

# The Michigan District (WELS) Mission Board Papers An Inventory



Archive of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Mequon, Wisconsin

Inventory Prepared by Jeremiah J. Gumm and Benjamin A. Radtke

Description Prepared by Jeremiah J. Gumm  
January 2005

# The Michigan District (WELS) Mission Board Papers

## Table of Contents

### Collection Level Description

Title .....	3
Dates .....	3
Extent .....	3
Historical Sketch .....	3-4
Custodial History .....	4
Scope and Content .....	4
Source of Supplied Title .....	5
Arrangement .....	5
Restrictions .....	5
Accruals .....	5

### Series Level Description

Series 1: Correspondence and reports on campus ministry .....	5
Series 2: District Mission Board minutes .....	5
Series 3: District Mission Board reports, agendas and correspondence .....	5
Series 4: District Mission Counselor documents .....	5
Series 5: District and Synodical documents.....	5
Series 6: General Board for Home Missions – Budget documents .....	6
Series 7: General Board for Home Missions – Committees documents.....	6
Series 8: General Board for Home Missions documents .....	6
Series 9: General correspondence .....	6
Series 10: Louis Leitz documents .....	6-7
Series 11: Miscellaneous District Mission Board documents.....	7
Series 12: Northern Conference Mission Congregations.....	7
Series 13: Ohio Conference Mission Congregations .....	7-8
Series 14: Southeastern Conference Mission Congregations .....	8
Series 15: Southwestern Conference Mission Congregations .....	8

Appendix A: The Michigan District (WELS) Mission Board Papers File Arrangement List .....	9-10
---	------

## Collection Level Description

**Title:** The Michigan District (WELS) Mission Board Files

**Dates:** 1940-1995

**Extent:** 6.26 meters of textual records

### ***Historical sketch:***

Following the Allied victory in World War II, the United States underwent a boom in productivity and population. America had become a major world power and leader in the areas of manufacturing, technology and other industry. Young men, who had served as soldiers on the battlefields of Europe, Africa and the Pacific, came home and started families. Families grew as the first “Baby Boomers” came into this world, and moved where new jobs were being started across the country. With this increase in productivity and population, America soared economically.

All these factors played into a surge in opportunities for home mission work. Just as the United States boomed immediately after the war, similar trends showed themselves in the Wisconsin Synod. Increases in offerings, growth in numbers and a plethora of mission opportunities moved the Wisconsin Synod to increase its mission efforts during this time. One of the major players in these early efforts was the Wisconsin Synod’s Michigan District. In the half-century after World War II, both the General Board for Home Missions, and the Michigan District Mission Board in particular, were very busy as the Synod began to outgrow its Midwestern borders.

All was not necessarily bright and sunny in the years after World War II, however. The dark storm clouds of doctrinal controversy threatened to ruin the close fellowship between the Wisconsin Synod and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The tension increased between the two church bodies until 1961, when the Wisconsin Synod formally terminated fellowship ties with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. This proved to be quite a challenge to the small Midwestern church body, since the LC-MS had carried out much of the home mission work of the former Synodical Conference in the years prior to 1961. The Lord did not let this controversy ruin the Wisconsin Synod, or WELS as it soon became known, but used the years after the 1961 break with LC-MS to change the outlook in the WELS from a fortress mentality in the Midwest to an outlook of mission outreach under the slogan “Every State By ’78!”

Particularly from the early 1960s to the mid 1980s, the WELS pushed to expand mission outreach across the nation. The Michigan District was no different. During this time, the Michigan District helped to establish WELS congregations throughout the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, throughout Ohio, Pennsylvania, New England, the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic. From the mission efforts carried out under the auspices of the Michigan District Mission Board at this time, two new districts of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod formed – the South Atlantic District in 1973, which encompasses much of what is known as the Deep South, including much of the Gulf Coast and reaching as far north as Tennessee and western North Carolina; and in 1983, the North Atlantic District, stretching from Charlotte, NC to northern Ontario and from the eastern Appalachians to the Atlantic. In the Michigan District itself, most of the congregations in what is today the Ohio Conference laid down roots at this time, as well as many churches in the present-day Southeastern Conference. It was a time of great growth both on the synodical and district levels.

During this time, pastors such as Daniel Gieschen, Herbert Kuske and Frederick Adrian served as chairmen of the Michigan District Mission Board and helped to guide the DMB as it fostered groups

to form exploratory stations and then eventually mission congregations of their own. At the present, the Michigan District Mission Board continues to oversee the efforts of mission congregations in Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

### ***Custodial history:***

This collection was originally held in the local office of the standing chairman of the Michigan District Mission Board. This collection of DMB papers was passed from each outgoing chairman to his successor as far back as 1940. In the summer of 1996, the Michigan District Mission Board decided to donate the portion of its papers that now form this collection to the WELS Archives, Mequon, WI, where the collection resides at the present time.

