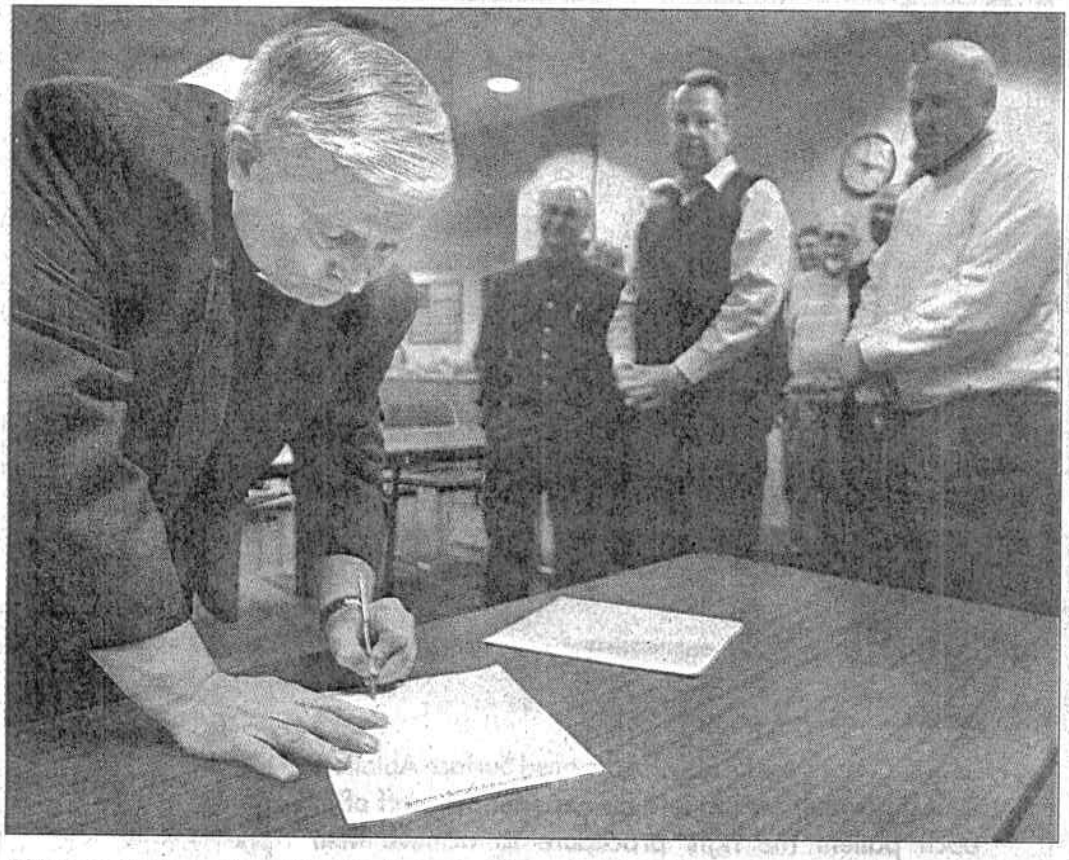


JOE COTTAM, pastor at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Sheboygan, signs the marriage covenant at the Mead Public Library in Sheboygan during a gathering of clergy from the Sheboygan County area on Wednesday. Press photo/**Sam Castro**

Ministers gather to sign marriage covenant on St. Valentine's Day

By Troy Laack
Sheboygan Press staff

On St. Valentine's Day, 22 Sheboygan County ministers gathered at Mead Public Library to sign a covenant to strengthen marriages.

"It kind of calls attention to the significance of the covenant that people are getting into upfront, to help people be aware of what it is they are committing to," said the Rev. Les Kuiper, pastor at Christian Reformed Church in Oostburg. "I think it's great that so many of the churches of the Sheboygan area are able to work together on something like this."

