



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

April 9 • Webinar

Introducing Hymns in Small Churches
Rev. William Weedon,
LCMS Director of
Worship

May 8 and May 9

Seminary events
St. Louis, Mo., and Fort
Wayne, Ind.

May 12

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

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

National Conference Update

Rural and Small Town Mission is pleased to announce that it will host the National Rural and Small Town Mission Conference Nov. 1-3, 2012, at King's Pointe Resort in Storm Lake, Iowa. We hope you will put those dates on your calendar and plan on joining us there!

Building on the theme, *In Christ for Church and World: Witness, Mercy, Life Together*, the conference will feature Luther Snow, creator and developer of Asset Mapping; LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison; Rev. Bart Day, Executive Director of the Office of National Mission; and Rev. Dr. Lee Hagan, Interim Director RSTM as plenary speakers.

Participants will also be able to choose from

break out topics including youth and family ministry, funding and stewardship, rural resources, and many other topics affecting our rural and small town congregations.

The National Conference is geared for congregational leaders from all rural and small town settings. While there is no "one size fits all" solution, participants will be encouraged as they see new opportunities for engaging their communities and are filled with hope for the future. Fellowship and discussion with others who have also been placed in this unique mission field will be invaluable too!

Registration is

\$200/person and will be available online through our website after April 15. Whether you watch our webinars, support our work with your gifts, or have ever attended one of our events, we hope that you will be able to attend the National Conference this November 1-3! To keep up to date with developments, go to <http://www.lcms.org/rstm> for more information or email us at the office at amy.gerdts@lcms.org.



Upcoming RSTM Events

RSTM is excited to bring 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 the webinar *Introducing New Hymns*

in a Small Church by Rev. William Weedon on April 19.

In May, RSTM will be visiting both seminaries to spend time with the pastoral candidates who have been called to rural and small town settings. These events will be followed up with video conferences to continue to support the new pastors in their parishes. Please

contact us if you wish to participate in one of our events or if you would like to know more about the rest of our upcoming calendar:

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



Let's Go to the Fair!

As the weather gets warmer, the thoughts of people all across America turn to corn dogs, funnel cakes, parades, carnivals and outreach.

Wait, did we say outreach? YES! State, county and local fairs are a wonderful time to reach out to others with Jesus' love. Not only do we have an opportunity to touch the visitors to our community, we also have the chance to reconnect with neighbors, old acquaintances, and family who may not have a church home.

In Seward, Neb., they like using Project Connect from Lutheran Hour Ministries as a great connection point for local county fairs. Rev. Scott Bruick, St. John's Lutheran Church, says they take out their stand and have it available, along with a couple give-aways like a new Bible, kids devotional sets and DVD sets.

For the last several years St. Paul Lutheran Church, Concordia, Mo., has hosted a meal for the traveling carnival workers. The workers appreciate the home-cooked meal and the hospitality. The church members are blessed by the opportunity to serve their Lord. St. Paul's school board and faculty have also opened up the school facilities to the community for tours one morning of the local fair. The children's art is displayed and a free will donation bake sale is held. A local historian volunteered to lead tours of the more than 100 year old church building, giving people a chance to

remember the history of God's work in the community.

Like a lot of churches, Pastor Hartley and the Grace/Faith Partnership Ministry of Hazard, Neb., have an old-fashioned float in their local fair. They make sure to use it for outreach, and every year it is themed for their upcoming VBS. The children ride on the float, singing songs about Jesus and inviting others to join them.

Here are a few ideas you might try at your local fair:

- Set up a first aid stand or volunteer to help at one. Put a short message about Christ's healing love on bandages, wash cloths, or anything else you think you'll be handing out.
- Set up a water stand and pass it out free to all those hot fun-seekers! Remind them that Christ is the Living Water they truly seek by putting labels printed with Bible verses on the water bottles or cups.
- If your fair runs through Sunday, consider holding a worship service on the fair grounds.
- Kids love to pick up prizes at the fair and parents love anything that doesn't hurt their pocketbook! So why not have a FREE fishing booth where kids can fish for inexpensive things like Christian stickers, temporary tattoos, plastic bracelets or bouncy balls. Make sure everything tells about God's love and people know to contact your church!
- Many churches already have fundraiser stands (ice cream, pie, hamburgers, funnel cake, corn dogs), so why not take that fundraiser and make it about outreach too? Is it easy to tell your stand belongs to your church? Make sure! Every group from LLL, Ladies Aid, youth group, PTL and more can get involved here! Have workers wear name tags with your



church's mission statement on them. (Cheap and easy to print yourself.) Consider getting a church "team" t-shirt with your mission statement. Maybe someone would donate the cost or members could pay for their own. Have napkins or cups printed with a short Bible message, or do-it-yourself with printer labels!

- Not everybody can quilt or embroider today. Have a craft show or booth. Do a raffle. Just remember to tie it all up with the Gospel!

The important thing to remember is to have fun, use your imagination, and to reach out for Christ!

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.

