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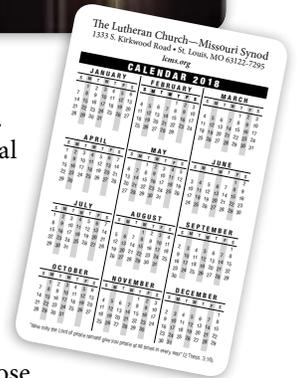
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Dear Colleagues in Christ:

The Peace of the Lord be with you!

Every year, we buy calendar cards for prison chaplains and VA chaplains who want to use them in their pastoral care.* This year, the card has a white cross with a black background, and it reads, “The Peace of the Lord be with you.” Then on the flip side where the year’s calendar is located, in very small print is the verse, “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way” (2 Thess. 3:16).



Sometimes peace is hard to come by — at least, it *feels* that way. There are people this very moment who are struggling with mental illness, who are actively dying, who are grieving the death of a loved one, who are feeling the fear of homelessness, who are praying for a loved one who has wandered far away, who are worried about a son or daughter in harm’s way somewhere in the Middle East.

The peace of the Lord be with you! As a phrase, that promise of Christ’s presence can seem like an empty throwaway line to those who are deeply hurting. And so, from the perspective of those in SPM, it is critical in ministry that we follow up the Sunday morning proclamation of peace with Monday morning visits — especially with those we know are struggling.

But what about us? What if we are the ones struggling and in need of God’s reassuring peace? Who visits us? Who hears our pain or attends to our uncertainties?

As you may know, CPE supervisor Jeff Scheer and I have been leading an online CPE program. It has proven to be successful in many ways. But one thing it has taught me — in addition to the fact that electronic CPE can work — is that intimate caring via the Internet can be a tangible alternative to in-person care.

So if you are a regular recipient of the peace our Lord provides in His Word and Sacraments, and if you know you need even more of God’s peace from a loving brother or sister in Christ, please don’t hesitate any longer! Ask for what you need. There are a lot of us only seconds away.

The peace of the Lord *is* with you. And may your Christmas be filled with the peace only our Lord can give.

Rev. Joel Hempel
 314-996-1388
joel.hempel@lcms.org

*These calendar cards are available to those who ask.





SPM Webpage Makeover

In the last couple years the SPM Recruitment Task Force has been working, we have determined the SPM webpage needs a makeover. If you go to the webpage as it is currently laid out, you will find categories and resources available to those already serving in SPM. Our plan is to shift the emphasis from service to recruitment.

More resources and events will continue to be posted, but the plan is to provide a more inquirer-friendly layout. We will be welcoming people with a new video, followed by five “panels” that will be links to resources behind those panels. The five panels or subpages will be Institutional Chaplains, Emergency Services Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Clinical Pastoral Educators and Prison Chaplains.

The landing page will next include an area that helps the viewer answer the question, “Am I cut out for this?” and includes a self-assessment inventory (under construction), FAQs, 10 characteristics helpful to being in SPM, a glossary of terms, etc. It will end with “How do I get there?” and include an infographic (visual picture) of the path to serving in a SPM vocation.

We invite you to go to our website at lcms.org/spm from time to time and see what’s new. Give us your feedback. If you see something out of place or absent, contact your SPM Office.

Action Photos Needed

For the new webpage design described above, we need action photos of you in ministry. We know you can’t take pictures of yourself, and we know there are HIPPA issues that could prohibit some photos un-

less you get signed releases, so the photos may need to be staged.

To aid in the process, once we have decided on the various contexts and ministries to be photographed, Synod’s photo-journalist will come onsite to help think through how to create scenes that demonstrate specialized pastoral ministers providing spiritual care. We are looking for a diversity of contexts and specialized pastoral ministers.

It is critical in communicating to inquirers what ministry looks like in your vocational specialization. We need those same photos for articles we can get included in *The Reporter*, *Lutherans Engage* and *The Lutheran Witness*.

If you can help out with this very important part of promoting SPM in the LCMS, please contact the SPM Office at spm@lcms.org.

Also Needed

Also needed for telling the SPM story is a testimonial from someone you have served who you would consider the

“poster child” for those who benefit from pastoral care/counseling at your institution. I know this is a tall order! When our Communications Department suggested this, I said it was not likely, but I’d ask.

When I think back to my days as a CPE supervisor and retirement community chaplain as well as a parish pastor, there were individuals who would be willing to give us a quote or two.

If you have one or two people you trust who would speak glowingly of your ministry, try to get past your humility long enough to ask them if we could call them and interview them briefly. We could do so over the phone or via email.

