



REACHING RURAL AMERICA FOR CHRIST

RURAL & SMALL TOWN MISSION

OUR "LIFE TOGETHER"

- To follow the core beliefs of the LCMS
- To bring the hope of Christ
- To equip rural Professional and Lay Leaders
- To be a Mission outpost to the community.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THESE IMPORTANT DATES:

District Rural Task Forces
6/30—MNN; 8/30 MO

7/22-23 Rural Regional Mission Partnership Retreat—Hwy 200
Regional Ministry; Underwood, Hazen, McClusky, ND

7/29-30 Rural Regional Mission Partnership Retreat—Grace/Faith Partnership Ministry; Pleasanton/Hazard, NE

8/19-20 Rural Regional Mission Partnership Retreat—St. John's Lutheran Church, Lincoln, KS

WHAT IS AN RRMP RETREAT?

We have been created to be in community. Our lives are not meant to be lived alone. We have been created by a relational God to live "Life Together" in relationship with others, as a family. **Be encouraged to build regional relationships by attending a RRMP retreat!** Some 800 LCMS congregations are living "Life Together" in Rural Regional Mission Partnerships in the USA. RSTM observes that a regional ministry is strengthened by encouraging the family of believers to invite their friends and neighbors to weekly Bible studies. These Bible studies focus on inner level rural cultural points, engagement and relationships. These Bible stories are stepping-stones for change

from the inside out. **Bible study only brings about change on the basis of God's Word and prayer!** Ministry of "Life Together" uses a leadership style of collaboration through the whole church. It engages in



Missionary Ralph Geisler

"mutual ministry", recognizing others gifts, and values relationships. **Most importantly, we seek out those Congregational Missional Strengths we may have overlooked and new opportunities we didn't even real-**

ize existed. RSTM is designed to show mercy and care for people (all nations) living "Life Together" in rural & small town regions in such a way that they witness the presence of Jesus. **Follow up mentors are selected and equipped from the congregations.** Regional partnership "Life Together" stories provide insights and challenge, as examples of the new perspective that transformation can be gained by changing past understandings of culture. **Stories are not seen as pointing to a "one-size-fits-all" method for districts or congregations to follow.** **Send us your story! New Retreats continue to be scheduled! Register today!** Ruralmission@spife.org

GET INVOLVED!

Give your gift to enable rural small town congregations to be more effective mission outposts to their communities. ~ Luke 19:10
Transform the spirits of church workers, lay leaders & congregations within the

rural small town culture.
~ Romans 12:2
Experience the joy of seeing the Great Commission strengthened in a changing & very challenging rural small town American culture.
~ Matthew 28:18-20

Connect & share through stories & conferences.
~ Philippians 2:1-4
Pray, celebrate, recognize, & thank professionals & lay leaders for their passion & support for congregational outreach.
~ Colossians 1:9-14

TWO CONGREGATIONS BECOME ONE WORSHIP CENTER

For I know the plans I have you, declares the Lord, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me." Jeremiah 29:11-13a ESV

How do two congregations become one? Does it have to be a "hostile takeover" or can it be for the growth and good of all? This story of a community in rural Minnesota gives hope that God's plans are always for the best. With the establishment of the Bullert Memorial Endowment Fund in the late 1990s, the congregations of Immanuel and Trinity in the Minnesota North district began to discuss the possibility of coming to-



gether as one. After years of prayer, meetings, fellowship, and work, in the summer of 2009 ground was broken for the construction of a new church building to house a single congregation. In 2010, the sale of the church buildings in Ogema, MN and Callaway, MN was completed and God led the people of the congregations of Immanuel and Trinity Lutheran into a consolidation that is becoming more harmonious as the days go by. The congregations were led on this journey by their earthly shepherd, Rev. Del Stohs to become one congregation named Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church of Callaway, MN. Over the course of the year the building phase of the church building for Beautiful Savior



proceeded toward completion also. This was not always a smooth journey. At one point, buyers for the Trinity building lost their funding. Other details, such as heating Beautiful Savior during the construction phase had to be planned for. The members were determined, and with God's guidance, came up plans to pay for these



Like many churches, Beautiful Savior relies on the help of volunteers

unexpected costs. God raised up leaders like Chairman Roy Pinske, whose experience consolidating grain elevators helped lead the congregations. Again and again, the theme was stressed that help would be needed from both congregations for the events to be successful. By the April 2010 Joint Council Meeting the "Agreement of Merger and Consolidation" was



Attending an RSTM training session at Beautiful Savior

read, and signatures of Immanuel's and Trinity's chairmen and secretaries were requested on the document. Approximately a week later, the congregation officially became Beautiful Savior.



Pastor Del Stohs and lay leaders

The next process then began with the adopting of a constitution and by-laws. In May, 2010 Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church held its first Voters Assembly with 70 members present to approve borrowing funds from LCEF to finish enough of the work on Beautiful Savior to allow the congregation to move into the building. LCEF was represented by George Mueller over the months as he explained the details, how the loan would be repaid, and worked



Time in Bible study is important for all members

closely with the congregation to handle the loan process. Throughout the process of establishing the new congregation the Minnesota North district made itself available for guidance and assistance. In July, 2010 when the time came to finalize paperwork, some minor constitution and

TWO BECOME ONE CONT.

by-law changes were requested and MNN district was able to guide the congregation through this process.

