



Dear Fellow Redeemed

“**This is the day**” the Psalmist says in Psalm 118: 24, a day “**the Lord has made.**” The days He is currently creating as we receive and read the pages of this issue of *Michigan In Touch* are the waning days of summer. They are soon to be followed by the hustling, bustling days of the return to school in September and all the commensurate activities in and beyond schools and those involved in them. These are also transition days from the hoped-for rest and recreation of summertime to the re-integration and involvement in the activities referenced. However, the Psalmist also continues with “**Let us rejoice and be glad...**” in the day the Lord has made. Such rejoicing is possible because our salvation in Christ brings

us joy in the midst of all the other aspects of life. May His joy permeate all our life together.

A continuing source of joy in our lives together occurs in the context of our congregations throughout the District. As people of God, we come together on Sundays for worship and on many other days during the course of the week for ministry and other activities. In all we rejoice in the blessing of **Word and Sacrament** ministry in our congregations. We rejoice in God’s gift of **Pastors, Teachers and Professional Church Workers** who staff our congregations. Under God’s blessing, may our church workers bring joy to those they serve and may those served bring joy to the ones who are privileged to serve. This joy depends upon mutual support.

Our Ministers of the Gospel evidence a winsome love for the Lord and His people. They possess a strong desire to serve in roles as servant-leaders in our congregations. They understand and have a deep desire for the spiritual welfare of those whom they serve. They have a deep and **an abiding stake** in those who love the Lord and also in reaching out to those who live lives without the joy of Jesus’ gift of salvation. We rejoice in the thankfulness of our Ministers of the Gospel for opportunities to serve and bring the joy of Christ

into hearts and lives.

Joy fills the hearts of our workers when words and acts of appreciation from the congregation are shared. Such recognitions and kindnesses occur in the ordinations, commissionings, installations, appreciation Sundays, and other planned events. In expressing such Godly gratitude for our workers, please permit a word regarding the **spouses and families of our workers**. For their love, care and concern in support of their spouses,

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we praise God. Reference is often made to the “fishbowl life” spouses and families of our church workers live. This reality has both its compensations and its challenges. Challenges face our workers’ families in the same way other families are challenged. God, in His faithfulness, provides for them. Often, that provision can come through the loving care and concern of congregations. It is important that there be respect, sensitivity, and support for workers’ families. Congregations have a wonderful opportunity to serve in such a way. Stories abound of both positives

and negatives relating to workers’ families. May the positives prevail! We pray that the Lord bless the families of our church workers and that we remember their commitment, sacrifices and involvement for the good of all.

There is great joy when **mutual support** occurs. It indicates a congregation’s appropriate understanding and awareness that it has **a stake** in the health and well-being spiritually, emotionally, and physically of our workers. Satan works very hard to destroy this understanding and bond of love in any way he can. May the Lord bless our congregations as they watch for such disruptive temptations that can lead quickly to lack of support and even worse. May the Holy Spirit grant wisdom and insight that in times of temptation and/or difficulty, congregations and workers draw close unto the Lord and to each other to unite in the caring and sharing of the burdens. This enables a context in which issues can be confronted without losing sight of the big picture of mission and ministry. The congregation’s understanding of its stake in the well-being of the workers enables effective ministry to occur for the good of all. This is deep and abiding foundational joy. He promises such in each day that He has made and will make!

In Him with You,
C. William Hoesman