

# A Pastoral TOUCH

A newsletter of Specialized Pastoral Ministry

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THE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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Specialized Pastoral Ministry

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## FROM THE INTERIM DIRECTOR

# Bowing Before Christ

### Dear Colleagues in Christ,

Back in the seminary (CTS 1971 graduate, Springfield), I remember being instructed in my Lutheran Liturgy 101 class to bow my head at the name of Jesus. Recently, I have noticed that others bow their heads at the name of the Triune God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Whether at the name of Jesus or the name of the Holy Trinity, Jesus gets my nod! Yes, I said nod. I don't mean any disrespect; it's just that I realize sometimes that is exactly how subtle it is: a brief, barely noticeable drop of the head. Of course, I'm talking about more than a physical response to a liturgical invitation.

I confess to you, my brothers and sisters, that acknowledging the person and place of Jesus in my life and ministry has become a struggle at times. It has become increasingly easy to pretend — in the pluralistic contexts where most of us serve and live — that Jesus is not all that important. Phil Kuehnert and Russ Helbig challenged me at our LCMS Specialized Pastoral Ministry (SPM) Educational Event\* in October to be more intentionally courageous in not only my ministry but also in my life and professional relationships.

You probably have figured out that the LCMS International Center is not all that pluralistic. So it's fairly easy talking like a Christian, looking like a Christian and ministering like a Christian! But step anywhere outside of these walls — across the threshold into your home, into a circle of professional colleagues, inside your walls of ministry — and giving Jesus more than a polite nod is not automatic. In fact,



“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth...”

Phil. 2:10 ESV

there are circumstances when it can be nothing less than risky and frightening even as it is exciting and rewarding — all wrapped up into one experience.

It's no small challenge to kneel and nod at the name of Jesus! Bravery is needed to claim the faith and identity of SPM. We are called to claim and intentionally live our identity privately, parochially and publically. We even have a Code of Ethics that admonishes us to be faithful in our SPM calling. But being called to faithfulness and living faithfully are two very different forces at work upon us and within us.

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\* You may find the presentations from the October 2014 SPM Educational Event at [lcms.org/spm](http://lcms.org/spm).



A number of you have said in the survey response we solicited some time ago, as well as in person, on the phone and at SPM Educational Events, that the challenge to remain faithfully LCMS is increasing. Being theologically conservative or confessional (however you want to say that) while being pastoral, loving and sensitive in ministry may not garner the respect that it once did. Some feel pressured to engage in ministerial practices that would cause offense not only to the specialized pastoral minister but also within our church body. So, what's a specialized pastoral minister to do?

As you continue to serve within your specialized context, remember you are

not alone. The One who descended into our world is the same One who ascended on high to fill the universe, you and your ministry context with His presence (Eph. 4:10). By God's grace, you can trust that truth and rely on His strength. Rely also on His courage and the wisdom of His Word within you!

Remember also that we are a community of brothers and sisters who understand Specialized Pastoral Ministry. We can be there for each other. It's a mistake when any of us try ministering alone — especially without seeking God's guidance, but also without seeking the support and encouragement of each other.

Most importantly, as you seek to serve

faithfully, remember this: What you are doing in ministry in the name of Jesus is God-pleasing and rewarding — though perhaps not immediately. But for the joy that *awaited* Him, Jesus endured the cross (Heb. 12:2). Your faithful and enduring service to our Lord and to the church has its blessings now and in eternity. Your SPM office is committed to do what we can to add to your blessings in this life. God has your next life covered!

*Joel*

Rev. Joel Hempel,  
SPM Interim Director

## In the News



### SPM Educational Event

Fifty-five specialized pastoral ministers and five spouses met in St. Louis Oct. 28-30 for the second SPM Educational Event of 2014. This was nearly a 100 percent increase in the number of attendees from the event in February. The LCMS video crew was present to record the presentations, and soon they will be posted online. Check them out at [lcms.org/spm](http://lcms.org/spm).

All areas of SPM were represented, with a significant increase in emergency services chaplains. We were also pleased to have present several ministers who were exploring SPM vocationally and/or how to become more fully tooled for the ministry. Program evaluations (35) gave the event an overall rating of 4.51.

