

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

Feb. 21 – Webinar

"Reaching Young Women: LWML" with Kaye Wolff, vice-president of Special Focus Ministries, LWML
1–2 p.m. CST

March 7 – Webinar

"Raising Young Leaders and the Lutheran Young Adult Corps" with Julianna Shults, DCE, program manager, Special Ministries-Lutheran Young Adult Corps (LCMS Youth Ministry)
1–2 p.m. CST

April 11 – Webinar

"Community Engagement" with the Rev. Dr. Keith Schweitzer, pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Greenfield, Ia.
1–2 p.m. CST

STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE

Celebrating Young Leaders

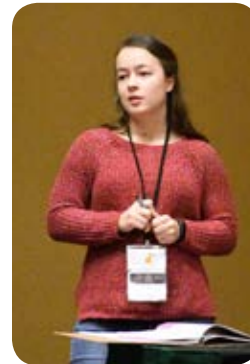
All too often, we hear people complaining about how just how inept, uninvolved, lazy, apathetic and so on the younger generation is today. We opine about our desire for the days when the next generation will pick up the mantle of leadership and carry on our organizations into the future. "If only they would just [insert action of choice]."

While this opinion might be true in some instances, it certainly isn't true in all of them. In fact, in the past year I have seen it taken to task on more than one occasion. There is one such example I'd like to share with you here.

At the 2018 LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission National Mission Conference, we had the great privilege of having two atypical young ladies, Tori Ritzma and Malaina Pitsch, present a youth leadership track for our attendees. This six-session educational offering was provided to equip youth and youth leaders to better engage each other and those around them. This series was entitled "Speaking the Truth in Love: Youth." Tori and Malaina, both seniors at Saint Paul High School in Concordia, Mo., prepared by attending a leadership training event facilitated by LCMS Youth Ministry. This multi-day training equipped youth from around the nation to use their leadership skills to "speak the truth in love" within their congregations and communities. These young ladies then facilitated their own training event with senior peers at a retreat sponsored by St. Paul's Lutheran Church Youth Fellowship. In all these events, participants were guided through sessions that focused on understanding worldviews as well as sharpening communication skills to better share the love of Christ with others.

This youth-focused track, led by youth, will be an ongoing addition to RSTM's National Conference, which will allow for training of youth from around the Synod so they can bring this type of leadership to their own areas. We encourage you to join us in 2019 with your youth and leadership. Thanks be to God for our these and other youth leaders whose love of Christ compels them to equip others!

Pastor Todd Kollbaum



Tori Ritzma (left) and Malaina Pitsch (right) presented at the 2018 National RSTM Conference.



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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 Amy Gerdts at the RSTM office.

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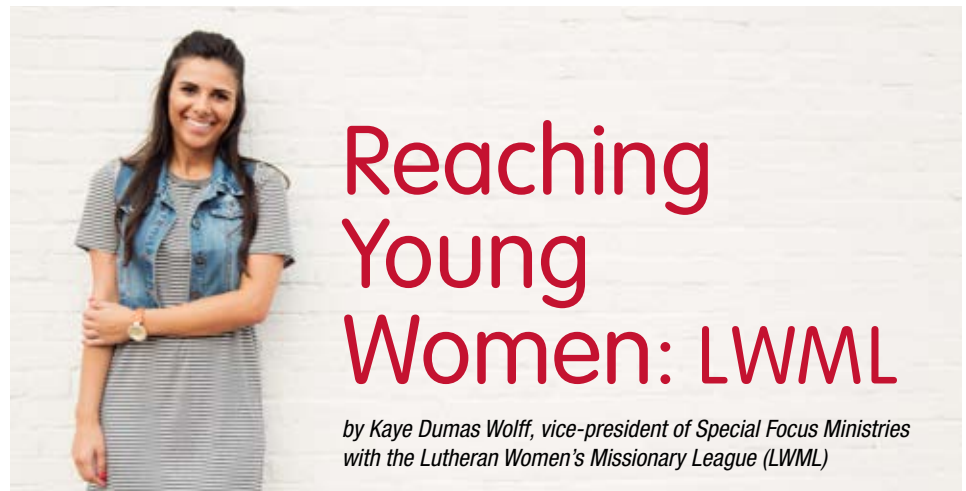
Support This Work

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!



Have you ever planned an event hoping that young women would attend? Or have you ever wondered, “Why don’t young women want to help out around the church?”

If you have asked these questions, think on this:

“And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Luke 11:9).

I attended a youth adult workshop and was given statistics on millennials. I talked to about 30 young women in seven districts for the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML), and the conversation was a bit different. I made it personal. When you build relationships, people feel you care about them, and they become invested in a whole new way.

We sometimes think that we have all the right answers and our way is the best way. Have you recently said, “We have always done it that way?” Then think on this:

“I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13).

Yes, you can change or at least learn that there are other ways of achieving favorable results. Perhaps the secret to reaching anyone is to be open to new ideas and ways of doing things. This is not to say that we should try change those things that are meant to be unchanging; our Lord has promised us that He is steadfast and eternal. However, when it comes to our events, we should be open and flexible. Perhaps, in addition to asking why young women don’t want to help out around church, have you asked yourself, “Are we meeting their needs or giving them opportunities that work for their lifestyle?”

The webinar presentation “Reaching Young Women: LWML” will help you in your outreach to the young women in your parish and community.

The answer is, “The time is NOW.” Tune in to the webinar for the question.

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 **Reaching Young Women: LWML** on Feb. 21. It will be followed by **Raising Young Leaders and the Lutheran Young Adult Corps** on March 7. Find past webinars in our archive and watch for information on all our upcoming events!

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. Online registration is available for both types of events. Contact your district or our office if you are interested in holding an event near you. Look for upcoming announcements about the 2019 National RSTM Conference!

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