



## Dear Fellow Redeemed

Once again we enter that very special time of year filled with **Advent anticipation, Christmas celebration** and the **dawning of a New Year**. The season, appropriately, revolves around the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. In His birth "...He humbled Himself..." (Philippians 2:8) for our salvation. Through His subsequent life of servanthood, including His death and resurrection, we have great joy. In honor of Jesus in this season of celebration of Christmas and a New Year, we pray for a Philippians 2:5 attitude of servanthood. May this "attitude" permeate our worship, our songs, our sharing greetings, our working together and all our actions. May they reflect that our knee "bows and our

tongues confess that ... Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:14). May our Lord Jesus enable us, by His love, to be winsome witnesses to those whose season of celebration misses the abiding and eternal peace that is God's gift to us through Jesus Christ.

Shortly after the beginning of the Year of our Lord 2007, we shall have additional opportunity to reflect upon **His continuing gifts to the church**. In particular, we focus upon the gifts of relationships that we share with one another in His service and evidence a Philippians 2 attitude. Thus we note the **congregations** of our district and our **professional church workers**. Please recall that the 2006 District Convention received ethical guidelines for both congregations and for professional church workers titled "**Partners In Ministry**." It was further resolved that these guidelines be studied by the congregations and professional church workers of the district. After discussions and study, the request is to provide feedback so that, if necessary, the guidelines can be revised for presentation to the 2009 District Convention for further action. Hopefully, even presently, the fruit of the discussions will provide immediate as well as long range blessings.

The goal is that such study and discussion would bring about **increased peace and joy among us all in our relationships**. Therefore, as partners in ministry interested in

more effective ministry, the following has been planned. A 2006 Michigan District Convention CD has been sent to every congregation. The CD also includes the guidelines and the study guides that have been developed. They are also available to print from the District website.

Additionally, in early January, **printed copies of "Partners in Ministry"** for professional church workers and the **related study guide** will be sent to each professional church worker. Each congregation will also receive two copies of "Partners in Ministry" for congregations and the related study guides. These mailings will all include a feedback report form and time table for accomplishment of such.

Please permit a comment about the "**study guide**" provided for each of the documents "Partners In Ministry." These study guides are particularly well written. Please take the time to read through them and use them in any of a number of settings. They are practical and very helpful. It seems to me that the discussion alone would be helpful. However, as such discussion eventuates in even more helpful guidelines, the mission of the Lord's church will be served. Quite frankly, relationships are foundational for effective ministry. These relationships encompass workers to each other and to congregations as well as vice versa. The relationships also encompass congregation to congregation throughout Circuit, District

and Synod. Positive relationships between and among congregations in Circuit, District and Synod, are necessary for walking together toward effective ministry. A mutual focus on this task will be a wonderful way to begin a new year as we thank and praise God for the gift of His Son, our Lord Jesus. Please "stay tuned" as more information will follow.

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effective ministry.**

As we gather this Christmas season to worship, we are renewed in our faith relationship with our Lord Jesus. He has also gifted us with each other as members of His family. He has called us into congregations. We are privileged to serve together in Word and Sacrament ministry in nurture of that faith and in the opportunity to extend His kingdom. To evidence a helpful, wholesome, servant attitude toward one another in dealing with the challenges and opportunities of ministry brings glory to His Name! May He bless this undertaking as a **district together** as we begin this New Year of His grace. May our Heavenly Father grant a joyous Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

In Him with you,  
C. William Hoesman