

Reaching Rural America for Christ

A newsletter of LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

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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

Aug. 11 - Webinar
“Are We a Friendly Church” with Kaye Dumas Wolff, LWML
1 – 2 p.m. CST

Sept. 15 - Webinar
“Ministry to the Armed Forces” with Chaplain Mike Moreno
1 – 2 p.m. CST

Nov. 3-5
RSTM National Conference
Wichita Hyatt Regency,
Wichita, Kan.
lcms.org/rstm/conference

If you have an idea or story for Rural Outreach, contact Amy at the RSTM office.

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“And we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and fervent love toward one another through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord” (Post Communion Collect, LSB)

STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE It’s a Miracle!

In his book *New Testament and Mission*, Johannes Nissen states, “That God can use such a fragile fellowship in his mission is something of a miracle. This miracle has to do with the promise which concludes the last commission: ‘I am with you always, to the end of the age’” (Nissen, Johannes. *New Testament and Mission: Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives*. Frankfurt Am. Main: P. Lang, 2002, 24).

Indeed, to think that God would use us, sin fallen humans as we are, to proclaim a message of hope in this hopeless world is a miracle indeed. Yet the sum total of the propagation of the Christian church lies in those words of Jesus, “I am with you always.” In a world which is constantly and consistently proving that the wisdom of man is folly and brings us to naught, what joy this message brings to the ear of the hearer! Christ is with us! He is with us, reigning over His church, feeding,



forgiving, strengthening and sending His people according to His purpose. In His presence, the faithful witness of His message of love in preaching, teaching, at the altar, in our homes, in our work, or whatever way He has called us to do so, we have the joyous opportunity to bear witness to the One who gives life in its fullest.

So, let us pray fervently to the Lord of the Church that he would remind us that we are not on our own and that the success or failure of the church is not in our hands but that indeed, He is with us always, to the end of the age!

Pastor Todd Kollbaum

RSTM Events Update

Don’t forget: RSTM provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is “Are We a Friendly Church” with Kaye Dumas Wolff, LWML, on Aug. 11, followed by “Ministry to the Armed Forces” with Chaplain Mike Moreno on Sept. 15. Find past webinars in the webinar archive on our website as a free resource for use when you need it.

Remember, you can register for our Engaging Your Community events (EYC) at lcms.org/rstm/engaging-rural-communities.

Also be on the lookout for more information on our newest events, Engaging the Wandering! Meant to partner with the EYC, these events will offer practical resources and communication skills for reaching out to our wandering members.

To see our calendar, visit lcms.org/rstm. Contact our office at 888-463-5127 or rstm@lcms.org.



Learn + Lead + Love + Cross

Overcoming Outreach Distraction



When it comes to sharing the story of Christ crucified, we hesitate; we procrastinate; and sometimes we flat out wander from the task at hand.

CONTRIBUTED BY BRUCE SUTHERLAND, MINISTRY RESOURCE MANAGER, LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

There is an old story about a peasant who was caught stealing from his king. The peasant lived in a small village that was a journey of several days from the king's castle. After being caught, the guilty man was promptly locked up in the village prison to await a public hanging the following week. In the meantime, the king heard of this peasant's great remorse and with compassion the king decided to send a messenger to the far-off village with *an undeserved pardon* for the thief. The king gave clear instruction to his messenger to

proceed directly to the peasant's village. Along the way, however, the messenger made frequent stops to attend to other matters and took alternate paths. By the time he reached the peasant's village he was shocked to discover the sentence was carried out two days earlier.

And so it is with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the pardon for humanity He has generously offered. He has called us as His ambassadors to *deliver a lifesaving message to our fellow criminals*. The fact is we aren't much different than the messenger. When it comes to sharing the story of Christ crucified, we hesitate; we procrastinate; and sometimes we flat out wander from the task at hand. As God's ambassadors we realize the Lord doesn't need us to save anyone, but He does give us the great privilege of carrying His pardon for humanity.

As a perpetual procrastinator, I often wonder how I can stay better focused.

Let's look to Christ and His example. In John 4:7-26 we see Jesus on a mission to deliver a pardon to the Samaritan woman. One way to look at this passage is to see **L.L.L.C.** (Learn, Lead, Love and Cross).

- **LEARN** (verse 7): Jesus is on a mission and He starts a conversation in order to LEARN more about this woman. One of the easiest things we can do is to *learn about and serve our neighbors*.
- **LEAD** (verse 10): Jesus is the one who takes the LEAD to change the conversation from simple friendly stuff to spiritual matters. *We should take the lead to transition the conversation to things eternal*. We don't need to wait for them because we may be waiting a long, long time.
- **LOVE** (verses 16-18): Jesus is continuing the conversation, and you will start to see both Law and Gospel unfold. Why do we need to talk about sin? It's so that people see their *need* for a Savior. LOVE rejoices with the truth (1 Cor. 13:6), and the truth is *we need to be perfect or forgiven*. The Law helps people see that human perfection is impossible.
- **CROSS** (verse 26): Jesus knows her repentant heart and reveals himself as Messiah, which points to the CROSS. In turn *we share Christ crucified* (1 Cor. 1:23) so that all may know the love of Jesus.

LEARN, LEAD, LOVE and CROSS are markers along a journey we can use to stay on track and not get distracted.

If you have questions or comments, please e-mail the author at bruce.sutherland@lhm.org.

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

Learn more about RSTM at lcms.org/rstm or by calling Amy at 888-463-5127. "Like" us on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/lcmsrstm](https://www.facebook.com/lcmsrstm).

Click the Give Now button to support the work of RSTM.

[Give Now](#)

SIGN UP NOW

for the RSTM National Conference!

Registration ends Sept. 15, is \$200/person and includes all sessions, materials, Thursday dinner, Friday lunch and dinner and more. Hotel reservations must be made separately. Register online at lcms.org/rstm/conference.

