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Dear Colleagues in Christ:

At the time of this writing, I am returning from the Association of Professional Chaplains conference in Houston. Like most conferences, it was okay. Maybe it was just “okay” because I’m not engaged in chaplaincy anymore. Maybe it was because there were only five LCMS ministers in attendance, and one of the reasons I go to conferences is to connect with colleagues. Or maybe it was because the plenaries I attended and a couple of the



workshops were not that helpful. At least the Lutheran breakfast went well! Then again, there was no discussion, no questions, not even the usual challenging objections. Hmm!

I wonder if Jesus had “okay” days. I wonder if there were days when no Pharisees tried to trick him, no townspeople tried to throw him over the city walls, and no one came to him looking for a miracle? I wonder if there were days when the disciples all got along and sat around or played around or looked around for something to do?

I know you have just “okay” days. You know, average days when nothing exciting happens and so you catch up on paper work or charting. Sometimes it feels good to have plain ole, average days. No stress. No anxiety. No unreasonable demands. Nothing out of whack!

But let’s face it, too much average and just okay is boring. So, thank God for healthy stress. Thank Him that you can be there for people in need and people in distress. Thank God for opportunities to serve as only you can. Thank Him for the excitement of ministry.

If Jesus and his disciples ever did have average, do-nothing days, I can’t imagine there were many of them. For Jesus was on a mission; and it was a short-lived one. He had disciples to train, a following to create, an endless throng of people to love, the Gospel and God’s wisdom to communicate, salvation to win, and oh yeah — Satan to defeat.

So, keep the boring days to a minimum, Lord. A little time off, yes! A little down time — it is appreciated! Time for renewal? Absolutely! But mostly, dear God, give to us the health, strength and courage to be faithful to You and our calling.

And when those boring, okay days come, O Lord, give to us the wisdom to enter them with gratitude; then prepare us for the excitement that will surely return.

Your brother in Christ,
Rev. Joel Hempel



SPM Educational Events

The 2017 SPM Educational Event includes all those who serve in SPM: emergency services and institutional chaplains, pastoral counselors and clinical pastoral educators.

The theme for the SPM Educational Event next month, September 19–21, will be mostly a repeat of the event in Oakland, Calif. this past May. If you can get the time, you are encouraged to attend the event hosted by the King's House Retreat and Renewal Center, Belleville, Ill. It was well received and praised for the content of the program.

The Rev. Joel Hempel, director for LCMS Specialized Pastoral Ministry, will set the stage with a brief presentation of the way it is in SPM: brother and sister chaplains, pastoral counselors, and clinical pastoral educators serving faithfully — generally unseen by their church — addressing challenges on the edges of culture and in various, pluralistic contexts.

Both the Rev. Dr. Larry Vogel, associate director of the CTCR, and

the Rev. Steven Briel, chairman of the Board for National Mission, will then respond to what you and our peers share in confidential and anonymous reports received from breakout groups and from a panel of colleagues who will present brief ministry scenarios. It is not an overstatement to say that you will likely be surprised with how affirming, appreciative and helpful these brothers are from their unique leadership positions in the Synod.

In addition to our keynote speakers, the Rev. Joshua Gale, executive director of Lutheran Church Charities (LCC), will talk about LCC's Comfort Dogs ministry as well as about how we in SPM can partner with them to attend to the emotional and spiritual needs of the handlers and helpers who go out with the dogs.



What was the opinion of those in attendance at the first event this past May? Here are a few representative comments:

- “I appreciated the time to relax, enjoyed the fellowship, experienced encouragement, and received affirmation.”
- “Networking with chaplains in other settings!”
- “Collegiality! I appreciated hearing from others in similar situations; and hearing Synod's perspective was good — especially I appreciated Larry Vogel's talk.”
- “The support from synodical officials was heartening.”
- “It was good connecting with people who are in similar ministries.”



ELECTRONIC CPE PROGRAM

On July 10, Lutheran Senior Services Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) center, with the financial support of the ONM's SPM office, started an Electronic-Extended (E-Extended) CPE program. Serving as the clinical pastoral educators are the Rev. Jeffery Scheer, administrator for LSS CPE, and the Rev. Joel Hempel, director of LCMS SPM. Also, didactics will be presented by the Rev. Dr. Robert Spilman, Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) supervisor from Buffalo, N.Y.

