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IN TOUCH

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

HEALTHY WORKERS

From Rock 'n Roll to Ministry

Back in the 1970s, Paul Ruehl and Russ Tkac played rock 'n roll in bars in Southwestern Michigan. At that time, the thought of leading worship or preaching in a Lutheran church never crossed their minds. They didn't even grow up Lutheran. But today, Ruehl leads worship at St. Augustine, Troy and Tkac serves as pastor of Peace, Waterford. Here is their story:

Russ Tkac and Paul Ruehl met on September 5, 1961, the first day of first grade. They quickly became great buddies and enjoyed playing at each other's homes. Like most kids from their generation, they saw the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show on February 9, 1964. Their lives changed forever. Both boys had to get a guitar and learn how to play.

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IN TOUCH

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They took lessons and practiced. Then, during the summer of 1971, just before their junior year of high school, Ruehl called Tkac and said, “Let’s form a band.” They have been playing music together since.

By the time they were 18 or 19, they were not only playing in their band from high school, they also ventured out as a duo and started to have some success playing in bars that catered to acoustic music. This success made them hunger for more. When they were both about 20, Ruehl’s brother asked them to form a new band with the remnants of his band called Springwell, a very successful Detroit-area band. They felt like they had an invitation to rock-and-roll heaven. They went from a high-school-level band to a “real band” called Bad Axe. For the next 10 years or so, Bad Axe played at bars and dances and anywhere else they could. Their band even had a nibble at the big time with Elektra-Asylum Records, but it never panned out.

A NEW FRIEND

Over the years, Tkac and Ruehl met and/or played on the same bill with many of the biggest names of their generation. The biggest name, by far, was Richie Furay. Richie was enshrined in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as an original member of the Buffalo Springfield. He later went on to form Poco, another very successful band. Furay became a Christian in the mid 1970s and went on to become a pastor. Tkac and Ruehl

played at Furay’s church in the mid 1990s and struck up a close friendship.

Neither Tkac nor Ruehl were raised in the Lutheran church. Both would have considered themselves theists, but neither knew Christ until Ruehl was introduced to real agape Christian love during his third year of college.

Ruehl formed his first Christian rock band in 1985 and has been playing Christian music since then. Of course, he couldn’t make music without his life-long buddy, Tkac who was not fully on board with the “Christian thing,” but their friendship was so strong, he agreed to record and eventually tour with Ruehl’s band.



CHANGING DIRECTION

They worshipped together for several years at a nondenominational church. Tkac, however, continued to dig into God’s Word and noticed the teachings and views of the sacraments of his church were at odds with what he was reading in the Bible. At a friend’s suggestion to check out the LCMS, he began to study the Book of Concord, Law and Gospel, and read Luther, *Man Between God and the Devil*, before visiting an LCMS church. He eventually joined St. John, Rochester and discerned a sense of calling, which God confirmed in various ways. One of them was through his best friend Ruehl: “*When I was considering ministry, I called Paul and asked him if he could see me as a pastor in God’s church, knowing I’d get an honest answer. Paul said, ‘If God can use smelly fishermen ... he can use you.’*”

Ruehl had no intention of following suit. After many years at his previous church, however, he felt an urge to move on. Tkac suggested he contact Rev. Paul Monson at St. Augustine, Troy as they were looking for a worship leader. Ruehl was skeptical. He was a rock ‘n roller from way back, and had been at a church with a very solid contemporary band. Changing worship style was not something in his future. Rev. Monson made one request, “*Teach my people how to worship God.*” Ruehl’s response was, “*Be careful what you ask for, I won’t do things by half. The day you ask me to tone it down will be the day I leave.*”

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Apps Help You Remain in God's Word

by Eric Ekong

The alarm goes off and a new day is upon you. What is the first thing you do after stretching and rubbing the gunk out of the corner of your eyes? Some will stumble to the bathroom, to the coffee maker, to their favorite chair/couch to catch up on the events from yesterday, or still some simply grab the nearest mobile device. Before you know it, it is time to shower, dress, and travel to work or school. Time seems to fly by most days, to the point where God and His Word in our own personal lives become an afterthought.

