

# Acts In Common

FALL 2016

## ACTS IN COMMON 2006-2016

**“Behold! I am making all things new!” (Revelation 21:5)**

February 6, 2006 – Leaders and members of what was then called the Detroit Lutheran Coalition met at Genesis Lutheran Church to vote in favor or against the coalition’s transformation into Acts In Common. There was a lot of tension in the air, and all of the congregations of the DLC were represented. Staff of the African American Strategy, along with board leadership of the DLC had been in conversation for many months, bringing what was a documented strategy for ministry in Detroit to life. After comments, concerns and hopes were shared, the vote was taken and Acts In Common was born.



ALL THE BELIEVERS WERE TOGETHER AND HAD EVERYTHING IN COMMON

**Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. (2 Timothy 4:2)**

Although it was a highly celebrated event, becoming Acts In Common was far from easy. Our highly faithful and committed community was moving towards a very difficult and challenging period in time. Race, ethnicity and culture became a tool of division rather than acceptance. The economy was beginning to fail and attendance within our Detroit congregations dropped. The needs of our congregations was changing, as more of them were being left with-

out called pastoral leadership. Our synod was in mourning for many years because of the resignations of two bishops and the death of one bishop. Our suffering was synod-wide. Congregations even closed. But, those left behind continued to remain faithful to their call. New friends and supporters came on board. Renewed interests in ministry were revealed. New opportunities were being manifested during some very dark days.

**Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. (Proverbs 4:25)**

Regardless of our losses, there was still joy to be found. For Acts In Common, finding its purpose was certainly a struggle, and the struggle continues. However, as a ministry that is charged with resourcing its member and supporter congregations, using what you have available is a great option. So, the board of directors took a chance in 2014 by introducing the Congregations Connections Grant to the community. Congregations were invited to apply for grants to strengthen current or grow new ministry opportunities. Through this effort, AIC has assisted congregational programs such as Last Minute Christmas (Gracious Saviour), Blessed Hands Sewing Ministry (Revelation), Lighthouse Food

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### POINTS OF INTEREST

- ◆ Acts In Common’s Anniversary in review
- ◆ Partner Spotlight: Last Minute Christmas
- ◆ Upcoming Events

“All the **believers** were **together** and had everything in **common**.”

Acts 2:44

## ACTS IN COMMON 2006-2016 (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Pantry (Immanuel), Food Pantry (St. James) and Youth Events (Inner City Youth Group) into fast growing outreach tools for networking and more.

***All the believers were together and had everything in common.” (Acts 2:44)***

What comes next as we celebrate 10 years together as Acts In Common? Well it depends on you. Our members. Our friends. Our supporters.

Our goals are to continue lifting up the six strategic objectives that defines our mission: Congregational Leadership, Contextual Ministry, Financial Development, Maximizing Resources, New Ministry Development and Strengthen Existing Ministries. This year we, as we look toward the presidential election, AIC will partner with others around Voter Registration and Community Organizing. Individuals

interested and available to serve on ELCA committees and boards, as well as local community-based networks are encouraged to make those desires known to us. Acts In Common looks forward to new and renewed partnerships in our Lutheran context, throughout Detroit and in other cities of our synod.

In God’s Glory!

*Robin J. McCants*

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## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS

Christmas is exciting for both children and their parents at Gracious Savior Lutheran Church. The church's outreach ministry, Jerusalem, works tirelessly setting up gift stations and preparing food baskets.

Jerusalem’s mission in this annual event is that “no child goes without a Christmas,” remarked Doreen Henry of Gracious Savior Lutheran Church. And that means ensuring that each child feels included in the Christmas tradition of gift giving.

The ministry provides warm outerwear, toys, and books for kids. Adults

receive a turkey and other food items to complete a Christmas meal. Parents also shop at the church for new and gently used items to give to their children—all at no cost.

Preparation for the Last Minute Christmas begins in early October. Jerusalem ministry members distribute coats to needy children. Team coordinators organize local groups to solicit donations, wash and sort any donated items, and go gift shopping. Last year they serviced several families with the help of church volunteers, Detroit Police Department’s 12<sup>th</sup> Precinct, and charitable organiza-

tions such as The Order of the Eastern Star.

The Congregational Connections Grant provided by Acts in Common enabled Jerusalem to purchase coats, hats, gloves, toys, and food for the families. “[We] even were able to get their parents a little something,” added Doreen.

When asked how the program can be supported without limits, Doreen’s response was that it is Jerusalem’s desire to increase participation by opening it to other Acts In Common churches. Jerusalem also seeks donations of outerwear, toys and



## 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION

### 500 Years of Evangelical Reformation 1517-2017

When Martin Luther posted his “Ninety-five Theses” on the church door in Wittenberg in 1517, no one expected the breadth of evangelical reforms in Christian teaching and practice that followed. In every dimension of Christian faith a renewed trust in God’s forgiving mercy replaced a reliance on teachings and practices that, like the sale of indulgences, were vulnerable to abuse and corruption.

Preaching a few years later, Luther said, “I opposed indulgences ... but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. I did nothing; the Word did everything.” When he began to propose reforms in worship, he wrote similar words. “This is the sum of the matter: let everything be done so that the Word may have free course.”

Nearly 500 years later, the results of this evangelical confidence in God’s forgiving and liberating Word are evident today in Christian communities of all types. In the years leading to 2017 ELCA members, congregations and synods will observe the anniversary of this evangelical reformation in a variety of ways with numerous partners. Please visit our website at [www.ELCA500.org](http://www.ELCA500.org).

### PARTNER SPOTLIGHT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

turkeys. Lots of thought, planning and helping hands make Last Minute Christmas a success each year; for, both recipient and giver are blessed by these simple acts of love and fellowship.

Want to learn more or volunteer this season? Please contact:  
 Doreen Henry  
 Gracious Savior Lutheran Church’s Jerusalem Outreach Ministry  
 Phone: (313) 342-4950  
 Email: [dhenry6790@gmail.com](mailto:dhenry6790@gmail.com)

#### Please Join Us!

Join us as we work to make a difference in lives of our Detroit Lutheran congregations and ministries.

Visit us at [www.actsincommon.org](http://www.actsincommon.org) to learn more and see our AIC partners in action.

## EVENTS

**December 1** — *Deadline Extension Congregational Connection Grants are due. Please submit yours by this date.*

**December 9** — *Accepting Donations for Last Minute Christmas*

**December 16** — *Last Minute Christmas Volunteer Deadline*

**January 15, 2017** — *“Save-the-Date” Annual MLK Worship Service. Rev. Linda Norman, Treasurer of the ELCA, is preaching.*

Want to see your  
 AIC ministry event  
 or  
 announcement  
 included in the next  
 newsletter?  
 E-mail:  
[shavaughn04@gmail.com](mailto:shavaughn04@gmail.com)

*Acts In Common (AIC) is an organization of Christian believers who seek to renew, resource and empower Lutheran congregations and ministries located in Detroit and nearby suburbs of the metropolitan area. AIC seeks to assist these congregations and ministries to find creative and public ways to invite others to know God's love through Jesus Christ. Membership is open to all Lutheran congregations in the territory of the Southeast Michigan Synod who subscribe to the purpose and goals of the organization.*



*"All the believers were together and had everything in common." Acts 2:44*

Robin J. McCants, Director

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Shavaughn Joyce, Member  
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