours, boat excursions, and entertainment by FLAME. This gathering is more than a trip—it’s a moment God can use to shape a student’s faith journey.

Legacy Grandparenting Summit

St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth is hosting the Legacy Grandparenting Summit Simulcast on Saturday, October 10, at its Worship and Event Center. A dynamic lineup of speakers will help you discover practical resources as you gather with other Christian grandparents who want to build a spiritual legacy for their grandchildren. Registration opened in March. Prices vary from \$38–\$53 depending on registration dates. For more information or to register, visit legacycoalition.com/summit.

Free Resources from Lutheran Heritage Foundation

Do you have a friend, neighbor, or family member who doesn’t speak English as a first language? The Lutheran Heritage Foundation, a recognized service organization of the LCMS, has translated and published books like *Luther’s Small Catechism*, *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories*, *God’s Word For You*, and more into nearly 190 languages like Spanish, Hmong, Swahili, and Chinese. Best of all, these books are FREE to any church or individual who needs them. Simply visit LHFmissions.org/publications and search by language and send an email with your request.



Photo courtesy of Lutheran Heritage Foundation



Photo courtesy of Christ, Milford

Members of Christ, Milford and two other Kensington Circuit churches volunteered on a MOST Ministries mission trip to Belize where they helped people get fitted with reading glasses. Read about their trip at <https://2603belize.wordpress.com/>.



Photo courtesy of St. Michael's, Richville

In January, St. Michael’s, Richville kicked off the year-long celebration of its 175th anniversary with celebratory worship services. Michigan District President David Davis was the guest preacher and in attendance was a son of the congregation, Rev. Elmer Schiefer, who recently turned 100 years old. Pictured (l-r) are Rev. David Davis, Rev. Elmer Schiefer, and Rev. Wes Gillaspie.



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Lutheran Adult Gathering
Mackinac Island, Mich.
October 9-11, 2026



Lodging, meals, and gratuities at the Grand Hotel

\$397

per person based on quad occupancy and room selection.

IN HIS PRESENCE

Go - Make - Share

Matthew 28:19-20

SPEAKERS

- Rev. Greg Finke
- Rev. Dr. Ryan Tinetti

ENTERTAINMENT

Tanner Olson

MUSIC

100 White Flags


Conference Registration

\$50/person | \$100/couple

(includes ferry to the island)

Deadline is September 10, 2026

Premier Sponsor

Church Extension Fund 

michigandistrict.org/lag26



Special Recognition

Bruce Volkert Named 2026 LEA Distinguished Lutheran Elementary Administrator



Bruce Volkert was selected to receive Lutheran Education Association's 2026 Distinguished Lutheran Elementary Administrator Award. Mr. Volkert is Principal at Trinity, Utica. He previously served as principal and/or teacher at two different Lutheran schools in Illinois.

Volkert earned a B.A. in Education from Concordia River Forest, Ill. and an M.S. in Education and Administration from Northern Illinois University.

About his greatest joys, Volkert said, *"It is fulfilling to build relationships with those in our school community. (...) I seek to know our school families by being present at as many events as possible in addition to the school day. This helps as we partner together to teach and raise children."*

In support of Volkert's nomination, one of his colleagues said, *"Bruce leads not only with strength and vision, but also with heart. His presence makes our school a safe, supportive, and welcoming place for everyone who walks through its doors. He lives out our mission of 'creating disciples who share Christ's story with love' not just in words, but in the way he leads, teaches, and serves our Trinity community each day."*

His pastor said, *"What distinguishes him in my mind is the way that all that he does to lead, maintain, and grow our school is not directed at just the success of the school, but rather is always focused on the larger mission of our church to make disciples who share Christ's story with love. While he is very busy ensuring the success of the school and its students, he doesn't let that distract him or the school at large from the important work of reaching those who don't know Jesus and training those who do know him. He has embraced the Synod's 'Set Apart to Serve' initiative, encouraging students to consider careers in the Church. He leads the staff in prayers and devotions; speaks at elementary and preschool chapels; and is always ready to share Jesus with students, whether with his words or his actions."*

Finally, Volkert's nominator wrote, *"Bruce is an outstanding leader. He leads with our school's mission as his first priority—Creating disciples who share Christ's story with love."*

Congratulations to Mr. Volkert on this well-deserved recognition.