Truth is, you have given your life to serving the Lord, but somehow in the

In each of our Baptisms, God has placed a spirit within us that needs to be fed and refreshed not just weekly at church, but daily and hourly in God's Word.

process you have become focused on the actions of serving and less upon the time spent in the presence of God. You think, *"He isn't talking about me because I was just in church this past week-end."* God desires for

your whole life to revolve around Him in thought, word, and deed. How in the world can we possibly do this, so that we remain healthy in our service to God?

I heard a sermon preached on *Psalm 1* and was left contemplating how we are to go about serving in a healthy manner in thought, word, and deed: *"But his (Jesus') delight is in the law (instruction) of the LORD, and on his law (instruction) he (Jesus) meditates day and night"* (*Psalm 1:2, ESV*). Throughout the Gospels, Jesus takes time to pray and study God's Word. How can we accomplish this in our busy world? How can we as church workers keep ourselves centered on God's Word?

The answer is to follow Christ's lead in keeping God in the forefront of everything we do through prayer and meditating on His Word. Taking time

at the beginning of the day through a devotion and reflection on Scripture is strongly suggested. Concordia Publishing House offers the comprehensive resources found in the Treasury of Daily Prayer, either in hard copy or mobile device format.

Personally, I would suggest combining this with some sort of reading of Scripture throughout the day. *YouVersion* offers a mobile app that allows you to participate in a variety of reading plans, from devotions lasting three minutes and 45 seconds to chronological plans through the Bible. *YouVersion* offers the ability to set reminders for different reading plans at specific times of the day. My wife Linda, for example, likes to listen to Scripture while she's driving or doing some mindless task. She often wears her earbuds around her neck; this way, when she has an opportunity, she can pop them in and get her fill of God's Word.

In each of our Baptisms, God has placed a spirit within us that needs to be fed and refreshed not just weekly

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St. Luke Opens Doors to the Community

by Russell Johnson

"In that day you will say: 'Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name; make known among the nations what He has done, and proclaim that His name is exalted'" (Isaiah 12:4 RSV).

In its May voter's assembly, members of St. Luke, Clinton Township gave thanks to God for all the blessings that He has granted over the last 60 years to the church and school and voted to share those blessings with the community by choosing to make St. Luke Lutheran School a tuition-free school for all.

God has provided St. Luke with a growing mission field in the surrounding neighborhood and, with His blessing, the congregation is hopeful that a tuition-free school will open an opportunity to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to children and their families.

"St. Luke is pursuing the goal of every Lutheran school. They are seeking to impact their community for Christ. This is a bold move for this congregation but their

passion is to reach the lost through Christian Education," shares Bruce Braun, Michigan District, LCMS Assistant to the President – Lutheran Schools.

What better blessing to give to the community than a free Christian education to someone who could not afford it! The congregation rejoices that this will allow them to continue their mission initiative to preach and teach to all people. It really is a mission effort, to preach and to teach and to give that which Christ gave to us freely we are giving to others freely.

St. Luke provides multi-age classroom instruction staffed by caring, certified, and gifted teachers. Catechesis and Christian education occurs for the entire school during daily Morning Prayer and for upper grades through pastoral instruction in the faith. St. Luke is located at 21400 S Nunneley Rd; Clinton Township, Mich. For more information, please call the school at 586.791.1151 or email Mr. Keith Vieregge, principal, at kvieregge@stlukemi.org. ■

After 20 years in the hospitality industry, Rev. Russell D. Johnson felt a strong call into the pastoral ministry. In 2009, he graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. and currently serves as senior pastor at St. Luke, Clinton Township.

"What better blessing to give to the community than a free Christian education to someone who could not afford it!"



Dan's Story

by Tyler Cronkright

Recently, I had the privilege to sit down with a man who regularly attends Family of God, Detroit. I have had the most interaction with Dan Myron during the Friday night men's Bible study, where he is very active (reading, interacting, asking questions). In my time at Family of God, I have observed that many of the men that come to Bible study live one of two ways: either poorly in a run-down place, or on the streets, finding shelter in abandoned houses or something of the like. Dan can be found living under the I-75 overpass listening to his radio set to the local Christian station. He gave me a brief run-down of how his day usually goes. He wakes up, "goes to work," reads Scripture, and comes to church.

