

Reaching Rural America for Christ

A newsletter of LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

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Rural & Small Town Mission

Our "Life Together"

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

Remember: RSTM is eligible for Thrivent Choice Dollars!

Please Pray for These Important Dates

Oct. 18 - Webinar
"Ministry to Inactives"
with Rev. Todd Kollbaum, director,
LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission
1-2 p.m. CST

Nov. 15 - Webinar
"Introducing New Hymns in Small
Congregations" with Rev. William
Weedon, director, LCMS Worship
1-2 p.m. CST

Nov. 8-10
National RSTM Conference
Hilton Kansas City Airport,
Kansas City, Mo.
lcms.org/rstm/conference

If you have an idea or story for Rural Outreach, contact Amy at the RSTM office.

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"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, Setting One-Five, *Lutheran Service Book*).

STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE

It's a Matter of Perspective

I have found, in my years of ministry and in business, that we humans are often very focused on the "how" and for some reason fail to recognize the importance of the "why." Why we are doing something oftentimes has as much or more impact on the thing we are doing as the steps taken to accomplish it. In fact, without ascertaining the proper understanding of the motivation to undergo a certain project or activity, you are often setting yourself up for failure. Miles and miles of print have been produced to tell you how you ought to lose weight, be financially prudent, have better

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JUST SO, I TELL YOU, THERE WILL BE MORE JOY IN HEAVEN OVER ONE SINNER WHO REPENTS THAN OVER NINETY-NINE RIGHTEOUS PERSONS WHO NEED NO REPENTANCE.

— LUKE 15:7

RSTM Events Update

Don't forget: RSTM provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is *Ministry to Inactives* with Rev. Todd Kollbaum on Oct. 18, followed by *Introducing New Hymns in Small Congregations* with Rev. William Weedon on Nov. 15. Find past webinars on our archive. Watch for information on all our upcoming events!

Consider registering for one of our Engaging Your Community events (EYC) or our Engaging the Wandering (ETW) events at lcms.org/rstm. Meant to partner together, each event offers practical resources and skills for reaching out to

wandering members and our communities with Christ's love. Online registration is available for both types of events, and a current date is scheduled in Hastings, Neb., in partnership with the LCMS Nebraska District, on Oct. 6, with more events on the horizon. Contact your district or our office if you are interested in holding an event near you.

Don't forget to pray for the RSTM National Conference!

To see our calendar, visit lcms.org/rstm. Contact our office at 888-463-5127 or rstm@lcms.org.



STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE, *continued*

relationships and on and on and on — yet we spend little time getting to know the motivation behind these activities. We fail to determine the perspective a person has under which these actions take place.

So, instead of enumerating “how” today, we are going to talk about perspective and motivation. These two key components of ministry are often left undiscovered and, when ignored, can have detrimental effects on ministry itself. Specifically, today we are talking about *why* we should undergo a ministry specifically to inactive members of our congregations. Almost everyone agrees that we should do this and that it is a very important part of the outreach work of the local congregation. Since everyone agrees, most folks just dig in and try to figure out how to do it. However, it is of vital importance that we try to get everyone on the same page as to why we should conduct this type of ministry.

For most, if we are being honest, the motivation for a ministry to inactive members would be numbers. If we can just get them back in the pews, they will start contributing their “fair share” and we can have a balanced budget again. While we might not want to admit it, this is an unfortunately accurate assessment. It is proven out in conversations about “giving units” and line items, dead wood and finances. This should not come as much of a surprise. An unfortunate majority of our congregational conversations

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.

Learn more about RSTM at lcms.org/rstm or by calling Amy at 888-463-5127. “Like” us on our Facebook page at facebook.com/lcmsrstm.

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

Give Now



“How comforting, then, would it be to understand that to the local congregation, as to Christ Himself, this person is not just a giving unit but a child of God for whom Christ died and to whom He is reaching out through His Church?”

take place at the level of budget and finance and personal preference. (I’m not talking about all people in all places here but a significant reality that does exist). This perspective and motivation limits our ministry to the realm of conquests and sales rather than wandering and lost souls in need of the healing Gospel.

It is with this in mind that we have an opportunity to change hearts and minds, both inside and outside the church. From within, all ministry endeavors will operate more smoothly when the majority of the congregation is of one mindset. With ministry to wandering sheep, it is imperative. When we keep as our goal the sharing of Christ’s love instead of getting seats in the pews filled, things will go much more smoothly. With budget and finance fixes as our goal, we will only be disappointed and never hit the mark. Yet, regardless of outcome, when we are faithful to Christ’s mission for the Church to share His Gospel, we will always find that we are meeting our intended outcome.

Think, too, from the mind of the one to whom we minister. How valued and loved are you going to feel if you sense that you are nothing more than a conquest, a means to an end? This is often the case even with the best of motives since the Law is working hard upon the heart of the wandering. Their guilt often manifests itself in resistance and opposition. How comforting, then, would it be to understand that to the local congregation, as to Christ Himself, this person is not just a giving unit but a child of God for whom Christ died and to whom He is reaching out through His Church? What a major perspective change on both accounts.

For more information and assistance in these endeavors, please check out our website or give us at LCMS RSTM a call! May God bless you in all of your endeavors in reaching out to the lost, especially those who have wandered away from the church.

Pastor Todd Kollbaum