



**Contents**

SPM Educational Events . . . . . 2

Human Interest is Our Interest . . . 3

Online Peer Support Group . . . . . 3

*Caring Connections* . . . . . 3

People News . . . . . 3

KFUO SPM Podcasts . . . . . 4

Wellbeing . . . . . 4

SPM Recruitment . . . . . 4

Annual Endorsement  
Maintenance Report . . . . . 4

Disaster Response  
Chaplaincy Update . . . . . 5

Prison Ministry News . . . . . 5

Impact of SPM Scholarships . . . . . 6

Introducing the  
Henry F. Wind Award . . . . . 6

Resources Shared . . . . . 6

Dates to Remember . . . . . 7

**Dear Colleagues in Christ:**

On March 13, I was at a circuit winkel when the district president was presenting. It’s interesting how everyone shows up when he is scheduled. Before holding forth about the restructuring of the district, LCMS Missouri District President Lee Hagan led the 26 in attendance through a Bible study. It was the familiar text from 1 Cor. 9:24–27, the athlete who runs a disciplined race to the finish line and wins the prize.

It was a thought-provoking discussion. We talked about the usual (as it applies to athletic runners and spiritual runners) — things that make the race hard, the benefit of training, endurance needed, support the runner needs, why someone keeps running and who wins the race as well as the prize at the end. There was considerable discussion about the “crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8) and the prize that awaits those who are graced to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. I couldn’t help but notice the confidence with which one brother spoke about the crown of life that awaits the faithful. It was only a couple years ago that his wife lost her battle against cancer. I found his confession of faith to be both poignant and reassuring!

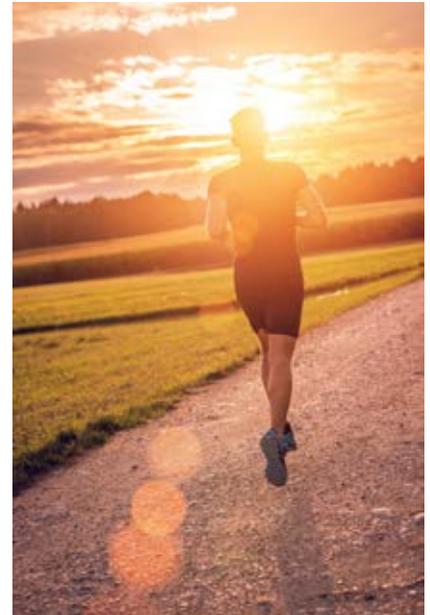
The more I thought about what we were discussing, I thought about you, my colleagues in SPM, and the ministries to which you have been called. These texts about the promise of eternity, the crown of life that awaits, the anticipation of joining loved ones in the faith — all of that is so critical to the end-of-life ministries in which we serve, as well as for anyone who is going through what can seem like endless suffering.

And yet, there is more than the prize of the resurrection. As grand as that is promised to be, there is more. There needs to be more for many others we serve.

There is that remarkable “already, but not yet” component to the prize. Between here and there is the journey. Between here and there is the privilege of calling and service. Between here and there is peace and joy as well as gratitude and opportunity to work for Jesus. Between here and there is the call to empathize with the suffering of others, offer hope in the Lord and witness to the faith that gives life.

Thank you for your faithful service. Blessed Easter!

**Rev. Joel Hempel**  
314-996-1388  
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**SPM EDUCATIONAL EVENTS**


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# Ministry in the Midst of CRISIS

The theme for our 2018 educational events is “SPM in the Midst of Crisis.” There are multiple crises those in SPM face: individual, community, interpersonal and one’s own. Presenters include the Rev. Dr. Richard Armstrong, LMFT, and Stacey Tasler Crosson, DCE, LMFT, who will address this range of challenges. A Bible study will be led by the Rev. Dr. Mark Whitsett, director of pastoral care at Cedar Lake Lodge and online adjunct faculty (theology) with Concordia University Wisconsin.



## Ministry in Times of Crisis

What have we learned and what do we know about working in times of crisis, whether the crisis is our own or the result of living in an imperfect world? What do we need to know and/or remember as we face these crises with others? What is a crisis? How does it impact people? What opportunities may be found within the crisis for growth, strengthening relationships, healing brokenness, etc.? Where might God be in the crisis? Attendees will explore all of these questions.

## Armor Up Your JOY!

Those who work daily in the people-helping business live out the acronym for JOY well: Jesus first, Others second, Yourself last. Even though there is truth in this adage, it has the potential to also morph into something just the opposite when self always comes in last — people-pleasing, burnout, depression, anxiety, numbness, disconnection and post-traumatic stress. What are the signs you might be in a personal crisis? How can you armor up and retain the JOY of serving others when you are in the midst of your own crisis? In this session, Specialized Pastoral Ministers will learn how to quickly identify a personal crisis and explore intentional and unique practices, relationships

and spiritual disciplines for restoration and replenishing. Special attention will be given to how men and women can personally armor up with JOY and what they can learn from one another.

## Ministry in Times of Community Crisis

The process of recovery from community crises and disasters — whether from natural or human causes — are important times for those who are affected. Recovery lasts a long time and has many layers of loss and confusion. What have we learned? What do we need to know and keep in mind? What should we avoid? What preparation do we need? How important is self-awareness regarding our

work and those we serve? What might be the role of our specialized ministry in these times? Participants will seek to understand the many ways they can assist with community crises.