For Dan, working is sitting by the side of the road asking for money. He enjoys it because he likes people watching. Every so often someone will throw him a little bit of cash or even offer him a roofing job or something like that to make a little extra money. I asked him how he feels about going back to the bridge every night and he told me that he absolutely loves it. He has made it his own and people around him know that it is his own. He said *"When I walk under that bridge, I feel comfortable. I feel at home. When I stay anywhere else, like with my parents, I feel uncomfortable and restless."*

When asked about his relationship with the Family of God, Dan lit up. His responses to some questions about the church were so real that they really made me appreci-

ate even more why I am a part of it. There are two reasons why Dan loves this church. He said it isn't the food, it isn't the clothing, and it isn't the hygiene kits. He loves Family of God because he feels there is no hypocrisy. He said people can be real with one another and people don't have to change who they are to be accepted. He also loves the teaching and the people that deliver the Word of God. He says that each teacher has their own style and he learns something new or more in-depth about things that he has read on his own in the Bible.

Dan feels that the church has helped him "lose his edge." He explained to me that, back in the day, he was getting into numerous fights and causing a lot of trouble in the street. Since he has been coming to Family of God, he has lost that anger and that edginess which has helped him shape-up. Now, he wants to see more people do that as well.

I thoroughly enjoy having Dan as a member of this church family and I cannot wait to continue helping him and watching him grow. The Lord is clearly at work in Dan's life, and Dan is continuing to make steps to better his lifestyle. ■

Tyler Cronkright is a Concordia University, Ann Arbor graduate in Family Life and Social Work. He started his practicum at Family of God, Detroit in 2013 and hasn't left since.

Have a HART

by Lauren Genthner

Peace, Ann Arbor Partners with Washtenaw Community Mutual Aid Association Fire Chiefs

In November 2014, Peace, Ann Arbor teamed-up with Washtenaw Community Mutual Aid Association Fire Chiefs (WCMAA) to form a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization named Helping Area Response Teams (HART).

HART acquired and utilizes an on-site rescue vehicle as a way to provide food and support services to Washtenaw County's emergency responders. This ambulance is stocked with snacks, drinks, clothing, blankets, and provides emergency responders a sanctuary from extreme temperatures produced by fires, and in the winter, the extreme cold.

The vehicle is a 2009 Ford E-450 donated by Huron Valley Ambulance. It provides a place to meet the immediate needs of those involved in emergency situations, as well as respite to escape the bustle of the inherent dangers of fire-fighting.

Since its beginning, the team has responded during a number of fires, participated in a training event, and assisted in other emergency situations.

HART's theme verse is *Matthew 25:35-36*, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me" (NIV).

The need for compassion is endless. Peace, Ann Arbor and WCMAA have shown outstanding care for those who put their lives at risk. Rev. Larry Courson, pastor at Peace, shares, "When we serve others we do it for Him."

That is what this Bible verse means; it's about providing help and support for those who need it, not for yourself, for Him. HART is a small—but in no way minor—example of great compassion in our community."

HART is a volunteer driven organization. Volunteers typically travel with the response team to support the first responders. Other duties include behind the scenes tasks such as restocking the truck. The volunteer team has upwards of 36 core members. If you feel led to volunteer, financially support HART, or if you simply wish to learn more, visit <http://hhv.care> or contact Rev. Larry Courson at 734.424.0899 or harthuronvalley@gmail.com. ■

Lauren Genthner is a junior at Concordia University, Ann Arbor. She interned at the Michigan District Office from April-May of 2015. Lauren is pursuing an English major and a Spanish minor. She is also involved in choir, worship arts, band, and theater at Concordia. Lauren hopes to use her linguistic talents to spread the Word of God working for Lutheran Bible Translators or editing.



"The need for compassion is endless."

Exploring Faith and Identity

by Jason Bauer

Christ-Centered Retreats Help Middle Schoolers Explore Faith and Identity

Middle school can be one of the scariest and most complex times in a person's life. As children enter into middle school their bodies are developing. As middle school begins, small schools merge into larger ones and children find themselves faced with the task of making new friends. Children begin to form an identity separate from that of their parents. Along with all of this change, children are developing an understanding of the importance of their faith.