If you are not comfortable asking them for what I’m sure would feel like self-serving praise, maybe there is a colleague or another staff person who would be willing to talk with them for a few minutes. Those who have expressed gratitude for your ministry might even appreciate the chance to support you!



Mentors Needed

As new people enter the endorsement process and realize there is much more to endorsement than requesting it via an email, our SPM Office would like to offer them a mentor to walk with them through the process as an advisor and encourager. Too often, “up and coming” colleagues get discouraged or distracted and don’t follow through with their original intentions.

If you are SPM or ESC endorsed and are willing to volunteer to connect with a colleague entering the endorsement process, please contact the SPM Office at spm@lcms.org. We will keep you on a list of those willing to serve in this important way.

Pastoral Counseling in INDIA

If you were blessed to be at the SPM Educational Event in Bellville, Illinois, this past September, you may have met Rev. Subin Raj. Subin is a pastor with the India Evangelical Lutheran Church, started by the LCMS in 1895. He is finishing up his PhD in Practical Theology at Concordia Seminary and will complete his thesis back home in India. The title of his thesis is "Shame to Honor: Paradigm Shift in the Life of Dalit Lutheran Christians in Trivandrum, India."

Subin's dream — indeed, his calling — is to start a pastoral counseling and training center in Trivandrum at the southernmost tip of India. He will be ministering to those who previously were referred to as "untouchables"

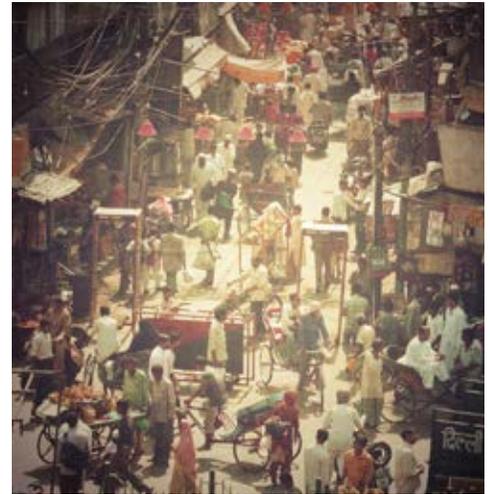
and are now called "Dalits," or "the broken people."

When I (Joel) first met Subin, he told me his story and how he was called to provide counseling to so many people who are broken by sin and poverty and have little hope in life. "Their biggest struggles," he

“I myself am an untouchable. I was born with that cultural designation. No, I'm not worried. I am honored ...”

said, "are with alcoholism, domestic abuse, suicide and other family issues."

As we talked, he added, "The people I will be serving are considered untouchables in our society." I asked,



"Are you not concerned about 'touching' these so-called untouchable people?" He replied, "I myself am an untouchable. I was born with that cultural designation. No, I'm not worried. I am honored ... As a pastor, I was working among them more than 15 years before coming to the seminary to work on my doctorate."

At the end of December, our brother will be returning to his home to begin the journey toward establishing a center for healing connected with his church.

A Correction Noted

In the November issue of *The Lutheran Witness*, there was an inaccuracy that a deaconess brought to our attention. A list of Office of National Mission ministries



included a very brief description of SPM: "Recruits and equips pastors for specialized pastoral ministry, including health care and prison chaplaincy, by providing training and continuing education (including online clinical pastoral education)."

Although we are grateful for all informative and promotional material in our Synodical publications, we were disappointed by this unintentional exclusion of deaconesses and other commissioned ministers who serve in SPM. This mistake was brought to the attention of Communications.

We appreciate the feedback!

PEOPLE NEWS

Ecclesiastical Endorsements

Since the last *Pastoral Touch*, one chaplain has been SPM endorsed: Rev.

Brian Earl. Congratulations, Brian! Recently, Brian completed a two-year residency at the VA Hospital in St. Louis and now is serving as Chaplain Fellow with the VA Interprofessional Advanced Fellowship in Addiction Treatment at the VA Connecticut Healthcare Systems in West Haven, Connecticut.

In addition, three ministers have received a time-limited, one-year endorsement to aid them in seeking employment; four are in the SPM process and nine are headed for endorsement in Emergency Services Chaplaincy (ESC).



Board for National Mission (BNM) Calls

If you are serving without a divine call, a BNM call may be just what the Lord ordered! Really, it may be the order he wants to bring to your ministry.

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).

Dearly Departed

- Rev. Robert G. Cardaro, July 11, 1930–Oct. 5, 2017
- Rev. Carroll D. Ohlde, Oct. 20, 1942–Oct. 17, 2017



E-CPE

Introducing the first graduating class of Lutheran Senior Services (LSS) Electronic-Extended Clinical Pastoral Education.