Photo courtesy of Faith, Grand Blanc

On February 15, Rev. Jakob Andrzejewski was installed as senior pastor of Faith, Grand Blanc. It was a great celebration that included 21 pastors, close to 500 people in attendance (with over 250 staying for the meal afterwards), and 400 views on the church's YouTube channel.



Photo courtesy of St. John, Adrian

Rev. Jonathan Toresson (pictured center with his wife, Taylor) was installed as Associate Pastor at St. John, Adrian. Rev. Toresson previously served Our Redeemer in Solon, Ohio.



How to Share Your Faith



Online E-Learning

Witness 101, Everyday Witness & More

One-on-one Instruction

Fishing in Your Community, no hooks!

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Beyond the Breakwater

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Michigan District

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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

2026 Spring Appeal



In the Michigan District, we are committed to helping congregations and ministries build a good biblical foundation. By now you have hopefully heard me encourage reading through the Bible annually for such an end. A key concern for us is that our young people are building the sort of foundation that Jesus speaks about in Matthew 7:

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it” (vv. 24–27).

Our goal is to build on the rock and teach our youth to do the same. We’re encouraged and excited as ministries across the District grow to meet this need.

Enrollment is up in our 193 Lutheran schools and preschools, and we celebrate the many resulting Baptisms of both children and parents. Public school teachers in retirement are redeploying and enrolling in Lutheran-based training courses to provide support for growing classrooms.

Continued on reverse side

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:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Greatest Need (Unrestricted) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mission & Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Church Work Scholarships |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Lutheran Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Campus Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

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

To explore additional ways to give to the Michigan District, visit michigandistrict.org/donate/ways-to-give.

To explore additional opportunities for giving contact Laura Thomas at laura.thomas@michigandistrict.org/734.213.4264.

Transformational programs through Acts 2 Enterprise ministry are seeding life and job skills for urban youth. Children and their parents in Detroit and Pontiac are learning about Jesus through summer A2E Sports Camps.

Hundreds of junior high and high school students will descend on Frankenmuth and Mackinac Island for summer gatherings and life-changing encounters with Jesus. Days and evenings are filled with fellowship, servant events, breakouts, and mass gatherings with old and new friends.

New campus ministries are rising up in collaboration with local congregations to serve Lutheran students and those who are seeking Jesus. In the last year, new ministries were established at Kettering University and Saginaw Valley State University. CrossPointe Center for the Trades, a Michigan District partnership with Southeastern Michigan Construction Academy to teach vocational training and Christian living, welcomes its first cohort in Fall 2026—more to come!

The Michigan District supported 88 future church workers in 2025. Each year, sons and daughters of Michigan District congregations of any age who are studying for full-time church work at a Concordia University or LCMS Seminary are eligible to receive student financial aid.

God’s Word teaches us to be intentional about our construction plans and materials. The Michigan District supports many ways for the building of “Matthew 7” firm foundations in the lives of young people across the state.

Will you help us grow these ministries with your resources today?

Your gift can give teachers and principals the right tools to deliver strong Lutheran education, provide hope to urban families who want to know more about Jesus, support teenagers who are looking for the real identity they have in Christ, meet college students where they are with the warmth of Christian friends, and reassure a new generation of church workers who will carry on God’s work for the sake of His Kingdom.

Thank you for all you do in our life together as *People of Hope: vigorously making known the love of Christ.*

...eyes on Jesus...

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



High School Gathering Servant Event



Youth at the A2E Camp

3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-3098

Phone: 734.665.3791 | Toll Free: 888.225.2111 | Fax: 734.665.0255 | michigandistrict.org | facebook.com/milcms | linkedin.com/company/milcms

My 2026 Spring Appeal Gift

Please make checks payable to Michigan District, LCMS or provide credit card information below. Return completed form and check (if applicable) in the enclosed envelope.

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____
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By signing this form, the card holder is authorizing the Michigan District, LCMS to debit their card.

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

Or donate online at michigandistrict.org/springappeal

A Steady Calling

realize it or not.

Q: Were you ever nervous when you preached?

A: Always have been. Still am. I want to say something right that the Holy Spirit can use.

Q: Did you ever preach a sermon that caused controversy?

