



# REACHING RURAL AMERICA FOR CHRIST



## 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

### January 13 – Webinar

"Rural Ministry Resources" with Rev. Todd Kollbaum, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Madison, Neb. and director of LCMS Rural & Small-Town Mission.  
1–2 p.m. CST



"... 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*

## STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE

# Walking Together

"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" (Psalm 133:1)

**R**epeatedly, I have shared with congregations what C.F.W. Walther states in his writing "Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod." He tells us, "It is a primary duty of a confessionally faithful synod that it take an enthusiastic part in all God-pleasing organizations dedicated to the spread of Christ's kingdom in the world. That is the duty of every synod, including our own. It is to join the ranks of that great army of laborers in the harvest field of Christ. For the harvest has long been 'dead ripe.' ... It should cooperate with every organization of both home and foreign missions for the spreading of the holy Scriptures. That also applies to the establishment and preservation of institutions for the preparation of pastors. In short, a synod is to be a living member of the body of Christ, and together with every other living member of that most sacred body in the whole world, it must do whatever it possibly can to spread Christ's kingdom and, wherever possible, to win for Christ and to lead into His sheepfold all those whom Christ has bought with His precious blood, and ultimately to lead them in the salvation of everlasting life."



There are some very interesting concepts that Walther posits here, but I wanted to point out this: As ones who are "walking together," we are called to work together in any God-pleasing way to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We might all read this and think to ourselves that this is just obvious. Of course, as the church, this is self-evident.

However, practically speaking, we very much struggle to carry this out in real life. As independent congregations, voluntarily bound together as Synod, we often forget this aspect of our work. It is easy to become isolated, inwardly focused or simply too stubborn to consider methods and partnerships with which we are unfamiliar. That is why as we are nearing the celebration of our Lord's birth and a coming new year, I would encourage you to consider the possibilities. What might the Lord be leading us toward to more efficiently or effectively cooperate with others in "both home and foreign missions"? How might we take Walther's advice and "together with every other living member of that most sacred body in the whole world" do whatever, wherever? Because in the end, it is that to which we are called, and who we are at the very core.



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## Contact us

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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## Support This Work

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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## THIS MONTH'S WEBINAR:

# Partnership Possibilities

**I**n the past, LCMS RSTM and congregations throughout the Synod have endeavored to focus on resources and processes by which congregations can partner with each other and with other organizations to carry out the church's mission. Sometimes, it can be very difficult to figure these partnerships out on our own. Furthermore, once they are in place, we must figure out how we can continue to make them viable, productive and God-pleasing. In order to try to accomplish this ongoing work, we have assembled a group of folks who are involved in partnerships which are at a variety of different stages, and are also varied in their type and location. By doing this, we hope to be able to provide some

"food for thought" to those who might be interested in forming or continuing partnerships. If this sounds like you, or if you are just starting out and might have an interest in partnering, I would encourage you to take advantage of our webinar which addresses this very issue. Wouldn't it be nice if we could work together for the good of the kingdom, partnering with one another to share our burdens and our joys all of time? Without a doubt, this would be a God-pleasing endeavor to share the Gospel and work for the Lord in His Kingdom! View this webinar at [resources.lcms.org/multimedia/rural-and-small-town-mission-webinar-roundtable-on-building-partnerships](https://resources.lcms.org/multimedia/rural-and-small-town-mission-webinar-roundtable-on-building-partnerships).

# RSTM Events Update

**D**on't forget that Rural & Small Town Mission provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is **Rural Ministry Resources** on Jan. 13. 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](https://www.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!