



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

April 15 – Webinar

"Compassion Fatigue and Burnout"

with the Rev. Dr. Rick Marrs, director of the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) and Residential Alternate Route (RAR) Programs and associate professor of Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
1–2 p.m. CST

May 13 – Webinar

"Leadership Through Conflict"

with the Rev. Mike Moreno (PMHP/PMSW), mental health and marriage counselor
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

Living in Unity

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

Recently I was watching a webinar on church unity and engagement. It got me thinking about the whole concept of working together as the Body of Christ. We, as believers, have an absolutely awesome opportunity from God, who has gathered us together as the Body of Christ. Because He has gathered us together, we are able to do those things that He has called us to do, but that we couldn't do on our own. What pure joy it is to know that He has gathered us in His church to work together to share the love of Christ and His life-saving message! *The Lutheran Study Bible* on Psalm 133 puts it this way: "Living in unity is as soothing as being anointed with oil, as refreshing as dew from the mountains on a parched desert. Descriptions of the goodness and pleasure of unity and brotherhood remind us that we often experience discord, strife, and disunity instead. This is true of our families, our communities, and our churches. Yet Christ's prayer is 'that they may be one, even as We are one.' He bestows that unity through the Holy Spirit in the refreshing waters of Baptism."



In this issue of our newsletter and in our upcoming webinar you'll hear about the mission field all around us. What a great reminder of how we can come together in unity to benefit the community around us through the love of Christ. Imagine what we can accomplish through the God-given unity we have as baptized children of God. When we partner together to connect with the lonely, the dying, the downtrodden and the lost among us, we are exponentially stronger to live out the strong faith and fervent love which God has granted to us. This is our commitment as LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission, to facilitate partnerships and bring forth resources so that together we can "reach rural America for Christ."



Rural & Small Town Mission

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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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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.

Click the Give Now button to support the work of RSTM.

GIVE NOW

Thrivent members: Remember that RSTM is eligible for Thrivent Choice Dollars!



THIS MONTH'S WEBINAR:

The Mission Field Outside Your Door: Serving Christ by Finding and Serving the "Invisible Elderly" in Your Own Small Town and Rural Community

Two years ago, leaders from Iowa's Perry Lutheran Homes (PLH) and Lutheran Family Service (LFS) helped another Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS — Ministry in Mission from Ohio — design, equip and open the first ever elder care home in Jacmel, Haiti. Little did they know this God-led, enlightening experience originally focused on helping frail elderly Haitians would transform the way they looked at elder care in rural areas of Iowa and the United States. How would you answer these questions:

➤ Are there "invisible elders" in your community who need your attention, friendship, support and Gospel witness?

- How would you know?
- Where would you find them?
- What are their needs?
- What can you do?

In this free webinar, listen to the PLH/LFS team tell their story, and consider how your congregation might engage its members, both young and old, to work together to design and implement a fun and important experiment that might not only change you and your entire congregation, but also bring the life-saving Good News of the Gospel to elderly people living in the mission field right outside your door!

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 **Compassion Fatigue and Burnout** on April 15, followed by **Leadership Through Conflict** on May 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. 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 2021!

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