A: Once I preached too harshly about absentees at an Ascension Day service—that was my mistake. There was also some concern about a July 4th sermon years ago; some thought it was political, though it was biblical.

Q: Has anything unusual ever happened during a sermon?

A: A man once slept through the entire sermon—and then told me it was wonderful.

Q: Favorite season of the Church Year to preach?

A: Christmas.

Q: What were the hardest funeral sermons you preached?

A: A couple of stillborn children. A little child hit by a car. A two-year-old girl named Terri Lynn with cancer—she cried every time I saw her for weeks. I can't remember preaching for anyone older than I am now.

Q: Best or worst sermon feedback?

A: One man was furious, insisting that I had preached directly at him.

Q: What was it like preaching into an empty church during COVID?

A: I was 86 years old. It was strange—but not entirely new. Years earlier, an ice storm left only eight people at a New Year's Day service.

Q: What is the greatest challenge to preaching in the years ahead?

A: Getting people to listen. Getting them to church—or whatever it will take.

Q: What would you say to your 23-year-old, rookie self?

A: With calling, inviting, building, counseling, and everything else, I wasn't giving preaching the priority I should have. A layman friend once told me that if I worked harder on sermons, people would appreciate it. I finally learned that preaching is the most important thing we do.

A Faithful Voice Still Heard

Through church buildings raised, vicars mentored, sermons preached, and prayers offered, Rev. Ronald H.

continued from page 8



Photo courtesy of Our Savior, Lansing

Guettler's ministry bears witness to a singular truth: the Gospel never grows old. Even now, his concern remains the same as it was on Good Friday in 1954—that someone, perhaps hearing for the first time, might come to know Jesus Christ. ■

Rev. Darryl L. Andrzejewski serves as senior pastor at Historic Trinity, Detroit and as 1st Vice President of the Michigan District, LCMS.

Sharing Jesus Through Hmong Ministry

continued from page 5

to a trickle, and the Hmong ministry began serving the 2nd and 3rd generation of Hmong-Americans.



Photo courtesy of Our Savior, Lansing

As the Hmong population began spreading across the U.S. and moving away, the attendance at the Hmong services dwindled. St. Michael's concluded their Hmong services in 2022. In 2025, Pastor Lang Yang accepted a full-time position as a chaplain in Winterhaven, Fla. The remaining Hmong members at Our Savior decided that this was the time for them to join the regular English services. With praise and thanksgiving to God for the work of the Holy Spirit, for the 389 baptisms, and for the ongoing mission of the Church, Our Savior officially welcomed the Hmong members into their regular services and concluded a significant era of Gospel outreach through Hmong worship services. The mission continues, however, through the ongoing efforts of the churches of the Michigan District to fulfill the Great Commission and make disciples of all nations through baptizing and teaching. We look forward to the Revelation 7 church of all tribes, peoples, and languages, gathered around the throne worshipping the Lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ who draws all people to Himself. To Him be the glory in the Church and throughout all generations. Amen! ■

Rev. William R. Wangelin serves as pastor of Our Savior, Lansing.



Michigan District

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-3098

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Michigan In Touch Spring 2026 Issue

Michigan In Touch

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Calendar of Events

APRIL 2026

- 2 Maundy Thursday
- 3 Good Friday
District Office Closed
- 5 Easter
- 17–19 The Katie
DoubleTree by Hilton, Bay City
- 21 Beyond the Breakwater
Messiah, Midland
- 22 Administrative Professionals Day
- 25 The Habbakuk Project
St. Mark, Flint
- 26–28 Office Personnel Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 28 Call Day
Concordia Seminary St. Louis
- 29 Call Day
Concordia Theological Seminary Ft. Wayne
- 30 Admissions Counselor Workshop
Location TBD

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

MAY 2026

- 5–6 West Pastors Conference
DoubleTree by Hilton, Battle Creek
- 12–13 South & East Pastors Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 13–14 Circuit Visitors Conference
St. Lorenz Worship & Event Center, Frankenmuth
- 16 Regional Track Meets
Various Locations
- 18 Board of Directors
Zion, Auburn
- 19–20 North & East Pastors Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 25 Memorial Day
District Office Closed
- 29–June 1 Synod Convention Floor Committees
- 30 State Track Meet
Valley Lutheran High, Saginaw

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