



# 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

**February 18 – Webinar**  
"Parish Nursing in Rural and Small Towns"  
*with Marcy Schnorr, education consultant for LCMS Parish Nursing and the LCMS Parish Nurse Council*  
1–2 p.m. CST

**March 4 – Webinar**  
"The Mission Field Outside Your Door"  
*with the Rev. Max Phillips and Wanda Pritzel, CEO and director of Perry Lutheran Homes*  
1–2 p.m. CST

**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

"... 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

# The Good Old Days

**In this time of transition** — from one year to the next, from the season of Christmas to the season of Epiphany — we are reminded that nothing on Earth stays the same. I have had the pleasure of working with congregations throughout the years as they planned and strategized, even working with my own congregation now to do the same. Throughout all of those meetings and conversations, one thing always rises to the top: The past was always golden and it is always seen as better than our present.

Nostalgia can be wonderful, and it serves us well to remember the good of the past and build upon it. However, these are just memories, and there is really no way to recreate the past in our present circumstance. But what we can do is look forward — look at our present circumstance and consider what work there is that God is calling us to do now and into the future.

As I was pondering this, I couldn't help but think of the words of the great Epiphany hymn "As with Gladness Men of Old." Here in the lyrics we are reminded



that God is with us just as He was in days of old, and that just as He kept His people and guided them, so too He does for us!

As with gladness men of old  
Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
Leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious Lord, may we  
Evermore be led by Thee.

*(continued on page 2)*

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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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## How to Subscribe

To subscribe to *Reaching Rural America for Christ*, contact the RSTM office by calling 888-463-5127 or sending an email to [rstm@lcms.org](mailto:rstm@lcms.org).

## 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!



## Good Old Days, continued

As with joyful steps they sped,  
 Savior, to Thy lowly bed,  
 There to bend the knee before  
 Thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;  
 So may we with willing feet  
 Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare  
 At Thy cradle, rude and bare,  
 So may we with holy joy,  
 Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
 All our costliest treasures bring,  
 Christ, to Thee, our heav'nly King.

Holy Jesus, ev'ry day  
 Keep us in the narrow way;  
 And when earthly things are past,  
 Bring our ransomed souls at last  
 Where they need no star to guide,  
 Where no clouds Thy glory hide.

In the heav'nly country bright  
 Need they no created light;  
 Thou its light, its joy, its crown,  
 Thou its sun which goes not down;  
 There forever may we sing  
 Alleluias to our King. (LSB 397)

## THIS MONTH'S WEBINAR:

### Life Ministry Overview

Rural and small-town communities are on the front lines of sanctity of human life issues. In these places, Lutherans are witnessing to the God-given value of all human life as the Lord's creation, and sharing Christ's love and mercy with their vulnerable neighbors. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) Office of National Mission supports the efforts of thousands of people in the church who are passionate and engaged in pro-life efforts through LCMS Life Ministry.

An upcoming LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission webinar on Jan. 7, 1–2 p.m. Central time will feature a conversation on life issues with Deaconess Tiffany Manor, director of LCMS Life Ministry. Attend the webinar to meet Deaconess Manor and learn how the people involved in LCMS Life Ministry speak up for human life, care for human life and teach people of all ages about the God-given value of life.

## 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 **Parish Nursing in Rural and Small Towns** on Feb. 18, followed by **The Mission Field Outside Your Door** on March 4. 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](http://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 2020!

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