According to renowned developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, known for his theory on psychosocial development, it is at this age that an individual spends the most time pondering what his or her life will look like as an adult. During this period, the child explores possibilities and begins to form his or her own identity based upon the outcome of these explorations. As the middle school child experiences this change and begins this exploration, a goal of parents, pastors, and educators is to establish faith in Jesus Christ as an anchor point in his or her life.

In middle school, many children begin to question their worth. This question invades every aspect of their lives from the way they dress to the peer group with which they surround themselves. During this time of uncertainty, and sometimes even hopelessness, middle schoolers can find hope in the knowledge that God loves them so much that he sent his only son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for their sin!

Sometimes in middle school, instead of finding hope in their faith, children become unsure of their faith. It is a period of time when children begin to explore whether or not the faith that their parents have shared with them will be their own personal faith. This is where a Christ-centered retreat can make all the difference!

During Camp Arcadia's confirmation retreats, middle school children find themselves surrounded by caring adults who are excited to share the joys and struggles of their faith



“During this time of uncertainty, and sometimes even hopelessness, middle schoolers can find hope in the knowledge that God loves them so much that he sent his only son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for their sin!”

life. Arcadia provides a safe environment for children to ask questions and gain answers about some of the deeper aspects of the Christian/Lutheran faith. The staff at Camp Arcadia, as well as the pastors who speak during these weekends, teach the Christian faith at a level that is fun and engaging for middle schoolers. Arcadia's confirmation retreats offer students the opportunity to spend time with other middle school children. They share experiences, fears, and joys with one another as the Holy Spirit meets them through his Word on the beautiful shore of Lake Michigan! ■

Rev. Jason C. Bauer is the program director at Camp Arcadia in Arcadia, Mich. The mission of the Lutheran Camp Association is to provide a setting for Christian families and individuals to vacation with God, and to foster the renewal of the whole person—spirit, mind, and body—amid the beauty of God's creation and in fellowship with other Christians. For more information, visit <http://camp-arcadia.com/confirmation>. To be put on a waiting list for the confirmation retreat this fall, call 231.889.4361.



Faith & Finance

A Dialogue on Faith-Based Investing with CEF

Faith and Finance is a series of discussions about the role CEF investments can play in the lives of Lutheran parishioners and congregations. In each installment, the CEF team addresses common questions about CEF and our financial products. If you would like to submit a question for consideration, e-mail us at cef@mi-cef.org.

Q:

How is Church Extension Fund different from other financial institutions?

A:

While other financial institutions focus on the interests of their shareholders, our investments are driven by our shared faith. Your investments mean valuable dollars are available to finance Michigan District ministries. You earn returns on your investments, knowing that your money is working to further our common Lutheran values.

Q:

Who can invest in the Michigan Church Extension Fund?

A:

All participants in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Michigan District are welcome to partner with thousands of Lutheran individuals and nearly 400 LCMS congregations through their investments.

Q:

How often are investment interest rates set?

A:

Investment interest rates are set monthly, based on regional and national rates published by the Bank Rate Monitor™. View all investment rates online at www.mi-cef.org or call our Interest Rate Line at 800-232-7313.

Q:

Will the interest rate go up if I increase the principal amount invested?

A:

Interest rates on Church Extension Fund Term Notes are determined by the time period of the investment, not on the dollar amount invested. CEF does offer investment product with rates that are tiered based on dollar amounts, such as the Dedicated Savings Accounts and ExtensionPlus, a money market-like account. See all of CEF product offerings online, www.mi-cef.org/investments.

Q:

What is the difference between Lutheran Church Extension Fund and the Michigan District Extension Fund?

A:

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is headquartered in St Louis, Missouri, and is Synod's Church Extension Fund. The Michigan Church Extension Fund (CEF) is the main source of Capital Funding for the Michigan District and is headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan.



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Welcoming Buildings

by Bruce Manzey

We often hear terms such as “people-friendly” or “guest-ready” to describe what we would like our churches to be. What does that mean? How does that factor into what we do as a congregation, as we focus on our building to create such a church?

With challenging budgets, shrinking manpower, and limited numbers of visitors, it becomes easy in rural and small town congregations to overlook or even sometimes neglect clean-up, touch-ups, and repairs.