Six learners will be in the program, including two deaconesses and four pastors from four districts. The group is meeting primarily via the electronic platform Zoom. However, the group will also be coming together for in-person time preceding and during the SPM Educational Event in September. Classes are on Monday evenings, 4:00–9:00 p.m. In addition, the participating ministers are required to spend 14 hours each week in direct individual and group pastoral care.

Following the end of the program on December 11, both the supervisors and learners will evaluate this pilot program. It will then be determined whether additional, electronic CPE programs will be offered. Before the start of the program, 12 applicants were on the waiting list.

Not for the Faint of Heart



Ecclesiastical endorsement is not for the faint of heart! It's only for those who:

- Want to benefit from the additional training following one's ordination or commissioning;
- Are willing to write relatively short papers that demonstrate self-awareness and competency in ministry;
- Desire to meet with a committee of peers to further show they have the ministerial stuff to become recognized by their church body as a specialized pastoral minister; and
- Want to celebrate the grace-filled achievement!

Endorsement is a grace-filled process!

- God is very much a part of this process, starting with His admonition to care for the broken, the poor, the imprisoned, the hungry, the sojourner and those to whom the Lord leads us.
- It is built on the assessment of seasoned colleagues in SPM who have determined the basics that are needed to serve competently in SPM and ESC. For a list of competencies, see page 4 of the Ecclesiastical Endorsement Standards and Procedures Manual linked at lcms.org/spm.
- From beginning to end, mentoring and support are available from SPM colleagues.

Prison Ministry Opportunity

REV. JAMES RIVETT

There is great joy in having been the first Prison Ministry Contract Coordinator for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod! I pray the Lord has used me to start a good foundation for our Synodwide efforts to expand, coordinate and enrich the quality and quantity of our ministry to those who are incarcerated in jails and prisons. It is also a joy to be receiving inquiries and assisting LCMS members and professional church workers to make connections of spiritual care and assistance for their family members, loved ones or parishioners who are incarcerated.

But sadly, due to health reasons, I need to move on from this position. I'm grateful to the Lord, to Rev. Hempel, to SPM administrative assistant Barbara Temples, to the Southern Illinois District Task Force on Prison/Jail Ministry, to all those who support us with their prayers, contributions and connections. I look forward to seeing whom the Lord will bring to this position to continue to be His hands and feet to share the Gospel with those who are in prison waiting to be visited (Matt. 25:36b).

What follows is a list of responsibilities and duties for this part-time (40 hours/month), paid, contracted position. If the

Lord has placed a passion in your heart for prison and jail ministry, and you have the administrative gifts and time to take this on, please contact Joel.Hempel@lcms.org.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES for Contract Synod Prison & Jail Ministry Coordinator:

1. Respond to appropriate inquiries and requests for resources from families and inmates, referring them to District Prison Ministry Coordinators (DPMC) and local ministries where possible.
2. Provide encouragement, consultation and regular contact with DPMCs.
3. Develop and collect presentations, video and/or audio recordings, and training materials for DPMCs to be used for equipping and empowering local ministers and congregations for startup prison ministries' recruiting, informing, fundraising, etc.
4. Maintain the personnel database of those (paid and volunteer) engaged in Synodwide prison ministry and reentry programs.
5. Maintain the database of prison ministry resources and best practices to be available to DPMCs and others.

PEOPLE NEWS

SPM Endorsements

Endorsement activity since the last *A Pastoral Touch*:

- 4 Time-Limited Endorsements
- 8 in process within Emergency Services Chaplaincy
- 5 in SPM

BOARD FOR NATIONAL MISSION (BNM) CALLS

Are you serving in an institution or agency without a call? It does not have to continue that way! The Board for National Mission (BNM) would be pleased to receive your application. The steps to follow for applying are on the SPM webpage at lcms.org/spm. For more information, contact Rev. Joel Hempel at the SPM office (contact information at the end of this newsletter).

6. Promote DPMC contact with circuit visitors and parish pastors to encourage and develop prison ministry opportunities.
7. Identify funding sources and volunteer grant writers to assist in the expansion of prison ministry at Synod and district levels.
8. Identify needs at the national/Synod level as well as recruit volunteers to assist the prison ministry coordinator in addressing the identified needs.
9. As possible, gather human interest prison ministry stories and photos for publication in Synod and district media outlets.
10. Encourage seminaries to develop and offer educational opportunities in prison/jail ministry
11. Solicit funding, provide organizational leadership, and lead in the hosting of Synodwide prison/jail ministry biannual conferences.
12. Provide a written status report outlining the work performed during the preceding month to Specialized Pastoral Ministry in a format supplied by ONM.

