

REACHING RURAL AMERICA for CHRIST

RURAL AND 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

March 22 • Webinar

RST Social Networking Strategies:
Sarah Gudalian, LHM, Mission U.

March 24

Engaging Rural Communities Event:
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
St. John Lutheran Church, Easton, Kan.

May 12

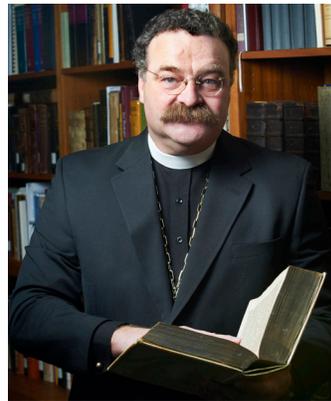
Engaging Rural Communities Event:
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
St. John Lutheran Church (Bingen), Decatur, Ind.

If you have an idea or story for Rural Outreach, contact Amy at the RSTM office: 888-463-5127 amy.gerds@lcms.org

National RSTM Conference

By the fall of 2012, Rural and Small Town Mission will have offered more than a dozen events to help congregations in rural and small town settings reach their communities. These events have been very well received and will have taken place in at least 10 different districts. The most recent event in Perryville, Mo., had people attending from 14 congregations from three districts.

The monthly webinars allow Rural and Small Town Mission to connect with people from across the country who have not been able to attend one of our events. The e-news and newsletter lists continue to grow. *Lutheran Witness* and *Reporter* articles reveal the



Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison

interest across the Synod in support for rural and small town congregations.

Building on this momentum, we are pleased to announce that we will be hosting a National Rural and Small Town Mission Conference Nov. 1-3 at Kings Pointe Resort in Storm Lake, Iowa. Please put those dates

on your calendar! More information will be forthcoming in our newsletter and on our website.

The conference will feature LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison as one of the plenary speakers. The conference will address a host of topics affecting rural and small town congregations.

Whether you watch our webinars, support our work with your gifts, or have attended one of our events, we hope that you will be able to attend the National Conference this November! To keep up-to-date with developments, go to <http://www.lcms.org/rstm>. For more information or to email us at the office: amy.gerds@lcms.org.

Upcoming Webinars

The RSTM webinar schedule has been planned through the end of the year. We are excited to be bringing you timely and helpful topics that are geared for single and multi-point parishes in rural and small town settings that help congregational leaders to examine their communities and consider ways in which they can serve the unique needs of their particular communities.

Up next is **RST Social Networking Strategies** by Sarah Gudalian, LHM MissionU, from 1 to 2 p.m. on March 22.

Following will be **Introducing New Hymns in a Small Church** by Rev. William Weedon on April 19 and **Ministry to Inactives** by Rev. Dr. Lee Hagan, RSTM, on May 24. Contact us for a link if you want to participate.

If you would like to know more about the rest of our upcoming webinars visit:

www.lcms.org/rstm
or contact Amy
at 1-888-463-5127 or
amy.gerds@lcms.org



We're on the Web: www.lcms.org/rstm

RURAL AND SMALL TOWN MISSION E-NEWSLETTER • MARCH 2012

Youth Ministry and Partnerships

It seems that every congregation we talk to is excited about youth ministry. Everyone agrees that we want our young people to be active, involved members of our churches. However, we also seem to agree that we aren't always sure how to make that happen.

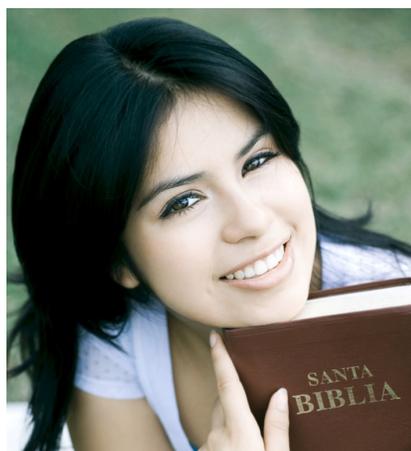
Many congregations work hard to have successful youth ministry programs. While many churches do achieve excellence, some congregations have also found ways to use their youth in their outreach efforts.

LCMS Rural and Small Town Mission (RSTM) had the chance to visit with a couple from rural Missouri who are passionate about youth and outreach possibilities. As a result, they have been doing exciting things with their youth group. We want to pass these great ideas along to you.

At Immanuel Lutheran Church in Rosebud, Mo., lay leaders Jim and Carol Meyer shared that their youth group has a yearly objective. This year it's *Serve God by Serving Others*, based on Romans 1:16.

The Meyers are big advocates of Ongoing Ambassadors For Christ. It has helped their youth group be able to verbalize, "Why we believe what we believe."

All through the summer, Jim leads an all day Wednesday Bible study.



You might be wondering, "How does he manage to get kids to stay for the whole day?" Jim and Carol spend a lot of time with the kids to build good relationships, plus they spend time teaching them how to serve.

The day starts at 9 a.m. with small group Bible study, then the kids visit at a nursing home, do some entertaining of the residents, break for a sack lunch or one of the parents will provide lunch, more Bible study, and finally around 3 or 4 p.m. they finish off the afternoon with some swimming.

Jim likes to bring a watermelon as an afternoon treat. These activities aren't just for the youth . . . parents are always welcome, as they are trying to keep the parents as involved as possible.

The Meyers have also found it's good to give the kids responsibility sometimes. One example was the lock-in the junior high youth planned and put on for the first-fourth graders. Right now, the youth group is planning a trip to the Creation Museum. This is going to be a family trip, because they want to get the whole family—parents and kids—into God's Word.

Recently, the Meyer's church (Immanuel, Rosebud) and Trinity, New Haven, Bethlehem, New Haven, and St. Paul, Union, Mo., were able

to plan a retreat weekend they called "Word vs. World – Dating, Courtship, and Finding a Spouse." Using material from Higher Things and a theme from Ephesians 5, parents and 43 young people from sixth–12th grade spent time talking about relationships. The last afternoon, the students were divided into small groups to listen to different married couples talk about their 50 years of shared life experience.

If your church is looking for youth resources or partnership possibilities, you might consider Octane Ministry. Octane offers direction and advice for small or struggling youth ministries, along with training, resources, support and an online community. They connect and network churches, equipping leaders of all ages with the tools and support necessary to find the right players and right strategy to build a healthy, sustainable, intentional, relational, faith building youth ministry within their congregation and network using the "Octane Solution."

Octane Ministry is an LCMS Recognized Service Organization in the Michigan District. To find out more about this ministry, go to www.octaneministry.com or call 586-799-2316.

LCMS Rural and Small Town Mission supports and encourages rural and small-town congregations in engaging their communities and growing together in Christ through Word and Sacrament.

If you have a good idea for outreach or a story you'd like to share with us, so that we can share it with others, please contact us at amy.gerdt@lcms.org.

Learn more about us at www.lcms.org/rstm or by calling Amy at 888-463-5127.