It matters not where you are located; the bumps and bruises that distract from your facility all look the same. You may feel they aren’t noticeable, but that is because you have become accustomed to how things look.

One of the first things people see is the sign on your property that contains information about services, etc. Many times it is the last thing we think about. Are there bushes or trees near it that obstruct the view? Does it need updating? Is the information kept current as required?

Depending on your structure (wood/brick/concrete), a careful review will likely find cracks, paint peeling, and other damage. Entrance doors take a beating, both from usage and the weather. Windows are particularly susceptible to weather issues. Sidewalks that are cracked or broken not only look bad but could pose a tripping hazard, especially for older people.

As you enter the building, what should we expect? Is the building clean, especially the bathrooms, kitchen, etc.? It is often tougher to make an older facility shine, but

it is important. Your visitors may come only once for a special occasion but the impression it makes will not be forgotten. One of the things that can happen in churches that don’t have much going on during the week is the air gets stale in the building and it will have an odor, and that is especially true in the basement. Running a fan in the building can help to alleviate the problem.

Is the narthex neat and uncluttered? Are the mailboxes and other materials organized in such a way as to be attractive? There is nothing less appealing than

**Take the time to be critical of your building.
Imagine yourself a visitor—how would you rate
your facility?**

mailboxes stuffed full of material waiting to be picked up or tract racks that are not neatly organized.

As you enter the sanctuary, what is it that catches your attention? Do the pew racks have the proper material, visitor cards, pencils, envelopes, Bibles, and hymnals? Uncluttered means that every pew looks exactly the same before every worship service, before anyone enters to fill the pew. It may seem trivial but it is not.

Is the signage in the church adequate to direct people to bathrooms, Sunday school, kitchen, or any

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VBS Baptism

During Camp Discovery VBS, Bethel, Howard City's Pastor Frentz shared the take-home point that it is Jesus who gives us faith. He then tied faith into Baptism. When he asked if everyone in the room was baptized, 13 year-old volunteer Joseph indicated that he was not. When the morning was over and the kids went home, Joseph came to Pastor Frentz to talk about being baptized. After checking with his parents and aunts, who encouraged him to do so, they set Friday morning during the closing program for his Baptism. Kerri and Sawyer Lewis were chosen as his sponsors. Sawyer is a friend and classmate and had invited Joseph to help out in the VBS games section for the past few years. Kerri is Sawyer's mother and led the games.

Bright and early on Friday morning, Joseph was so excited and although VBS didn't begin for a few hours, he called Kerri at 6 a.m. to make sure she was going to pick him up. During Joseph's Baptism, the children were invited to come close to the font to witness what was happening. At that point, one other child indicated that he was not baptized either, and plans were made to secure parental support.



In June, two children who attend St. Thomas, Ann Arbor's Freedom Childcare and Family Center celebrated the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Pictured (l-r): Rev. Carl Demeritt-vacancy pastor, students Hannah and Grady and their parents Gwen and Terry; Miss Megan, Mrs. Healy (director), and Mr. Matthew.



St. Stephen, Waterford participated in the Waterford Memorial Day Parade. They utilized the float as an invitation to attend VBS 2015. Nine children signed up to be a part of the float.



In June, Joseph, a young man who has been a volunteer for Bethel's VBS for the past several years, was baptized. Pictured (l-r back row) are Kerri and Sawyer Lewis, Joseph, and Pastor Steven Frentz. Front rows are the children of the Bethel VBS.



In June, Trinity, Oscoda's choir sang Gospel favorites at the annual "Art on the Beach" in Oscoda, Mich. Trinity's mission booth was conveniently located near the band shell where many pass by and enjoyed free lemonade, some conversation, and the usual fair along with opportunities to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. This was the ninth year that members of Trinity have participated in this event. An unusual addition was the presence of six wind surfers enjoying the fruits of a 15-mile-an-hour on-shore wind.

