



REACHING RURAL AMERICA FOR CHRIST

R U R A L & S M A L L T O W N M I S S I O N

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:

12/25 -Christmas
Celebrate the birth of our Lord

5/9/12-Connecting with Rural & Small Town Placed Seminary Candidates
Ft. Wayne, IN

5/10/12-Connecting with Rural & Small Town Placed Seminary Candidates
St. Louis, MO

Christmas Outreach Ideas

During the Christmas and Advent season we have so many opportunities for outreach we are sometimes overwhelmed by them all. Sometimes we forget what we are doing is supposed to be outreach and start thinking of it as "our" tradition. Try taking a look at the things you have always done and see how you can open that up to bring in those who have not had the opportunity to hear about Christ. Many of our churches host Advent dinners, so consider issuing invitations to the community to join you for the meal. Make people feel welcome, show them where the restrooms are, and invite them to sit with you during the worship services. Make sure they feel like one of

the family! Consider hosting a "Happy Birthday, Jesus!" party for all the community children. Have



cake, sing "Happy Birthday to Jesus," do games and crafts, tell the *Reason for the Season* often and in many ways, but don't forget to invite these little ones and their families to come back and join you again. If you have a Mid-week program, try involving the Mid-week children in the Christmas program if you don't already do that. You

might host an Advent Fair where you pass out Advent devotions and use the time to equip the families who attend on how to do the devotions. But don't just pass them out. Show them how to do it! Spend some time modeling and show them some resources like advent wreaths, children's nativities and calendars. Have a Giving Tree at church where people can choose a gift to give to a needy family. Of course, there is always Christmas caroling. This old favorite is loved by all. Be sure to go by the houses of people who might be looking for a church to call home too! We are missionaries wherever we go! Contact RSTM at Ruralmission@spife.org

Welcome to RSTM E-News

This time of year is the one time that the name of Christ is seemingly on the lips of everyone as Christmas carols are heard on store speakers and Nativity sets and Christmas cards are found on every shelf. This is also a time when Lutheran churches can reach out into

their community with the message of the Word made flesh who came among us. We hope that this first monthly electronic edition of our newsletter will provide your congregation with ideas for engaging your community in the future. Our next e-news edition will feature the

exciting plans of Rural & Small Town Mission for next year. Watch for that newsletter in early 2012. We ask that you keep the work of rural mission in your prayers and encourage you to contact us with your outreach ideas at 888-463-5127 or ruralmission@spife.org



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

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

Live Nativity is a Free Gift

For the last four years the congregations of First Trinity Lutheran Church, Bloomfield, NE and Golgotha Lutheran Church, Wausa, NE have worked together under the direction of Rev.



Duane Fahr to present a live nativity for their community. This year the event takes place on Sunday, November 20th. Because of the huge response in past years, the congregation has gone to two showings at 2 and 5p.m. To hold this huge production and the large crowd it draws, the congregations rent the nearby Harm and Tulleys Event Center, located on the Knox County Fairgrounds, in Bloomfield, NE for the entire week.

This year's theme is "Watch the Lamb" and starts with a father reading the Christmas story to his young daughter in their living



room. From there the story progresses to the shepherds fields, the manger, the angel chorus, **the Wise Men's journey, and**

continues to the Easter story with a climax of the actor as Jesus carrying his cross, and the empty tomb. The program concludes with singing of Christmas carols in a candlelight setting. The story is told narrator style with a joint choir, soloist, duets and trios, and a cast of over 50 church members acting. Live animals are used, including donkeys, horses, cows, and sheep. Putting on a production this size takes more effort than the actors and choir members though, and well over 100 volunteers are utilized to make this nativity happen. Church members of all **ages get involved ...from the babies** that are recruited to play the part of the infant Jesus each year to the 70-somethings that are in



the angel choir and shepherd crew. Last time around, the little **one playing "Baby Jesus" had her grandpa** as one of the Wiseman. What makes this event so special is the **group's decision** to make it a completely free gift to all who attend. They consider it a privilege to share the love of Jesus with all who watch. There is no ticket cost and no free will offering. Each year, First Trinity and Golgotha promote and advertise their event, encouraging everyone to bring their families to

enjoy a great afternoon of Christian fellowship and love. They have looked at this event through the eyes of outreach, and constructed it with that in mind. The crowd is actively engaged and asked to participate in the program, and each year there is a free gift for every family to take home. One year the gift was a Christmas card, another year it was Lutheran Hour Ministry **"What Is Christmas?" pamphlets**, and probably the most popular gift was a CD of Christmas music made and played by the church organist. First Trinity and Golgotha also try to make people feel welcome by serving complementary cookies, hot chocolate, and coffee to warm up in the chilly weather. This welcoming atmosphere seems to be working as more than 50% of the attendees are from outside the congregation. Some of them have even said this event has become their Christmas kick-off! You can reach Pastor Fahr

ftlc@apcom.net or Pastor Adam Salinas adaminas@yahoo.com for more info on the nativity. If you have an idea for outreach to share, contact LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission at 888-463-5127 or ruralmission@spife.org



Many people mingling and enjoying the fellowship after the live nativity.