RESOURCE

Ministry to Parents of a Stillborn Child

DEACONESS MARGARET (PEG) ANDERSON

DURING my CPE residency in Des Moines, Iowa, I was on call (about 6:00 p.m.) when a lady delivered a female baby who was stillborn. I was called to her room and visited with her and her husband.

They already were parents of a healthy son and daughter, but they were actually parents of *three* children — the last was *with Jesus*.

During my initial visit, I told them about a "Service of Blessing and

Commendation," one at which we could give the baby her name. I told them I was the on-call chaplain through the night, and if they wanted that service, they could simply have the switchboard page me to return to their room.

About 10:35 p.m., I was paged to the room. They told me they wanted to recognize their third child as part of their family, officially naming her "Angel Elizabeth." The father asked if I would

have my picture taken holding her all wrapped in a blanket. I said that I would be honored, and after the service, we took the photo.

I left the family to speak with the nurses who were with the baby in the nursery, so they knew the plan and could prepare the baby for the service in the room.

Other than the doctor and nurses, the parents and I were the only ones who were privileged to meet Angel Elizabeth.

Service of Blessing and Commendation

(Chaplains: What follows is a specifically Christian blessing and commendation. The chaplain may invite the parents, other family, and staff members present to lay their hands upon the child.)

Our Lord Jesus, take this beloved child into Your arms and give Your blessing of love. Bless each one here as we bring this child to You. Help us to remember that You came to us as a newborn baby. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Naming the Child

God has assured us that He has known us even before we were formed in our mother's womb, and certainly God knows this little one. Dear father and mother, how shall this child be named? *(Parents name the child.)*

(Name), by this name you are known to us and to God. By this name, you will be remembered. Amen.

Prayer

The chaplain may pray as the Spirit leads or use the following:

Most merciful God, we come before You with sadness. With faith in You and in your mercy, O Lord, we pray that You receive _____ into Your arms. Trusting as little children and believing in Your Son Jesus Christ as our Savior bring us into eternal life. Loving God, let Your Holy Spirit intercede for us when we do not know how to pray. Give us hope in Your promises and peace in our hearts. In the precious name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Benediction



SPM SCHOLARSHIPS

The Specialized Pastoral Ministry Scholarship Committee, composed of Jim McDaniels, Robert Spilman, and Gayle Truesdell (chairperson), met on May 3, 2017 to consider three scholarship applications. The following actions were recommended:

1. to award partial tuition to each of two pastors, one completing his seventh unit of CPE, and the other completing his eighth unit; and
2. to award a third pastor a full tuition scholarship to cover the cost of his first CPE unit.

Recognizing that ecclesiastical endorsement is very important, the committee further recommends that after four units of CPE, an applicant should provide documentation that he/she is actively pursuing ecclesiastical endorsement.

It is further recommended that after completing a basic unit of CPE, an applicant should provide verification that he/she plans to pursue a vocational goal within SPM (CPE supervisor, chaplain, pastoral counselor, etc.). The rationale for this recommendation is that the basic intent of the scholarship is to prepare men and women for Specialized Pastoral Ministry.

Suggestion for SPM Recruitment

In addition to identifying 10 unique characteristics helpful to those serving in SPM, developing a self-assessment instrument based on those characteristics, changing our webpage to make it inquirer-friendly, developing a glossary of terms to post on the new website, and adding SPM categories to the PIF, the recruitment task force at its last meeting took a first look at how to provide support to entrepreneurial-minded colleagues who want to enter the SPM vocation.

Network Support Model

International and national missionaries all agree to participate in raising the capital needed to support them in their mission work. The program is called the “Network Supported Missionary Model.” With financial support already obtained from generous contributors, missionaries (and spouses) agree to engage in nearly full-time networking and fund development the first six months of ministry until 75% of the funding needed is raised in gifts and pledges. Once their direct mission work begins, 20% of their time remains invested in networking.

What do you think?

Might something similar work for entrepreneurial-minded ministers called to SPM? The advisory committee wants to further explore this along with the recruitment task force. Entrepreneurial SPM could be especially important for those who are qualified to enter an SPM-related ministry following ordination or commissioning. It could also be an alternative for those who need to remain in a given location following CPE training.