Special Recognition

Hoeft Installed

Stacy Hoeft was installed as President/CEO of Lutheran Special Education Ministries (LSEM) on July 26, 2015 at Immanuel, Macomb. Hoeft comes to LSEM with a wealth of professional experience in education and executive leadership. Even more, her passion and love for serving children with specialized learning needs is evident as she responds to God's calling. Born and raised in Detroit, Mich., Hoeft completed her entire education in Lutheran schools and earned her degree in Elementary Education from Concordia University Wisconsin in 1996. Since then she has gone on to earn graduate credits in Special Education and Education Administration. She has spent the last nineteen years serving various congregations in the Michigan District, LCMS as a teacher, early childhood director, and principal. Hoeft was honored as the Michigan District Principal of the Year in 2013-2014 and completed the Van Lunen Fellowship Program for executive management in education in 2014.



LSEM provides certified special education professionals who work with children, teachers, pastors, and parents within the existing structures of schools and churches, to reach children with special learning needs. For more information about LSEM programs and services, please visit luthsped.org or contact the national office at 248.419.3390.

District Partners with Open Arms

The Michigan District, LCMS and Open Arms, Belleville has entered into a partnership as they installed Rev. Michael Grannis in



June as Assistant Pastor/Missionary to Wayne County. Grannis is tasked with starting house churches and creating a network of house churches whose primary foci are evangelism, leadership development, and community renewal. He will be working to connect lost sheep to the Shepherd. Grannis will intentionally interface with the District's Acts 2 Enterprise as well as other existing ministries in Detroit and Wayne County.

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AN ANSWER TO PRAYER

Pastor Monson says, *"For years, I've prayed that the spirit of David would rest on our church. David serves as an example of how God wants us to worship. Paul Ruehl is an answer to that prayer. He often jokes that he writes songs with King David. So, even if you don't like the melody, you have to love the lyrics, because they're divinely inspired! In other words, the lyrics come from the Psalms."*

St. Augustine, where Ruehl serves, offers both traditional and contemporary services. Pastor Monson adds, *"I like to do contemporary worship that is theologically sound. So even our contemporary service includes all the basic elements of the liturgy—confession and absolution, Scripture readings, the Creeds, the prayers of the church, the Introit, etc. When Ruehl and I choose hymns and songs for a service, we take into consideration my sermon theme, the readings for that day, and the Introit. Some of Ruehl's songs come directly from the Introit of the day. Psalm 6 and Psalm 134 on their CD are such examples. Kyrie Eleison has a clear liturgical influence, as well. Sometimes we use it as our Kyrie during a communion service. Ruehl also wrote The Spirit of God during the Pentecost season, since he saw a need for contemporary songs about the Holy Spirit."*

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

The rest is history. The praise band at St. Augustine has recorded two contemporary CDs. Furay sang on two of the tracks on the most recent one. Bob Seger's former drummer and Meat Loaf's former keyboardist played on the entire project. The cover art for their latest CD, *We See the Lord* (featured above), was done by Gary Faszholz, art teacher at Lutheran High North in Macomb, Mich.

Meanwhile, Tkac ended up at Peace, Waterford. He took advantage of the SMP program to become pastor at



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Peace after 30 years of selling pianos. Ruehl wrote *There is a Friend* for Tkac's ordination service. And of course, Tkac played on both CDs Ruehl's band released. Pastor Tkac says he loves the liturgy and uses Divine Service Setting Three at Peace. In early spring 2015, he went to Germany and played some bluegrass with LCMS President, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison during a free concert before the dedication of the Old Latin School outreach center in Wittenberg.

If 30 years ago someone would have said Tkac would be a Lutheran pastor and Ruehl would be a Lutheran worship leader, they would have had a great laugh and thought it was a joke. The joke's on them! ■

The CDs produced by the praise band at St. Augustine can be obtained by contacting the church at at 248.879.6400 or churchoffice@saltchurch.net. The band also performs on demand; they bring their own sound equipment and only ask for a freewill offering.



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www.loonlakeretreat.org

at church, but daily and hourly in God's Word. St. Paul writes, *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12, ESV). Engaging God's Word encourages us to be living and active in His work in thought, word, and deed.



Through this encouragement from God's Word, we are empowered to live healthy and faithful lives in Christ. St. Paul also writes, *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak"* (Ephesians 6:10-20, ESV).

