



Dear Fellow Redeemed

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in the final days of this Lenten season. This issue of *Michigan In Touch* spans these last days of Lent, the meditation on the passion of Christ of Holy Week, the glorious celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter (April 16) and His Ascension (May 25). The text from Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever," seems very fitting in view of this time span. The "yesterday" of Jesus surely includes His death and resurrection. The "forever" of Jesus stretches from His ascension throughout eternity. This April-May period in Christ's life encompasses the

"yesterday" and "forever" of our Lord's life very nicely. His securing of our salvation brings us assurance and peace even as His Ascension fills us with hope. Tucked between yesterday and forever is "today." Herein lies the challenge and opportunity to live daily as a new person in Christ. One is struck by how quickly each today turns into yesterday in all of our busyness. In reality, however, each "today" is where we spend our time responding in a life of thankful living and serving. Today is often the most difficult part as compared to yesterday and forever. However, the promises of God kept and His promises for the future enable us to endure daily by faith and also serve Him. May He bless these busy spring days as we focus on serving Him today which He will turn into another promise kept!

Some of that which makes us busy centers around preparations for the **Michigan District Convention** scheduled for June 25-28 at Concordia University in Ann Arbor. The registration materials and forms have been sent. Delegates are responding. Planning is continuing. The Rev. Joel Lehenbauer will lead delegates in presentations and discussion on working together in God's Church. The focus will be on the **pastoral office** and the **priest-**

hood of believers. There will also be several special celebrations of The Michigan District's 125th Anniversary.

The **Regional Pre-Convention meetings** are scheduled for Saturday, May 6. Each of the four Regions of the District will gather with the Regional Vice President to review convention planning, share news and nominate candidates from their region to be presented for election at the convention. The four Pre-Convention Regional meetings are listed on page 22.

Please pray the Lord's blessings upon the preparations as well as the gathering of Lay Delegates and Ministers of Religion-Ordained and Commissioned in Convention in June. Guests and visitors are always welcome!

Another aspect of that which makes this time of year so busy is that of getting ready for **placement.** As of this writing, 11 congregations in the Michigan District will be applying for **pastoral candidates** from our seminaries. Also, 11 congregations are seeking a vicar. Of those applying for pastoral candidates, there are six sole pastor congregations while five are for team ministry. It appears at this writing that the supply will meet the demand. This is both good news and cautionary news. The good news is that most of those applying for pastors will receive a pastor. The

cautionary news is that, appearances to the contrary, there is a pastoral shortage looming on the horizon. Therefore even as we thank God for laborers for the harvest today, we pray that He would keep us focused on the need to provide laborers for the harvest in the future as well. More will be forthcoming on this issue as our 125th anniversary thankoffering unfolds.

As in previous years, the placement process for **Ministers of Religion—Commissioned** is one that begins this time of year and continues on into the early months of summer. As we have figures, updates will be made available.

May the final steps of our Lenten journey draw us closer to our Lord Jesus Christ as we view His passion, celebrate His resurrection, and anticipate celebration of His ascension. All of this grants peace that He alone can give for all of our yesterdays, todays and forever. In the planning for all the various activities, individually and as a church, during this busy spring season, may our coming convention theme be descriptive of us as His people, "**Celebrating His Faithfulness: Redeemed ... Refreshed ... and Ready ...**"

In Him with you,
C. William Hoesman