Emergency Services Chaplaincy

THE EMERGENCY SERVICES CHAPLAINCY (ESC) endorsement process continues for police, fire, and EMS chaplains. Endorsement is expected of all ministers (ordained or commissioned) who serve in these capacities, whether paid or volunteer. The process is outlined at lcms.org/spm. To begin, applicants should complete the personal data form and request a letter of recommendation from their district president. Help is available to understand and complete the rest of the requirements by contacting Chaplain Bill Engfehr at esc@lcms.org.

New to the endorsement process

There has been a change to the Grandparent Rule. The period for receiving credit for prior training or experience expired in March, but a new option has been put in place. *Any ESC who has served three or more years can apply to have that training and experience credited toward some of the training requirements for endorsement.* This Grandparent Rule is available until further notice. After submitting the personal data form and letter of recommendation from their district president, applicants can submit evidence of experience and training to Rev. Joel Hempel at spm@lcms.org. Rev. Hempel and Chaplain Engfehr will evaluate it and notify the applicant of which requirements will be waived.

The endorsement process is designed to provide a minimum uniform level of training and competency for all ESCs who represent The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in these ministries, and to have a ready resource of chaplains who can assist when needed in areas like Disaster Response.

Chaplain Channing Kearney (right) joined the chaplaincy department at Edward Hines VA Hospital in Chicago. Chaplain Kearney came to Hines from the Indianapolis VA Hospital. Previously, Chaplain (LT Commander) Kearney served 22 years in the United States Navy and Marine Corps. Chaplain Lynn Hanson (left), MSGT USAF retired, continues as the chief chaplain at Hines.



SPM Contact Information

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Web page: lcms.org/spm

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Phone: 800-248-1930, ext. 1388 or
ext. 1312 or 314-996-1388

SPM Staff

Rev. Joel Hempel, ACPE Supervisor,
AAPC Certified Pastoral Counselor
Director and Religious Endorser

Barbara Temples
Administrative Assistant

Rev. William Engfehr
ESC Contract Coordinator

Rev. James Rivett
Prison Ministry Contract Coordinator

Reprints

A *Pastoral Touch* may be reprinted
with acknowledgment given to The
Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

If you received this by mail and
would like to receive future
editions of *A Pastoral Touch*
or other SPM information
by email, please send your
preferred email address to us
at spm@lcms.org.

**YOUR HELP IS NEEDED:**

Prison Ministry Database

The LCMS Southern Illinois District, with the support of the Synod, has created two databases that may be found on the SID website at sidlcms.org. However, one — the Prison Ministry Personnel Database — needs your help. If you are engaged in prison or jail ministry as a full or part-time chaplain or as a volunteer and have not completed and submitted the information needed to be added to the database, please contact Chaplain James Rivett, coordinator, at jimrivett65@yahoo.com.

The databases will open up opportunities for all of us. As an individual, one can find out who is engaged in prison or jail ministry and where it is being offered. Thus, if one has a loved one in prison or jail, that concerned pastor or family member will be able to easily determine if the LCMS has a presence in a specific facility.

To get to our resources database, please go to prison-ministry-resources.firebaseio.com. If you have a resource you would like to add, correct, endorse, etc., please contact Rev. Rivett at his email address above.

Caring Connections

The latest issue of the online journal *Caring Connections* is now available at lutheranservices.org/caring_connections. *Caring Connections* is an inter-Lutheran journal for practitioners and teachers of pastoral care and counseling. It is written by and for Lutheran practitioners and educators in the fields of pastoral care, counseling and education.

The new issue is on “Migration – Ministry – Mutuality.” Here is a list of the articles:

- Medical Repatriation: Best Interest for Whom? by *David McCurdy*
- Singing the Song in a New Land by *Bea Vue-Benson*
- The Cost of Culture by *Alemseged “Alem” Asmelash*
- My Name is Anurag by *Anurag Mani*
- Is American Sky Blue? — Reflections on Immigration Detention by *LIRS*
- Missionaries to America by *Robert Scudieri*
- Ministry with Refugees at Bellevue and Beyond by *Paul D. Steinke*
- Ministering at ICE in Tacoma, Washington by *Bob Bankin*
- Immigration or Emigration—No Easy Matter for Any Involved by *Lorinda Schwarz*
- Priest in a Community of Equals by *Chava Redonnet*

Dates to Remember

Sept. 19–21 Combined ESC Conference and SPM Educational Event
Belleville, Ill. • lcms.org/spm

Oct. 22–26 FFC Annual Conference
Oklahoma City, Okla. • firechaplains.org