



Dear Fellow Redeemed

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ early in this New Year of His Grace. Even as the year has barely begun, this issue of *Michigan In Touch* encompasses the first quarter of the year! As we transition through the season of **Epiphany** in anticipation of **Ash Wednesday** (March 1) and **Lent**, may the Lord lift your hearts in reflection upon the depth of His love in Christ.

It is also timely to announce the **98th regular Convention of the Michigan District**, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, June 25-28, 2006 at Concordia University, Ann

Arbor. The theme for our 2006 Michigan District Convention is **“Celebrating God’s Faithfulness: Redeemed ... Refreshed ... Ready ...”** Redeemed ... Refreshed ... Ready ... will provide a special focus each day of the convention. Additionally, there is also an anniversary component in our theme. The Michigan District, blessed by the Lord of the church, is able to celebrate 125 years of God’s faithfulness in 2006.

The Scriptural foundation for our Convention Theme is found in the words of St. Paul to Philemon regarding the former run-away slave, Onesimus. In Philemon, verses 4-7, 20, we find:

“I always thank my God as I remember you in all my prayers because I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints... I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.”

In these verses we note three people in particular: Paul, Philemon and Onesimus. We celebrate their part in the history of our Lord’s church. But, if you would permit a “fast forward” from their time in the history of God’s people to the year 1881, we find another great reason to celebrate! The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in convention, created the **Michigan District in 1881**. Michigan congregations have been a part of LC-MS since Synod’s inception in 1847. Michigan congregations from other states and part of Canada were combined in the Northern District. However, by 1881, Michigan was the only state in the Northern District. That year the Synodical convention voted to re-name the Northern District as the “Michigan District”. Thus we have **125 years of**

history as the Michigan District and we will celebrate it at the convention.

In the spirit of remembering the past, but also being excited about the present and future opportunities of service, we noted in the last issue of *Michigan In Touch* the retirement of Dr. George Locke as Superintendent of Schools. In this issue, as we go forward, we are very thankful for the Lord’s continuing provision of “laborers for the harvest”. We especially praise Him for His gift to the church of Bruce Braun. He has served well with great distinction as an educator, school administrator, principal, and most recently, Assistant Superintendent of Schools of the Michigan District. It is a joy to **announce and welcome Mr. Braun as Superintendent of Schools of the Michigan District!** He has been blessed with many gifts for ministry. It is very exciting to anticipate his gifts being used in the service of the ministry of Christian education in the Michigan District. Even as Mr. Braun began his duties on January 1, 2006, we look forward to his **installation** as Superintendent of Schools at his home congregation, St. Michael’s, Wayne, in its 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, February 12. Your prayers and cooperation are sought in support of Mr. Braun’s ministry among us. We pray God’s blessings for Bruce, his wife Jayne, and their family as they walk together and serve in His love. You will note an article and picture of Mr. Braun on the following pages of this issue of *Michigan In Touch*.

With an awareness of the presence of our God and a **lively expectation of His blessings**, we look forward to Lent, Easter and beyond, to our convention in June. May these and the other events of the church be shaped and molded by our Heavenly Father, who loves us in Jesus Christ that we might be His servants “Celebrating His Faithfulness: Redeemed ... Refreshed ... Ready ...”

In Him with you,
C. William Hoesman