This picture was taken at the mid-unit retreat in Belleville, Illinois. In addition to Clinical Pastoral Educators Jeffery Scheer (second from right) and Joel Hempel (far left), the graduates are (left to right) Rev. Matthew Troester, Deaconess Ellie Corrow, Rev. Andrew Byars, Deaconess Tiffany Manor, Rev. Michael Gudgel and Rev. Brian Heller.

Will we offer another E-Extended CPE program? Many have asked! The decision has not yet been made. As this article is being written, the program is still



in session with three weeks remaining and the program evaluation yet to be completed. If you are interested in finding out more about the program or getting your name on a list, contact the CPE administrator for LSS CPE:

Rev. Jeff Scheer
jeffery.scheer@lsslovong.org

Lennis Harrison
lennis.harrison@lssliving.org

SPM EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

Ministry in the Midst of Crisis

The theme for our 2018 educational events is “Ministry in the Midst of Crisis.” There are multiple crises those in SPM face:

- individual and community,
- interpersonal and
- one’s own.

Presenters will address this range of challenges.

Save the date:

May 15–17, 2018

Techny Towers Conference and Retreat Center
2001 Waukegan Road
Techny, IL 60082
technytowers.org

Oct. 2–4, 2018

Kings House Retreat Center
700 N 66th St.
Belleville, IL 62223
kingsretreatcenter.org

Annual Endorsement Maintenance Report

It’s that time of the year! Please complete your annual report (online at lcms.org/spm linked under Endorsements) and send it to Barb Temples at barbara.temples@lcms.org. Because Religious Endorser Joel Hempel is unable to follow up with all of our colleagues who find it impossible to get their reports into our office, two of our SPM Advisory Committee members have volunteered to reach out to them after the January 15 deadline.

SPM Scholarship Endowment Fund

Yes, this is an endowment! The corpus continues to be in the \$70,000 range because the interest is given away. But the endowment could grow if you wanted to contribute to it. If you will, consider an out-of-pocket gift or even a bequest — a legacy to the future of LCMS SPM and those following behind you.

You may contribute to the SPM Endowment Fund:

By phone
888-930-4438

By email
mission.advancement@lcms.org

By mail:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Mission Advancement
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166

(Be sure to note SPM Endowment Fund on the memo line of your check.)

Since the last *Pastoral Touch*, one scholarship was given to a deaconess enrolled in a CPE residency preparing for a vocation in institutional chaplaincy.



SPM Contact Information

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 1333 S. Kirkwood Road
 St. Louis, MO 63122

Email: spm@lcms.org

Web page: lcms.org/spm

Fax: 314-996-1124

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

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 AAPC Certified Pastoral Counselor
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Barbara Temples
 Administrative Assistant

Contractors:

Rev. William Engfehr
 LCMS Emergency Service Chaplaincy

Rev. James Rivett
 LCMS Prison Ministry

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.

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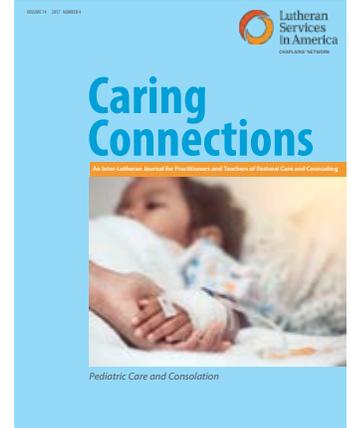


Caring Connections

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 current issue is on "Pediatric Care and Consolation." Articles include:

- "Editorial," by *Diane Greve*
- "A Father's Lament from the NICU," by *Brian Heller*
- "Tender Losses, Lasting Grief, Emerging Hope," by *Cheryl Plummer*
- "The Pediatric Burden," by *Hal C. Weldin*
- "This Little Light," by *M. Alexandra George*
- "Caring for Chronically Ill Children and Their Families," by *Kevin Powell*
- "Grieving Youth in our Faith Communities," by *BJ Larson and Allison*
- "A Bridge to Emotional Wellness," by *Kristin McKenzie*
- "Book Review: *Children Die, Too and Children Grieve, Too*, by Joy and Dr. S. M. Johnson" by *Ghislainne Cotnoir*



Dates to Remember

- March 17–18** The 28th Plenary
 Oakland, Calif. • cpsp.org
- April 23–25** Caring for the Human Spirit
healthcarechaplancy.org
- May 9–11** ACPE Annual Conference
 Atlanta, Ga. • acpe.edu
- May 15–17** Combined ESC Conference and SPM Educational Event
 Techny, Ill. • lcms.org/spm
- Oct. 2–4** Combined ESC Conference and SPM Educational Event
 Belleville, Ill. • lcms.org/spm