Reading and meditating on God's Word throughout the day prepares us for the assaults of the Evil One, including trials, tribulations, and temptations. It is through God's Means of Grace that we are refreshed, renewed, protected, and equipped for work in His Kingdom and, in the process, we become healthier workers in the vineyard. For *"all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16-17, ESV). ■

Rev. Eric Ini-Obong Ekong is the senior pastor at Trinity, Jackson. He and his wife, Linda, have five children.

other needs such as the church or pastor's office? Signage is important since there may not always be someone available to give directions.

Take the time to be critical of your building. Imagine yourself a visitor—how would you rate your facility? It is important not only for the physical well-being of the building, but it is also the place that God has planted your congregation in your town. ■

Contributed by Bruce Manzey, field representative for the Minnesota South District, LCMS Witness & Outreach, in partnership with LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission. RSTM supports and encourages rural and small town congregations in engaging their communities and growing together in Christ through Word and Sacrament. The RSTM 2015 National Conference will take place November 5-7 in Kansas City, Mo. For more information, or to register, visit lcms.org/rstm.



- ✓ paint
- ✓ signage
- ✓ windows
- ✓ doors
- ✓ sidewalk
- ✓ kitchen
- ✓ bathroom
- ✓ narthex
- ✓ sanctuary

Fall Outreach Seminar

Bringing Christ to Your Neighborhood

Registration is now open for all LCMS Michigan District members wishing to attend the Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) Fall Outreach Seminar "Bringing Christ to Your Neighborhood" on October 10, 2015 at Our Savior Lutheran Church; 7910 East St Joe Hwy; Lansing, Mich.

The seminar is being sponsored by LHM, Michigan District. The presenter will be Bruce Sutherland, Constituent Relations Manager for LHM. Sutherland recruits and trains lay leaders, forms missional focused partnerships, increases resource awareness, provides leadership, and unifies and coordinates LHM Communications and on-the-ground activities. He joined Lutheran Hour Ministries in 2011 after serving as a gift planning counselor for the LCMS Foundation in Williamsville, New York, director of church relations and development for Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario, and executive director of Ignite & Light mission transformation for the LCMS Eastern district. He is the co-founder of "Last Command - First Concern" evangelism training and plays a critical role within LHM's MISSION Uwitnessing training program by serving as a trainer for on-site workshops and author of program content. He earned a bachelor's degree

in marketing and economics from The Pennsylvania State University and is the outreach and evangelism chairman at his home congregation, Holy Ghost Lutheran Church in Niagara Falls, New York.

The seminar will cover the three Cs of outreach:

- **Connection:** intentionally pursue guests to connect them to the life of your church,
- **Culture:** transform how your congregation views outreach; and
- **Community:** understand, serve and impact your neighborhood for Jesus.

Registration and fellowship begins at 9:30 a.m. The two-hour seminar runs from 10 a.m. to noon and is followed with lunch.

All expenses, including lunch, will be covered by LHM. Pastors and laity from all LCMS congregations are invited.

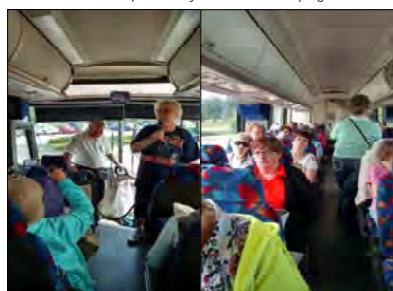
Attendees must RSVP for the event no later than October 3, 2015. Please send your full name and email address to John Raffel at john.raffel@gmail.com or call him at 616.894.2936.



LWML



Above: We sowed, nourished and reaped in Iowa.
Below: MI-bus trip. Thank you Jesus for keeping us safe.



Exhilarating! Eventful! Exhausting!

Bountiful Harvest Times

Too much to share! - Too little space!

Over 4,600 in attendance. 1,042 first-timers.

Over 28,000 Gifts of the Heart were made or received.

Tears of joy and tears of sorrow mingled as stories were shared by speakers from the Mission Field. New officers, new grants and a \$2 Million mission goal adopted. Whew! Visit National's LWML Facebook page for highlights. Visit LWML Website for details.

