



REACHING RURAL AMERICA FOR CHRIST

“... and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord...”

—Post-Communion Collect, Divine Service, *Lutheran Service Book*



Our “Life Together”

- To follow the core beliefs of the LCMS
- To equip rural professional and lay leaders
- To support congregations in community engagement



Please Pray for These Important Dates

December 9 – Webinar

“Roundtable on Building Partnerships” with Rev. Todd Kollbaum, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Madison, Neb. and director of LCMS Rural & Small-Town Mission; Rev. Dan Galchutt, assistant to the president for Missions and Stewardship in the LCMS Kansas District; Rev. Michael Hageman, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Garden City, Kan.; and Rev. Jon Bruss, senior pastor at St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Topeka, Kan. 1–2 p.m. CST



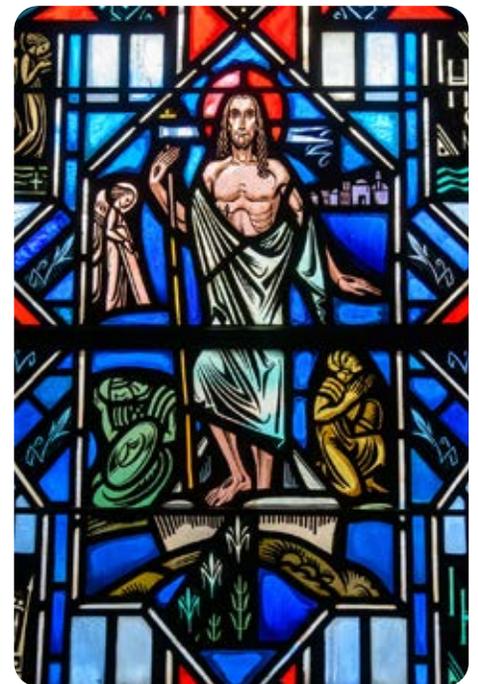
STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE

Yesterday, Today and Forever

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them” (Heb. 13:8–9).

Over the past weekend, I had the joyous pleasure to spend a good amount of time with my grandsons, even celebrating two of their birthdays. These awesome days got me thinking about them and how their faith and life will look as they grow up in this crazy, fallen world. This caused my thoughts to drift back to something my daughter said a number of years ago when she was attending Concordia University, Nebraska. She said, “It is so great to be in a place where taking your faith seriously is encouraged.”

How great that she had that sanctuary in her life where her faith could grow and be nurtured, even in a time when, societally, this certainly isn’t the norm and some are even hostile to the very idea. And, brothers and sisters in Christ, this isn’t going to get any better. Our society is becoming increasingly hostile to the



Christian faith, even in the rural and small-town settings where, historically, this hasn’t been a problem. Instead of finding respite from the hostile world, our faith is constantly challenged.

Now, this could easily beat us down and cause us to lament our situation in life. Oh, woe is us — if only we could go back to the “good old days.” Well, why

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It's Budget Time

Fall is upon us: The harvest is coming in, kids are deciding on Halloween costumes, the church choir is getting special pieces ready for Reformation ... and it's about time to put together the church budget for next year.

Every organization needs a budget — your family needs one, the business down the street needs one, and your congregation needs one as well. But how does this budget come together? If your congregation is like most, it's probably a process along these lines.

- > **First**, a committee is appointed to make the budget. This might include the treasurer, members of the church council, the pastor or a standing finance committee.
- > **Second**, the budget committee sits down with last year's budget and goes line by line asking, "How much did