### ***Scope and Content:***

The collection is made up of materials created by and collected by various members of the Michigan District Mission Board, in particular from the files of former District Mission Board chairmen—Rev. Daniel Gieschen, Rev. Herbert Kuske and Rev. Frederick Adrian—and from laymember Louis Leitz. The collection reflects a very busy time in the history of the Michigan District, as new missions formed across the state of Michigan, as well as throughout Ohio, western Pennsylvania and West Virginia. This collection also reflects the ongoing challenge of carrying out mission work with diminishing money resources, not only in the Michigan District, but in the WELS as a whole. Many of the items in this collection reflect the joys of churches forming out of small exploratory groups and growing into established congregations, as well as the sorrows of churches forced to close due to lack of money, lack of numbers or other unfortunate reasons. Many of the items in this collection reflect the methods, philosophies and materials used in the mission work of the Michigan District and the WELS at-large particularly during the boom years between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. These items reflect the success and failure of the methods, philosophies and materials that were used, but overall this collection reflects the grace of God as he spread the Gospel through the mission efforts of the many congregations under the auspices of the Michigan District Mission Board.

The collection consists of the following series:

- Series 1: Correspondence and reports on campus ministry
- Series 2: District Mission Board minutes
- Series 3: District Mission Board reports, agendas and correspondence
- Series 4: District Mission Counselor documents
- Series 5: District and Synodical documents
- Series 6: General Board for Home Missions – Budget documents
- Series 7: General Board for Home Missions – Committees documents
- Series 8: General Board for Home Missions documents
  - Subseries 1: General Board for Home Missions Minutes – 1941-1980
  - Subseries 2: General Board for Home Missions Reports – 1964-1989
  - Subseries 3: General Board for Home Missions Correspondence – 1965-1984
- Series 9: General correspondence
- Series 10: Louis Leitz documents
- Series 11: Miscellaneous District Mission Board documents
- Series 12: Northern Conference Mission Congregations
- Series 13: Ohio Conference Mission Congregations
- Series 14: Southeastern Conference Mission Congregations
- Series 15: Southwestern Conference Mission Congregations

**Source of supplied title:** Title based on the provenance of the records.

**Arrangement:** See appendix A for arrangement of the folders in the boxes.

**Restrictions:** None.

**Accruals:** The collection remains open for future accruals from the files of the standing Michigan District Mission Board.

## **Series level description**

### **The Michigan District (WELS) Mission Board Papers**

#### ***Series 1: Correspondence and reports on campus ministry***

Dates: 1982-1989

Extent: 3 folders, 5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of reports, correspondence and other documents pertaining to campus ministry work, particularly on university and college campuses in the Michigan District.

#### ***Series 2: District Mission Board minutes***

Dates: 1940-1990

Extent: 5 folders, 11.4 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of minutes and official correspondence from fifty years of Michigan District Mission Board meetings. The files are arranged chronologically.

#### ***Series 3: District Mission Board reports, agendas and correspondence***

Dates: 1940-1992

Extent: 17 folders, 32.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of reports, agendas, correspondence, essays and other items from over fifty years of Michigan District Mission Board meetings. There are also some minutes from the late 1970s to the late 1980s intermingled with the reports. The files are arranged chronologically.

#### ***Series 4: District Mission Counselor documents***

Dates: 1976-1987

Extent: 4 folders, 7.5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence and reports gathered and sent by the first two mission counselors who served the Michigan District – Robert Hartman and John Chworowsky. These men served as advisors to the various mission congregations in the Michigan District and served as liaisons between the congregations and the District Mission Board.

#### ***Series 5: District and Synodical documents***

Dates: 1983-1993

Extent: 4 folders, 5 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of reports, correspondence, notes and other documents pertaining to the 1993 Synod Convention, the Michigan District Council and the Flint Circuit Mission Committee.

***Series 6: General Board for Home Missions – Budget documents***

Dates: 1959-1991

Extent: 15 folders, 16.1 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of financial reports regarding the annual budgets of the General Board for Home Missions, as well as reports regarding the BHM Budget Task Force, the GBHM/BHM Budget Committee, budget revisions, budget projections, budget requests, budget requisitions, proposed budgets for new openings, budget decision packages for each district mission board and reports from the Synod treasurer/controller.

