

Reaching Rural America for Christ

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. 6, 8 a.m.–3 p.m.

Engaging Rural

Communities Event,

St. Luke Lutheran

Church, San Jose, Ill.

Oct. 11 • Webinar

Redefining the Graying Church Renea Gernant, Ph.D., a specialist in communication and aging studies

Nov. 8 • Webinar

Christmas Outreach Rev. Mark Larson, Lutheran Hour Ministries

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

Teaching the Faith

Great teachers of the Word of God are first and foremost diligent students of that Word. In one of his Table Talks, Martin Luther said, "The Holy Scriptures require a humble reader who shows reverence and fear toward the Word of God and constantly says, 'Teach me, teach me, teach me!"

The study of the Scriptures is not a subject to be mastered through diligence and discipline. The Scriptures are not just a collection of teachings or historical data. In his preface to the New Testament, Luther writes, "To know his [Christ's] works and the things that happened to him is not yet to know the true gospel, for you do not yet thereby know that he has overcome sin, death, and the devil. So, too, it is not yet knowledge of the gospel when you know these doctrines and commandments, but only when the voice comes that says, 'Christ is your own, with

his life, teaching, works, death and resurrection, and all that he is, has, does and can do."

The starting place for all teachers of the Scriptures is to be faithful in the hearing and study of God's Word, to be able to rightly

distinguish Law and Gospel. Only those who can join with St. Peter in saying "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68 ESV) can teach this Word of life.

The laypeople of the church are struggling with an erosion of biblical knowledge on one hand and the challenge to resist being conformed to the pattern of this world on the other. There is a tremendous need for faithful teaching of adults and equipping of parents



to be able to teach the faith in the home. Our families today need the solid teaching of the Scriptures on issues such as marriage, the sanctity of life, the nature and content of saving faith, and Pontius Pilate's age-old question, "What is truth?" The importance of the study of God's Word, led by pastors, church professionals or thoroughly equipped laypeople cannot be overstated. May God guide and bless all teachers and students of His Word!

RSTM Webinar Update

Rural and Small Town
Mission provides free monthly
webinars on topics important
to congregations located in
town and country settings.
We will be wrapping up 2012
with a Christmas Outreach
Webinar presented by Rev.
Mark Larson, Lutheran Hour
Ministries, on Thursday,

Nov. 8, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., and a Family Ministry Webinar presented by Ben Freudenberg, DCE, Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Mich., on Thursday, Dec. 6 from 1 p.m. to 2 p. m.

When you need them, you can find all our past webinars at our webinar archive on

our website. They are a free resource.

If you wish to participate, or would like to know more about the rest of our calendar, visit www.lcms.org/rstm or contact Amy at 1-888-463-5127, or amy.gerdts@lcms.org, or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/LCMSRSTM.



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eNewsletter | November 2012

Where two or more are gathered ... in two places?

ne of the joys for pastors serving dual parishes (or partnerships) is the opportunity to gather with the saints at each congregation for Divine Service. However, multipoint parishes also present the challenge of how to provide Bible-study opportunities for adults when the pastor is busy travelling from one parish to another.

Many young pastors, fresh out of the seminary, find themselves trying to keep a schedule that prevents them from being able to teach Sunday morning Bible class. So how can pastors and congregations develop workable solutions that meet their unique needs? It depends on everything from the distance between the congregations to the abilities of lay leaders to the technological resources and talents available.

The Kansas District, like many others, has a number of multipoint parishes. The pastors serving these congregations utilize a variety of solutions to the challenge.

Rev. Dennis Fangmeyer, who serves St. John, Nashville, and Trinity, Medicine Lodge, has lay leaders who teach the

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.gerdts@lcms.org.

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



Sunday morning adult Bible classes at each congregation. Pastor Fangmeyer leads Sunday and Wednesday evening Bible studies and alternates periodically which Bible study is on Sunday and which is on Wednesday.

St. John's and St. Paul's Lutheran Churches in Lincoln are served by Rev. Matthew Schneider. These congregations also offer lay-led Bible studies, making use of DVD-based studies with helpful leaders guides.

Rev. Adam Reichart, who serves Immanuel, Hoxie, is also serving Grace, Hill City, on a temporary basis. Pastor Reichart is using Skype to "broadcast" his Bible study from one site to the other so that he can lead the study in both places.

Many pastors and congregations are looking for training resources to assist adult Bible-study leaders. Some are looking for additional studies and resources that can be easily led by laypeople. In addition to resources from Concordia Publishing House, some congregations have used studies from Lutheran Hour Ministries' Men's Network, as well as video-based studies by Dr. Paul Maier, available from Lutheran Visuals.

This is the type of issue that is good for congregations working in partnership to

discuss together. How are service times determined? How does the schedule serve the needs of each congregation? In what way is the schedule sensitive to the pastoral care that is provided by the pastor at the church door on Sunday morning? (Or is he rushing off each week to reach the other congregation?)

When congregations that share a pastor meet together for these types of discussions, it helps to build a sense of partnership and commitment to one another and to the pastor. Solutions may not be easy, but it is an important step for congregations to work together to decide how to meet the spiritual needs of the congregations rather than just deciding how much of the pastor's salary each church can afford to pay.

May God bless your partnership in the Gospel as you work together and explore new ways in which the Word of God can be taught to strengthen the saints of your congregations!