Left: MI-YWR Hannah Steele and Karla Stahlecker with Past President Kay Kreklau. Right: Delegates at work. Below: A miniscule sample of all the willing hands serving God by serving others in the Mission Fields by making dresses, witness bracelets, quilts, marking Bibles, Braille marking and so much more!



Please mail Mites to: Glory Drum; PO Box 305; Warren, MI 48090

National LWML website: www.lwml.org

Michigan District website: www.lwmlmichigan.org

Calls and Roster Update

ORDAINED

Calls Accepted

Andrzejewski, Darryl L. (Dearborn) to Historic Trinity, Detroit
Fairbairn, Christopher D. (Associate Pastor, St. Paul, Northville)
to Sole Pastor, St. Paul, Northville
Siefert, Gary L. (Battle Creek) to IIM, Zion, Tawas City

Change of Status

Claus, Terry A. (Milford) to Emeritus
Spence, Kenneth M. (Westland) to Emeritus
Teuscher, Michael L. (Sebewaing) to Emeritus

Transferred out of District

Rockrohr, Carl E. (Ft. Wayne, IN) to Indiana District

Called Home

Zeile, Theodore A.

COMMISSIONED

Calls Accepted

Eifert, Rebecca (Concordia, River Forest) to Valley Lutheran
High School, Saginaw
Noack, Chelsea (Concordia, Ann Arbor) to Zion, Harbor Beach
Ryneerson, Abigail (Concordia, Mequon) to St. Matthew, Westland
Topham, Roxanne (Candidate) to St. Michael, Portage
Wilke, Christian (Concordia, River Forest) to Valley Lutheran
High School, Saginaw
Wilson, Steven (St. Peter's, Big Rapids) to St. John, Rochester

Change of Status

Brandimore, Layna (Peace, Saginaw) to Candidate
Dockery, Daniel (Trinity, Traverse City) to Emeritus
Gehrs, Kathleen (St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth) to Emeritus
Janetzke, Kristen (Living Word, Rochester) to Candidate
Krc, Mary (Holy Cross, Saginaw) to Candidate
Kruger, Nancy (Immanuel, Macomb) to Emeritus
Rasmussen, Sarah (Faith, Bay City) to Non-Candidate
Schafer, Joyce (St. Paul, Ann Arbor) to Emeritus
Weiss, Muriel (Immanuel, Saginaw) to Emeritus
Weiss, Rebecca (Candidate) to Non-Candidate
Weiss, Theodore (Immanuel, Sebewaing) to Non-Candidate

Transferred out of District

Bolt, Jonathan (Living Word, Rochester) to Indiana District
McKinney, Robert (Concordia, Ann Arbor) to Pacific
Southwest District
Kowalke, Julie (Trinity, Utica) to Indiana District
Rockrohr, Deborah (Candidate) to Indiana District
Pendley, David (Candidate) to Pacific Southwest District
Young, Courtney (Christ, Stevensville) to South Wisconsin District

Transferred into District

Burgess, Julia (Texas District) to St. Paul, Ann Arbor
Burgess, Robert (Texas District) to St. Paul, Ann Arbor
Lepp, Crystal (Iowa District East) as Candidate

A complete up-to-date listing of Calls and Vacancies can be found at
michigandistrict.org, click on *About*.

16 September 2015

Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

- 13–15 Deacon Conference
Arcadia, Michigan
- 13–15 Urban Institute
Bethany, Detroit
- 16–17 Circuit Visitor Conference
Our Savior, Lansing
- 21–24 Intentional Interim Ministry Conference
Michindoh Conference Center, Hillsdale

OCTOBER

- 2–4 Church Extension Fund Conference
Ypsilanti, Michigan
- 10 LHM Free Outreach Seminar
Lansing, Michigan
- 11–14 All Pastors' Conference
Boyne Falls, Michigan
- 19–21 Children's, Student, and Family Life Ministry Retreat
Northwood University, Midland, Michigan
- 21 LWR Boxcar Loading
- 27 Michigan District Board of Directors

NOVEMBER

- 3 Election Day
- 11 Veteran's Day
- 26–27 Thanksgiving Holiday
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED

DECEMBER

- 24–25 Christmas Holiday
DISTRICT OFFICE CLOSED
- 31 New Year's Eve

For more detailed information, visit michigandistrict.org/events.

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