***Series 7: General Board for Home Missions – Committees documents***

Dates: 1966-1989

Extent: 6 folders, 12.7 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of reports correspondence and other documents pertaining specifically to the work of the following subcommittees of the General Board for Home Missions: the Architecture Committee, the Church Extension Fund, the Communications Committee, the Inner-City Mission Committee, the Mass Media Committee, the Priority Committee, and the Special Mission Committee.

***Series 8: General Board for Home Missions documents***

Dates: 1941-1990

Extent: 27 folders, 48.2 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of reports, correspondence, agendas, minutes and other documents pertaining to nearly fifty years of work by the GBHM and its successor the Board for Home Missions. Subseries 1 includes minutes from the General Board for Home Missions and the General Synodical Committee. Subseries 2 includes about forty-five years of reports, as well as evaluation and informational documents sent to the WELS home missions, such as the Home Mission Handbook, the “New Mode” Evangelism Project, and documents on GBHM administration and policy. This Subseries also includes reports on surplus land, the Church Extension Fund, various architects that worked with the GBHM and reports from the GBHM Executive Committee. Subseries 3 contains general correspondence to and from the GBHM, with Gary Baumler, Norman Berg, and Daniel Gieschen being primary correspondents.

Subseries 1: General Board for Home Mission Minutes – 1941-1980

Subseries 2: General Board for Home Missions Reports – 1964-1989

Subseries 3: General Board for Home Missions Correspondence – 1965-1984

***Series 9: General correspondence***

Dates: 1943-1991

Extent: 13 folders, 25.1 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence from a variety of correspondents regarding Michigan District Mission Board business, as well as the specific workings of the mission congregations scattered across the district. Some correspondents include: Frederick Adrian, John Chworowsky, Edwin Frey, Richard Frohmader, Daniel Gawrisch, Daniel Gieschen, Peter Kruschel, Herbert Kuske, James Mattek, Robert Mueller, and Walter Oehlhafen.

***Series 10: Louis Leitz documents***

Dates: 1983-1988

Extent: 4 folders, 10.4 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of reports, correspondence, notes and other documents collected by Louis Leitz, a laymember of the Michigan District Mission Board, during his years of service on the Board.

### ***Series 11: Miscellaneous District Mission Board documents***

Dates: 1959-1995

Extent: 11 folders, 18.3 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of reports, correspondence and other documents regarding District Mission Stations, Evangelism & New Mission Ideas, Finances, Inservice Seminars, Lapeer Region Work, Metro-Detroit Outreach Work, Mission Counselors, Soul Conservation, Statistical Reports and other official business of the Michigan District Mission Board in conjunction with the General Board for Home Missions (WELS).

### ***Series 12: Northern Conference Mission Congregations***

Dates: 1964-1993

Extent: 38 folders, 81 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence, reports, newsletters, and other documents sent to and from the Michigan District Mission Board from various mission congregations started in the Northern Conference of the Michigan District (WELS). Missions in this conference were started in the northern half of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. These congregations with the dates of their files include: Beautiful Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – Petoskey, MI (1989-1992); Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church – Imlay City, MI (1976-1991); Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church – Mount Pleasant, MI (1964-1991); Gloria Dei Evangelical Lutheran Church – Cadillac, MI (1984-1988); Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church – Midland, MI (1970-1988); Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church – Alma, MI (1978-1979); Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church – Indian River, MI (1971-1993); Mount Sinai Evangelical Lutheran Church – Montrose, MI (1967-1980); Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – Gaylord, MI (1974-1979); Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – Perry, MI (1978-1992); Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church – Traverse City, MI (1982-1992); Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church – Big Rapids, MI (1977-1990); and St. Martin Evangelical Lutheran Church – Roscommon, MI (1991-1993).

### ***Series 13: Ohio Conference Mission Congregations***

Dates: 1958-1995

Extent: 105 folders, 231.4 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence, reports, newsletters, and other documents sent to and from the Michigan District Mission Board from various mission congregations started in the Ohio Conference of the Michigan District (WELS). Missions in this conference were started in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and West Virginia. These congregations with the dates of their files include: Abiding Word Evangelical Lutheran Church – Cincinnati/Maineville, OH (1982-1993); Abiding Word Evangelical Lutheran Church – Coraopolis/Moon Township, PA (1980-1995); Amazing Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church – Florence/Boone County, KY (1989-1992); Beautiful Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – Cincinnati, OH (1970-1980); Beautiful Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – Grove City, OH (1965-1979); Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church – Gibsonia, PA (1975-1994); Crown of Life Evangelical Lutheran Church – Marietta, OH (1983-1993); Divine Charity Evangelical Lutheran Church – Bethel Park, PA (1968-1982); Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church – Lima, OH (1976-1984); Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church – West Newton, PA (1971-1977); Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church – Beckley, WV (1975-1990); Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church – Girard, OH (1971-1993); Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church – Kenton, OH (1953-1979); Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church – Cuyahoga Falls, OH (1965-1993); King of Kings Evangelical Lutheran Church –