The congregation was able to honor their past by using stain glass windows from Immanuel in the Beautiful Savior building and helped keep costs down by moving the Immanuel sound system also. September 19, 2010, was the last worship at the old Callaway site and on September 26th the first worship service in the new facilities at Beautiful Savior took place. October was a busy month of firsts for the new church building as they saw the first funeral, the first baptism, the election of first officers, and the installation of Rev. Del Stohs as the first pastor of the congregation. On October 10 they held the dedication for Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church.



Immanuel's stained glass in the Beautiful Savior church

But the Word of God increased and multiplied. Acts 12:24 ESV

Seventeen new members were accepted in to membership in December. Throughout the year the congregation had 10 baptisms, 2 confirmations, and 3 funerals. In 2011 the elders are working on a mission statement for Beautiful Savior. The ladies of the congregation have formed a cleaning committee to do the janitor job for the duration of the year. A new directory is being considered. With many thanks to God for a large endowment fund and generous contributions from others to

help finance the building project, the amount that is owed by the congregation today is very small.



This has allowed them to concentrate on other things besides a building and how to pay for it. Now with the help of God and leadership from their pastor, the congregation is looking for ways to reach out to their community. In order to do this, they have made it a priority to get training for their leadership. They have done this with the help of Rural & Small Town Mission, alongside of the MNN District. After several personal visits with Dr. Geisler, Beautiful Savior decided to host a Rural Regional Mission Partnership Retreat on April 15-16, 2011. The LCMS National Rural & Small Town Mission in Concordia, MO under the direction of missionary, Dr. Ralph Geisler, serves as the national resource center shar-



MNN district rep, Rev. Rick Hans has been very involved in connecting Rural & Small Town Mission and Beautiful Savior

ing outreach strategies and ministry possibilities. Congregations and lay leaders are strengthened

to fulfill the Great Commission in their region (Matthew 28:18-20) through on-site visits from Dr. Geisler or by attending equipping events at Rural & Small Town Mission on the campus of Saint Paul Lutheran High School & Ministries. Each experience equips leaders of all ages and backgrounds by providing them with tools to help incorporate the Gospel into a life equipped for outreach. (2 Timothy 3:14)

The congregation's other goals



The Rural Regional Mission Partnership Retreat hosted by Beautiful Savior.

include establishing a youth committee, an Altar Guild, a music/worship study group, beginning officer training, establishing new Bible studies, and encouraging participation in Mary & Martha and Men's Club. For two years it seemed as though the efforts of the people were toward the building of the physical church. However, a simple look at the growth through new members shows that outreach and spiritual building continued through the time of physical building. Now they have a building and the people who will be there with the help of God to further His work here on earth.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

2 Corinthians 5:1 NIV

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.SPIFE.ORG



Let us go to the small towns...
Mark 1:38

**RURAL & SMALL TOWN
MISSION - SPIFE**

Saint Paul Institute for Education
Schroeder Memorial Leadership Center
205 S Main PO Box 719
Concordia, MO 64020

Phone: 888-463-5127
E-mail: ruralmission@spife.org
www.spife.org
LCMS "Life Together"

Non-Profit
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit 25
Mailed from
Zip Code
64020

Let us go to the small towns... Mark 1:38

MISSIONARY'S MESSAGE—DR. RALPH GEISLER

We give God glory for all of you! RSTM is looking forward to "Life Together" in the LCMS Mission Journey. We thank you for your daily prayers and generous financial support. Since 2000, the Board of Trustees for Saint Paul Lutheran High School & Ministries-Saint Paul Institute for Education (SPIFE) has provided outstanding in-kind support services for serving LCMS districts and congregations. I am privileged to serve SPIFE as the resource center for rural and small town congregations. As a missionary-church leader-I often feel I'm in the midst of converging streams, trying as a catalyst to sort out the flowing rivers of change. Through prayer and study of God's Word, I have found these important principles: **Acknowledge that this is the Lord's church.** Remember the church facilities were dedicated to the Lord and His mission, not to

the members and their comfort. **Know the region/community.** Study the demographics before you make a decision. God has brought the world to our doorstep. God is asking us to get involved. **Get to know your neighbors.** The church is about relationships: people listening, learning, caring, helping, and sharing with other people—not just people like us, but "all nations." **Be ready for change.** Understand that when you, like the apostles, step in the mission field things are going to change. This helps us depend upon God for answers and solutions to mission challenges. **Avoid "us and them" syndrome.** As you share facilities, also share ministry. See your ministries as one ministry. **Pastors and leaders should meet regularly.** The pastors and leaders will be a catalyst for unity. Become a model for others to follow.

Worship and celebrate together. On special occasions, 2 to 3 times a year, hold joint worship services. Have several fellowship opportunities for the region/community. **Be patient.** The primary goal of rural regional mission partnership is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those in the region/community. Become a mission outpost. **Pray that the Holy Spirit will "transform the spirits of church workers, lay leaders, and congregations within the rural & small town culture."** (Rom. 12:2)

