



Dear Fellow Redeemed

By grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8) we are able to exclaim with the Psalm writer in Psalm 8 “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth. You have set Your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants You have ordained praise.” It is our privilege, honor and opportunity to proclaim the glory and majesty of our God during this Epiphany season. May it continue to dawn upon us in ever expanding ways. We have this blessed privilege together to praise our God and to serve Him that we might build one another up in the faith and declare His wonders in an inviting way to those who do not yet acknowledge Him.

In accomplishing the above, not enough can be said about mutual and collegial relationships among us as congregations and as professional church workers in serving together to accomplish our Lord’s mission. The focus of this issue of *Michigan In Touch* is on the Ethics Documents that were presented at the District Convention and accepted for distribution, study and feedback. The cover of *MIT* is a very pleasing combination of the covers of each of the **Ethics Documents**. It features views of an exterior and interior of a church and also incorporates professional church workers. But there is more to “Partners In Ministry” than the cover! The content is compelling as we seek to work well together to build and extend the kingdom.

The Ethics Documents, as they are drawn from the Scriptures, lift up our loving relationships which we have individually and as congregations in Jesus Christ. It is a relationship to which we pledge ourselves as congregations. As professional church workers we pledge it at our commissionings and ordinations. We in and through Jesus Christ do **love one another**. We do by the Spirit’s power want to work together as we acknowledge Christ in each other. We want to do so in loving,

trusting, complimentary relationships as we seek to serve Christ and live together in “everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness” as Luther says. We wish to live together that His name be hallowed, that His kingdom come and be extended. Our goal is that how we “love one another” may be so winsome that many are attracted

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Even as this is our covenant as congregations and professional church workers, the realities of life and the desire of Satan can cause hurt. That gets in the way of the mission. When one loves another, as in a relationship between husband and wife, that love eventuates in a **desire to build up**, not to hurt the other. If at times one hurts a loved one, there is an ache within upon the realization of having hurt one whom they love. Most, in such a loving relationship, appreciate it when the one who has been hurt would not only share the feeling, but explain. Then it can be dealt with in a loving manner toward reconciliation, and the relationship actually, under God’s blessing, grows closer.

It is the intent of these guide-

lines to enable fruitful discussion and **mutually agreed upon expectations**. The prayer is that attention given to these guidelines will enable a “walking together” that is at the center of our agreement to work together in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. If and when in the realities of life, any hurtful and/or disagreeable actions take place, we have the guidelines themselves as an objective point of reference. This will help us resolve and reconcile even very difficult situations.

These guidelines and study guides are being **mailed to every congregation’s leaders and professional church workers** and are commended to you for study and discussion.

The mailing includes the Ethic documents, study guides, an explanatory cover letter, and a form for **feedback**. Please read, study and discuss them very carefully and share the results with the church. We need you to do that!

This is an exciting District-wide opportunity that is filled with wonderful potential for kingdom ministry. May God guide, guard, lift and fill our hearts with His love and power as we proceed together in this undertaking to His glory.

In Him with you,
C. William Hoesman