Willoughby, OH (1967-1992); Lamb of God Evangelical Lutheran Church – Columbus, OH (1970-1994); Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – Altoona/Hollidaysburg, PA (1974-1993); Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – Ashland/Mansfield, OH (1974-1990); Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – Englewood, OH (1979-1982); Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – Strongsville, OH (1977-1993); Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church – New Carlisle, OH (1964-1983); Peace of Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – New Carlisle, OH (1983-1993); Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church – Reynoldsburg/Columbus, OH (1975-1987); Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church – Centerville/Kettering, OH (1977-1994); Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church – Maumee/Toledo, OH (1983-1992); Shepherd of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church – Worthington/Powell, OH (1981-1992); St. Andrew Evangelical Lutheran Church – Toledo, OH (1958-1980).

### ***Series 14: Southeastern Conference Mission Congregations***

Dates: 1945-1993

Extent: 46 folders, 95 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence, reports, newsletters, and other documents sent to and from the Michigan District Mission Board from various mission congregations started in the Southeastern Conference of the Michigan District (WELS). Missions in this conference were started in the southeast portion of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, primarily in the Detroit region. These congregations with the dates of their files include: Amazing Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church – Taylor, MI (1972-1993); Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church – Eaton Rapids, MI (1945-1992); Cross of Glory Evangelical Lutheran Church – Romeo/Washington, MI (1971-1992); Divine Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church – Lake Orion, MI (1967-1982); Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church – Novi, MI (1980-1993); Holy Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church – Port Huron, MI (1975-1992); Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church – Portland, MI (1966-1990); Paul the Apostle Evangelical Lutheran Church – Detroit, MI (1983); Shepherd of the Hills Evangelical Lutheran Church – Lansing/Grand Ledge, MI (1974-1992); St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church – Jackson, MI (1968-1993); St. Mark – Utica/Sterling Heights, MI (1961-1981); and Zoar Evangelical Lutheran Church – Detroit, MI (1950-1992).

### ***Series 15: Southwestern Conference Mission Congregations***

Dates: 1964-1992

Extent: 11 folders, 26 cm. of textual records

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence, reports, newsletters, and other documents sent to and from the Michigan District Mission Board from various mission congregations started in the Southwestern Conference of the Michigan District (WELS). Missions in this conference were started in the southwest portion of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. These congregations include: Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church – Holland, MI (1971-1990); Christ Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church – Grand Rapids, MI (1985-1992); St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church – Portage, MI (1967-1980); and St. Stephen Evangelical Lutheran Church – Kalamazoo, MI (1964-1984).

Appendix A

**The Michigan District (WELS) Mission Board Papers**  
Arrangement

Box 1: Folders 1-19  
Box 2: Folders 20-45  
Box 3: Folders 46-65  
Box 4: Folders 66-87  
Box 5: Folders 88-106  
Box 6: Folders 107-126  
Box 7: Folders 127-144  
Box 8: Folders 145-162  
Box 9: Folders 163-181  
Box 10: Folders 182-199  
Box 11: Folders 200-218  
Box 12: Folders 219-235  
Box 13: Folders 236-250  
Box 14: Folders 251-265  
Box 15: Folders 266-286  
Box 16: Folders 287-304  
Box 17: Folders 305-310

Series 1: Correspondence and reports on campus ministry  
Folders 1-3

Series 2: District Mission Board minutes  
Folders 4-8

Series 3: District Mission Board reports, agendas and correspondence  
Folders 9-25

Series 4: District Mission Counselor documents  
Folders 26-29

Series 5: District and Synodical documents  
Folders 30-33

Series 6: General Board for Home Missions – Budget documents  
Folders 34-48

Series 7: General Board for Home Missions – Committees documents  
Folders 49-54

Series 8: General Board for Home Missions documents  
Folders 55-82  
Subseries 1: General Board for Home Missions Minutes – 1941-1980  
Folders 55-64  
Subseries 2: General Board for Home Missions Reports – 1964-1989

Folders 65-79  
Subseries 3: General Board for Home Missions Correspondence – 1965-1984  
Folders 80-82

Series 9: General correspondence  
Folders 83-95

Series 10: Louis Leitz documents  
Folders 96-99

Series 11: Miscellaneous District Mission Board documents  
Folders 100-110

Series 12: Northern Conference Mission Congregations  
Folders 111-148

Series 13: Ohio Conference Mission Congregations  
Folders 149-253

Series 14: Southeastern Conference Mission Congregations  
Folders 254-299

Series 15: Southwestern Conference Mission Congregations  
Folder 300-310