

## THE MEDIATOR

Rev. Dr. Peter Larsen, who recently retired as Congregational Ministry Facilitator for large churches and Director of Member Services for the Michigan District, has received training from Peacemakers, the Alban Institute, and from the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. Previous to being on District staff, Pastor Larsen served 33 years as pastor of Holy Cross, Jenison, Michigan.

Dr. Larsen will work in each situation with co-mediators whom he has trained. These include principals of Lutheran schools and lay persons. Each mediation will have co-mediators to provide balance and two sets of *eyes* and *ears*.

For more information or to schedule an information meeting with your church, contact:

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**Unity**  
A Ministry of Mediation

## WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF UNITY

“... already the atmosphere: our church and school has changed for the better.” (Pastor/Principal)

“Mediation has been a great experience ... I recommend it to any church in conflict.” (Board of Directors member)

“We dealt with the past without dwelling on it and found new basis for mutual respect.” (Staff member)

“Unity brought us a comprehensive consulting service at the fraction of the cost charged in the public sector.” (Board of Directors member)

“We have reconciled our differences and moved on with new understanding and appreciation for each other and the ministry we share.” (Pastor/Staff)

“The Unity process has been a useful tool to resolve the conflict in our church.” (Congregation Chairman)

“God has used your work for our great benefit.” (Pastor)

“I would recommend the mediation process to any church finding itself in conflict.” (Board of Directors member)

## COSTS

Because Unity is a subsidized ministry of the Michigan District, costs to congregations are kept to a minimum and are based on congregation size. Nonetheless, financial participation by congregations in dealing with their issues is an important part of addressing the situations.



Michigan District  
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

When you

**disagree...**

it's ok to  
ask for help



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*actually ...*

...there's nothing unusual about it:

- Acts 6: Hellenists and Hebrews
- Acts 15: Paul and Peter
- Philippians: Euodia and Syntyche

and it can even be constructive:

- In gaining understanding
- In learning new patterns of behavior
- In learning new skills

Our disagreements lose their intensity as they are discussed and understood.



**UNITY**

**A Ministry of Mediation**

In its mission to “bolster congregations,” the Michigan District offers a new service to aid its workers and congregations who find themselves in disagreement over ministry issues. This new ministry is named *Unity* because the reuniting of workers and congregations in their work in the Kingdom is the goal. *Unity* is also further described as a *Ministry of Mediation* because it uses mediation as the process for serving. Mediation involves those in disagreement finding their own solutions.

## WHAT IS MEDIATION?

If you have a conflict or issues you cannot resolve yourself, mediation may be the answer. Mediation empowers you and your fellow disputant(s) to resolve your differences skillfully and effectively. All parties are challenged to move beyond blame and to engage in serious self-examination to facilitate agreement. Issues important to you are discussed as an agreement is reached.

The role of the mediator is to be impartial and to help clarify the concerns of each disputant. You are assisted in finding a solution acceptable to everyone in conflict. Clear and constructive discussion is facilitated, but no solution is imposed.

Mediation is especially attractive for Christians by providing a way to resolve disagreements faithful to the teachings of Christ. It resolves disputes using the resources within the fellowship of Christian believers. Moreover, when all parties are able to acknowledge their role in the conflict, mediation can also lead to reconciliation and healing between fellow members of the Body of Christ.

**“All this is from God,  
who reconciled us to Himself  
through Christ and has given us  
the ministry of reconciliation”  
-2 Corinthians 5:18**

## THE MEDIATION PROCESS

### FOR 2 PARTY MEDIATION

Interpersonal mediation begins by giving both participants a chance to tell their side of the conflict. It continues by helping both work at healing past hurts to reach an acceptable solution, resulting in a written agreement for future ministry.

### FOR CONGREGATIONS

Although the process varies in each specific situation, the typical steps for congregations are:

#### Contracting Phase

The Mediator's purposes and roles are clarified, goals are set, and an official invitation is issued by the church

#### Information Gathering

Employs questionnaires, interviews, and small group sessions to document the interests of all parties

#### Problem Solving Phase

Solutions are presented and approved

#### Education Phase

A training workshop for all

#### Closing Phase

A monitoring task force is put in place to facilitate solutions