### 2015 SPM Educational Events

Mark your calendars! May 5-7, 2015, will be the next event, which will again be held at the Mercy Retreat Center in St. Louis. The principal presenter will be the Rev. Dr. Joel Biermann from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. His two presentations will be "Luther's Left Hand" and "Ministering with Peace in the Left Hand." A

description of what to expect will be sent in a later mailing. The planning committee (Derek Wolter, Jim McDaniels, Bill Wagner and Russ Helbig) is still working on the schedule, but there will also be a focus on spiritual wellness.

The fall 2015 event/retreat will be Sept. 22-24, 2015, at the Retreat and Conference Center at Bon Secours, Marriottsville, Md. (outside of Baltimore). We are looking for someone to serve on the planning committee who lives in the area. If you are interested, please contact the SPM office. The program is expected to be much like the May event in St. Louis.

### Endorsements

- Congratulations to Arthur Werzner who received ecclesiastical endorsement Sept. 26, 2014, in Seattle, Wash. Thank you to the consultation committee: Lorinda Schwarz (convener), Philip Streufert and Barry Stueve.
- One-year (transitional) VA endorsements were granted to Richard Davis, Robert Carter, Ken Fosse, Michael Schempf, David Reed, Channing Kearney and Kenneth Hessel.

From top: The Rev. Dr. Phillip Kuehnert leads the session "Pastoral Care in a Pluralistic Context" at the LCMS Specialized Pastoral Ministry Educational Event and Retreat. The Rev. Lee Joesten leads a session "Personal and Professional Wellness in SPM." Chaplain Craig G. Muehler, director of the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces, listens to a presentation.



## First BNM Divine Call on Behalf of SPM

After 10-plus years of navigating through various channels, boards and offices — all of which was initiated by the Rev. John Fale — as well as creating a process that both honors the divine call process of the LCMS and those colleagues who are serving faithfully without a call and who want a call, the Board for National Mission issued its first call to the Rev. Steven Sutterer to serve at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, Mich. Sutterer accepted the call and was installed Nov. 16. This story was covered in greater detail in the November issue of the *Reporter*. Find the story online at [blogs.lcms.org/2014/bnm-extends-call](http://blogs.lcms.org/2014/bnm-extends-call).

## Emergency Services Chaplaincy

The ESC Task Force completed its work after updating and testing (with 10 colleagues) the ecclesiastical endorsement process for Emergency Services Chaplaincy. The revised process is included in the updated Ecclesiastical Endorsement Manual (Pages 6-7). However, the process will be finalized and fully launched following feedback from the district presidents. Time has been requested on an upcoming Council of Presidents (COP) agenda.

Having completed their assigned task, we give special thanks to task force members Bill Wagner, Bill Engfehr, Frank Ruffatto and Jim Wright!

## Interim Duties

The Rev. Bart Day (Office of National Mission executive director) has been asked to serve as interim chief mission officer (CMO) during the CMO vacancy; meanwhile, the Rev. John Fale (associate executive director of Mercy Operations



The Rev. Steven Sutterer, a chaplain for Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, Mich., visits with a friend of a patient in that hospital.

and religious endorser for SPM and Ministry to the Armed Forces) has been asked to increase his responsibilities by taking on designated ministries that are under the oversight of the CMO. The Rev. Joel Hempel was asked to step up and serve as interim director of SPM, and the Rev. Bill Engfehr has agreed to serve under contract and give leadership to Emergency Services Chaplaincy (ESC) during the same interim time period.

## Presenters Needed

We are looking for presenters for future SPM Educational Events, workshops and/or videotaped topics of interest for our webpage. So, what subject matter or topics do you know well and would like to teach? We are interested in material that is based on credible knowledge, sound in biblical truth and readily applicable to our ministries. Please contact the SPM office if you have an idea or suggestion. Also let us know if there is something relating to SPM that you want to learn!



## Reminders

### Annual Report Due

For everyone who is ecclesiastically endorsed in SPM, our annual report is due to the SPM office no later than Jan. 15, 2015. The link to the annual report form is on our webpage. Also on our webpage under “Resources” is a description of peer review.