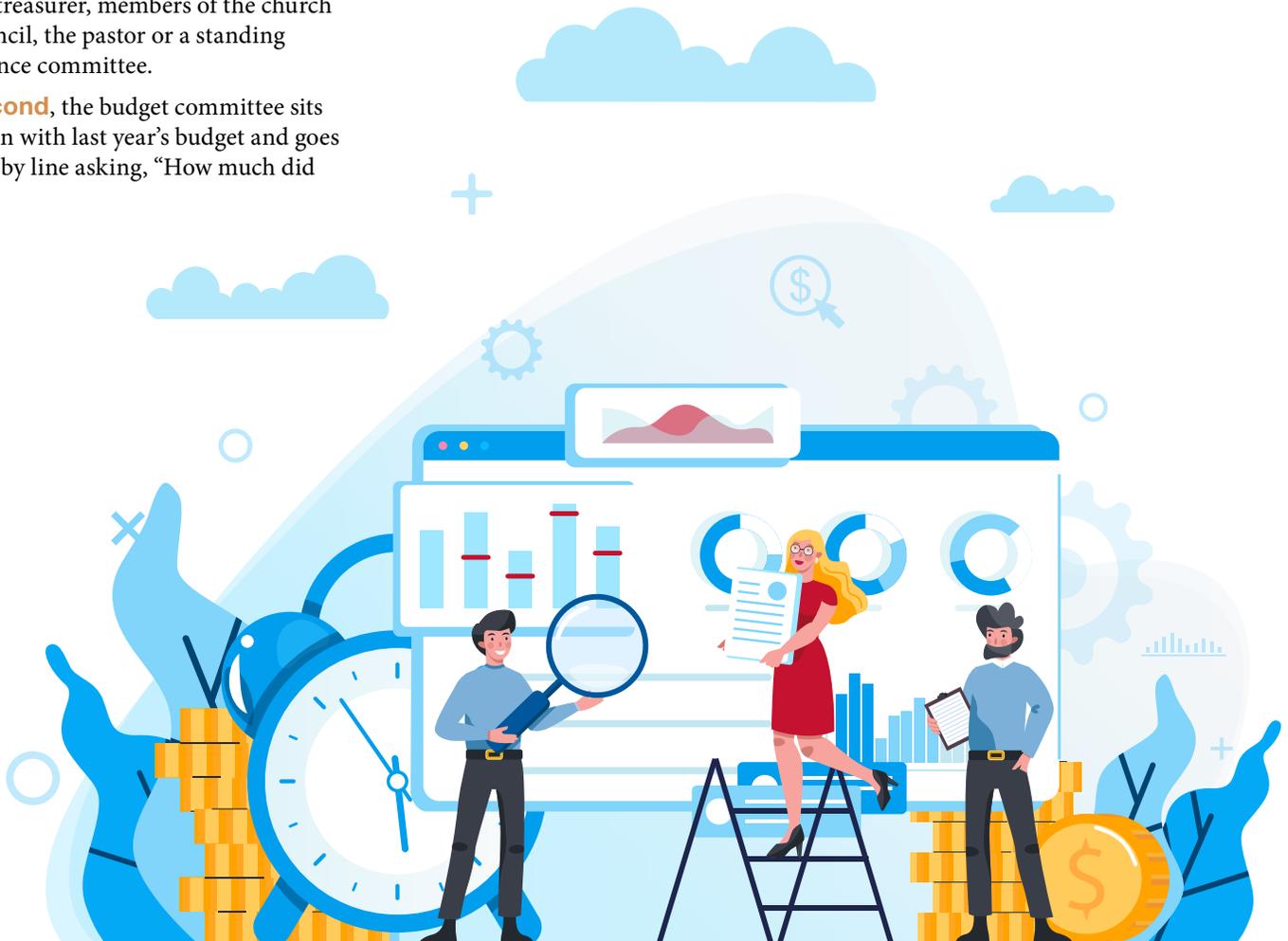
we spend on X last year? Do you think that needs to go up, come down or stay the same for next year?"

- > **Third**, the budget is presented to the church council and finally the voters for final approval. At those meetings, changes can be made to specific line items.
- > **Fourth**, somewhere in there, Pastor says a prayer.
- > **Fifth**, hope the money comes in...

That's pretty much the way most of our parishes run. And let's be honest: it's not a great system. Where is the Word of God

in this process (besides that little prayer)? How do we account for things that were not in last year's budget, but need to be in for the coming year? How can any organization make a budget without trying to account not just for spending, but also for expected income?

At our November 4th RSTM webinar, the Rev. Heath Curtis, coordinator for LCMS Stewardship Ministry, takes us through a better budgeting process that aims to put the Word of God in charge of how we do business in the church. View this webinar at resources.lcms.org/multimedia/lcms-rural-small-town-mission-webinar-stewardship/



Reaching Rural America for Christ is published monthly by LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission.

Reaching Rural America for Christ may be reprinted with acknowledgment given to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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We want to hear from you! If you have ideas for future issues, comments, or feedback on articles you've read in *Reaching Rural America for Christ*, please contact the RSTM office.

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LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission supports and encourages rural and small-town congregations in engaging their communities and growing together in Christ through Word and Sacrament.

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can't we? Surely, society most likely isn't going to change for the better. It's only going to keep marching toward death. But the Word of God hasn't ever changed. It is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow! Without fail, the Word has been our "trustworthy shield and weapon" throughout all the battles of our lives in this valley.

Where then can people turn? To us, to Christ's church where that pure Word and the Sacraments are taught and administered. How will they know to turn to us? Let us with an attitude of vigor and

excitement engage those around so that they too can say of us, "It is so great to be in a place where taking your faith seriously is encouraged!"

This is exactly what we are endeavoring to do as we work to "strengthen, renew, revitalize and transform the congregations, schools and workers of the LCMS through the life of Christ crucified and risen in His means of grace."

May God bless you as you work to "be that place" to those you serve.

RSTM Events Update

Don't forget that Rural & Small Town Mission provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is **Roundtable on Building Partnerships** on Dec. 9. Find past webinars in our archive. Watch for information on all our upcoming events!

RSTM's **Welcoming Workshops** are something we think your congregation will love and benefit from. These day-long events will help congregations become more welcoming places, providing God's Word to both current members and guests. They offer practical resources

on having welcoming buildings, welcoming publications and welcoming people.

Register for one our **Engaging Your Community (EYC)** or **Engaging the Wandering (ETW)** events at lcms.org/rstm. These partner events offer practical resources and communication skills for reaching out to our wandering members and our communities with Christ's love. Contact your district or our office if you are interested in holding an event near you. We are currently scheduling for 2022!

In addition, pray for the new **Making Disciples for Life conferences** and watch for information on a regional event coming near you!

