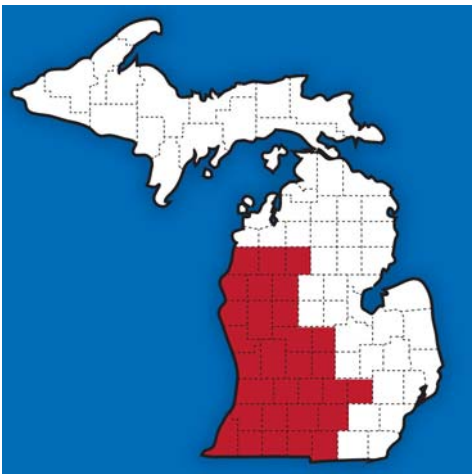




Just as crops require nourishment to grow, congregations and their leaders also need support and resources for continued strength and growth.

As General Presbyter for the Lake Michigan Presbytery, John Best helps provide that support by building relationships, strengthening communications, and connecting resources to congregations in need. "It is a companion journey so that no one is out all on their own. We offer support. One major part of my work is helping connect congregations with resources they need. We have a wealth of human resources in this Presbytery. I help to connect the dots," said John, who relates to the 70 congregations in the Presbytery. The Presbytery of Lake Michigan stretches from the Indiana border to Cadillac and Lake City in the north, and from Lansing to the Lake Michigan shore.



Presbytery of Lake Michigan

Congregations should monitor the needs of their community and look for ways to join God in meeting those needs. Doing so requires people to stretch and grow. John admits that is not always easy, but is important if the church is to remain relevant to the people.

During times of pastoral transition in a congregation, the Presbytery's assistance is particularly important. John meets with the Session and fills the pulpit soon after a pastor leaves. The Presbytery, through the General Presbyter and the Committee on Ministry transition counselors, provides support and a process for finding temporary and future

Lake Michigan Presbytery's two main priorities currently are helping congregations grow deep in spiritual growth, and wide in outreach; and supporting congregational leaders. John plays an important role in both areas.

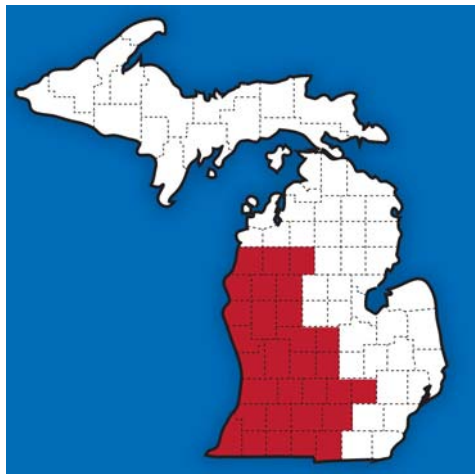
"This is a tough time to do ministry. Techniques and programs which once worked well no longer produce the same results. We are all wandering in a wilderness, learning to navigate this strange new century. Anxiety is high! Stresses are everywhere! It is critical for congregational leaders to have support," said John.

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pastoral leadership. John said it is not about telling congregations what to do, but providing tools, resources, a process, and guidance to identify God's calling.

Another important part of his role is serving as a pastor to the pastors - listening, encouraging, and supporting.



John Best

John makes hospital visits, stays in contact with pastors, and prays for them. "Pastors are human too, with all the same needs as anyone else. They sometimes get sick, need surgery, or become discouraged. Several have lost parents in the last year. I try to be there for them."

In the three years that John has been General Presbyterian, he has found ways to use his own life experiences in his ministry. His father was a Presbyterian minister so he understands the stress on clergy families. He heard God's call to ministry at a young age. After serving in Brazil as a missionary for three years, and then for 23 years as a pastor in a variety of settings, John felt a call to share his gifts at the Presbytery level.

John says it is an honor to serve the people of God in this leadership role and he knows he is not alone in his efforts. He has support of the presbytery staff and ministry teams and committees. And, most importantly, he is always listening and trying to follow God's leading.

Presbytery of Lake Michigan is a Middle Governing Body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and is organized into 4 ministry areas.



Presbytery of Lake Michigan is a Christian community of congregations and clergy seeking as disciples of the Lord, Jesus Christ, to partner in mission and support one another in ministry

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