Note: Retired specialized pastoral ministers who remain active in SPM are also to submit an annual report, but they only need to record 10 contact hours per year of continuing education and complete a peer review once every three years. Ecclesiastically endorsed emergency services chaplains (most of whom are volunteers) are expected to submit 10 hours of continuing education and present themselves in a biennial peer review as part of their annual report.

For more details, see the annual report form and/or contact the SPM office.

### Zion XVI in '16

LCMS SPM is hosting the 2016 triennial Zion Conference, and it will likely be in October. The planning committee is just getting organized and the location is soon to be nailed down. Both the ELCA and NALC will have representation on the planning committee. The chairman is the Rev. Jeffery Scheer, ACPE Supervisor with Lutheran Senior Services in St. Louis. His email address is [jscheer@lssliving.org](mailto:jscheer@lssliving.org). Although the theme has not yet been determined, it will be the eve of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation!

### New on the SPM Webpage

1. Ecclesiastical Endorsement Manual (Only a few changes but a great look)
2. Verbatim Outline
3. Step-by-Step Call Process
4. SPM Scholarship Application Form
5. Peer Review Description



## Noteworthy Reports

### SPM Scholarships

Scholarship grant requests are now on a three-times-per-year cycle for consideration by the SPM Scholarship Committee. **The application deadlines are April 1, July 1 and Nov. 1.** The scholarship application form is on the SPM webpage. Committee members include Gayle Truesdell (chairwoman), Jeff McPike and Jim McDaniels.

Grants are funded from the interest earned from the SPM (previously “Give Something Back”) Scholarship Endowment Fund. Requests frequently exceed what is available. When available, scholarship money from the general SPM budget is used. Your contributions to the endowment are needed and appreciated.

In the last round, scholarships were awarded to two applicants. Here’s an expression of appreciation from one of them:

*“I would like to extend a thank you to the SPM Scholarship Fund for its grateful support in granting a scholarship to assist in my tuition for my CPE. As I prepare to begin my fourth unit shortly, I am amazed at how much I have learned about myself and chaplaincy work as I continue to grow in my faith. This has been a great challenge as I am making a change in my ministry and greatly appreciate all the support that has come from the scholarship and the Specialized Pastoral Ministry office itself.” —Kenneth Hessel*

### SPM Advisory Committee

The committee met Oct. 27-28 prior to the SPM Educational Event. In addition to reports, the agenda included a lengthy discussion and brainstorming on how and who to recruit for SPM, as well as on learning opportunities we can create to support you as constituents. Many ideas were voiced on both topics. If you have ideas on how to recruit for SPM, and if you have suggestions for educational and learning opportunities that would be helpful to you, please let us know!

Special thanks to colleagues who served faithfully and completed their term: Russ Helbig, Dale Kuhn and Gayle Truesdell.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

April 20-22, 2015	Health Care Chaplaincy Network Conference <a href="http://healthcarechaplaincy.org">healthcarechaplaincy.org</a>
May 4, 2015	Emergency Services Chaplaincy Day Conference, St. Louis, Mo.
May 5-7, 2015	SPM Educational Event/Retreat, St. Louis, Mo. <a href="http://lcms.org/spm">lcms.org/spm</a>
May 6-9, 2015	ACPE Annual Conference – Atlanta, Ga. <a href="http://acpe.edu">acpe.edu</a>
June 4-7, 2015	APC Annual Conference – Louisville, Ky. <a href="http://professionalchaplains.org">professionalchaplains.org</a>
July 13-17, 2015	International Conference of Police Chaplains <a href="http://icpc4cops.org">icpc4cops.org</a>
Sept. 22-24, 2015	SPM Educational Event/Retreat, Baltimore, Md. <a href="http://lcms.org/spm">lcms.org/spm</a>
Oct. 15-21, 2015	International Congress on Pastoral Care and Counseling <a href="http://aapc.org">aapc.org</a>
Oct. 18-22, 2015	Federation of Fire Chaplains <a href="http://firechaplains.org">firechaplains.org</a>