Kuiper and other Oostburg ministers put together a similar covenant six years ago, which Great Marriages for Sheboygan County used as a

Five points of the Marriage Covenant

- Christian commitment: Active involvement in the church
- Waiting period: A minimum of four months
- Premarital counseling: A minimum of four sessions
- Marriage declaration: Signed agreement between couples
- Marital nurturing: Counseling, pastoral care and couples' retreats

ONLINE

- View a PDF of the Sheboygan County Marriage Covenant at www.sheboygan-press.com
- www.sheboygancounty-

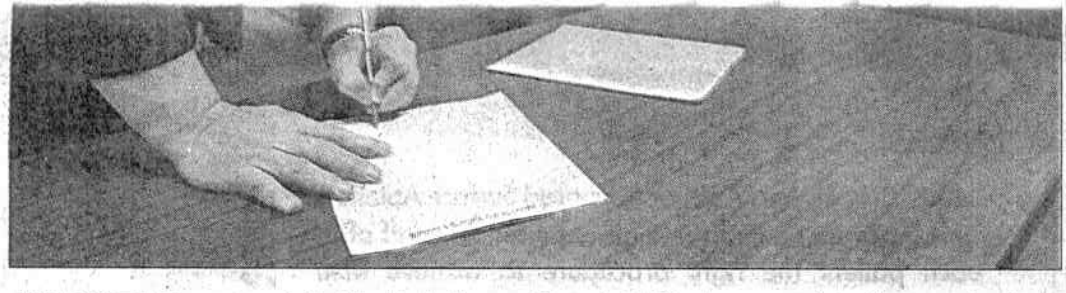
riages," Hunholz said.

The Rev. Steve Pedersen of Zion Covenant Church in Sheboygan said it was remarkable that a variety of denominations came together for the agreement.

"I think it's important that a wide diversity of churches and pastors have all affirmed the sanctity of marriage and the importance of marriage preparation so that marriages last," Pedersen said.

Reach Troy Laack at tlaack@sheboygan-press.com and 453-5133.

We'd



JOE COTTAM, pastor at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Sheboygan, signs the marriage covenant at the Mead Public Library in Sheboygan during a gathering of clergy from the Sheboygan County area on Wednesday. Press photo/**Sam Castro**

Ministers gather to sign marriage covenant on St. Valentine's Day

By Troy Laack
Sheboygan Press staff

On St. Valentine's Day, 22 Sheboygan County ministers gathered at Mead Public Library to sign a covenant to strengthen marriages.

"It kind of calls attention to the significance of the covenant that people are getting into upfront, to help people be aware of what it is they are committing to," said the Rev. Les Kuiper, pastor at Christian Reformed Church in Oostburg. "I think it's great that so many of the churches of the Sheboygan area are able to work together on something like this."

Kuiper and other Oostburg ministers put together a similar covenant six years ago, which Great Marriages for Sheboygan County used as a model for the Sheboygan County Marriage Covenant, said Charlene Lammers, executive director of that organization.

Although 22 ministers signed the pact Wednesday, a total of 48 local clergy members from 16 denominations have signed the covenant.

"Eighty-six percent of marriages take place in the church, but still we have one of the highest divorce rates in the world," Lammers said. "That is why we had to come together to work on this."

Lammers coordinated efforts to get pastors together, who put the covenant together and got other ministers to sign on.

The Rev. Glenn Powers of Immaculate Conception, Saint Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church in Sheboygan said the signing on St. Valentine's Day had significance as well.

"We're trying to draw the slightest distinction but it's a very important distinction between light-hearted romantic infatuation and something that's a little bit more deeper, serious, committed, this unconditional love that's preached of in churches," Powers said.

The Rev. Keith Hunholz of Saint Peter Evangelical and Saint Paul's Christian churches in Elkhart Lake said the covenant is designed to detour couples from divorce.

"We want to do what we can to help strengthen marriages," Hunholz said.

The Rev. Steve Pedersen of Zion Covenant Church in Sheboygan said it was remarkable that a variety of denominations came together for the agreement.

"I think it's important that a wide diversity of churches and pastors have all affirmed the sanctity of marriage and the importance of marriage preparation so that marriages last," Pedersen said.

Reach Troy Laack at tlaack@sheboygan-press.com and 453-5133.

Five points of the Marriage Covenant

- Christian commitment: Active involvement in the church
- Waiting period: A minimum of four months
- Premarital counseling: A minimum of four sessions
- Marriage declaration: Signed agreement between couples
- Marital nurturing: Counseling, pastoral care and couples' retreats

ONLINE

- View a PDF of the Sheboygan County Marriage Covenant at www.sheboygan-press.com
- www.sheboygancounty-formarriage.org

We'd
to Miscon

Cremation Room