## “The Assumptions and Ambiguities of Crisis: Discovering Hope in the Crossroads”

Crisis is a term we use without thinking about it. Do we intuitively and rightly *know* what crisis is or what others have in mind? Does crisis as an idea have a direct corollary in Scripture? How and where does this show up in biblical accounts? We will look at two biblical foils to stimulate and inform our conversations with each other.

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## SAVE THESE DATES

### May 15–17, 2018

Techny Towers Conference and Retreat Center  
2001 Waukegan Road  
Techny, IL 60082  
[technytowers.org](http://technytowers.org)

### Oct. 2–4, 2018

King's House Retreat and Renewal Center  
700 N 66th St.  
Belleville, IL 62223  
[kingsretreatcenter.org](http://kingsretreatcenter.org)

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## Human Interest is Our Interest

**Know this repeated appeal** may sound like “sound and fury, signifying nothing,” but it can result in a significant something! Your stories matter!

Recently, two different chaplains each sent in a story about people they had been graced to serve over a long period of time. Both stories were about suffering, need, grace and pastoral care competency. The chaplains were not bragging about themselves. Rather, I had asked (perhaps you remember a similar appeal in the last *A Pastoral Touch* newsletter) for testimonies from individuals who could tell the story of SPM from their perspective of having been blessed by the ministry of these called ministers of the Gospel.

I (Joel Hempel) interviewed both people who offered their testimonies. Why? Our Synod’s communications department has requested such stories. We want to get stories about us before our sisters and brothers in Synod. We want them to know about the blessing you are. We want your story to trigger that spirit in another who is exploring vocationally.

**But we need help.** We need more stories, and we need photos. I know there are challenges, but they are not insurmountable. If you don’t have a photographer on staff who can take action shots of you in ministry, we can request the Synod’s photojournalist to spend a day with you. Please consider these opportunities!

## Online Peer Support Group



**For about five years,** there has been a peer support group in St. Louis. It meets monthly in the evening at the home of a SPM colleague. Six to eight specialized pastoral ministers meet to unload, seek counsel, find strength and share professional and personal challenges. We laugh, cry, confront, affirm and rejoice that we have each other.

For years, there has been a desire to “clone” this group for other cities, but that hasn’t materialized. However, online support has become a possibility. Are you interested? If you are, contact the SPM Office by emailing [spm@lcms.org](mailto:spm@lcms.org). If we have six colleagues in SPM who are interested in meeting for 10 sessions followed by an evaluation, we will organize the online group via Zoom. If you are not familiar with the Zoom platform, we can hook you up!

## Caring Connections

The latest issue of the online journal *Caring Connections* is now available. Volume 15, Issue 1 is on the theme of “Ministry in Times of Disaster.” It may be found at [lutherservices.org/newsletters#cc](http://lutherservices.org/newsletters#cc).



## PEOPLE NEWS

### Dearly Departed

- **The Rev. Robert J. Weinhold**, Jan. 4, 1930–July 24, 2017
- **Deaconess Ruth S. Stallmann**, April 8, 1918–Nov. 14, 2017



### Acknowledgements, Achievements and Awards



- **Emmanuel Viray**  
Endorsed Dec. 20, 2017
- **Jerry McNamara**  
Endorsed Feb. 16, 2018
- **Charles Keogh**  
Became a Board-Certified Chaplain, NAVAC
- **Brian Earl**  
Became a Board-Certified Chaplain, Association of Professional Chaplains
- **Jay Beyer**  
Became a Board-Certified Chaplain, Spiritual Care Association
- **Charles Keogh**  
Recognized as a Friend of Social Work



- **David Ficken** (in photo above, second from right)  
Given a Police Appreciation Award
- **Douglas Fountain**  
Selected to serve as a volunteer Chaplain for the United States Secret Service

# KFUO SPM Podcasts

**Be on the listen** for 10 interviews with SPM colleagues from around the country. They are expected to be posted to the KFUO website by mid-May. We will send you an email and a link to the podcasts. Each one is about 20 minutes. Special thanks to colleague Brad Thomas and KFUO Radio personality Andy Bates for producing these!

Special thanks to the following:

- The Rev. Dr. Rick Armstrong, “Pastoral/Spiritual Counseling”
- The Rev. David Ficken, “Law Enforcement Chaplaincy”
- The Rev. Joel Hempel, “SPM Administration”
- The Rev. Ken Hessel, “Fire Chaplaincy and Senior Living Chaplaincy”
- Deaconess Tiffany Manor, “District Caregiver, Institutional Chaplaincy”
- The Rev. Jim Rivett, “Prison/Jail Chaplaincy”
- The Rev. Jeff Scheer, “Clinical Pastoral Education”
- The Rev. Brad Thomas, “Older Adult Chaplaincy”
- Deaconess Gayle Truesdell, “Older Adult Chaplaincy”
- The Rev. Arthur Werzner, “Nursing Home and Hospital Chaplaincy”

## SPM Recruitment

There is much that is being explored in the world of recruitment. One piece that may be of special interest to you is a self-assessment inventory based on 10 identified qualities or characteristics that are helpful to have if one is serving in SPM. The inventory is in the beta testing stage. If you are curious and would like to participate in the beta testing, contact the SPM Office.

## ! Annual Endorsement Maintenance Report

These are way overdue if the reader is SPM-endorsed and has not yet submitted one. And yet, there is mercy!

# Wellbeing

BY DEACONESS HEIDI GOEHMANN

**Wellness is a complicated topic for anyone.** Wellness among those who are concerned for other's wellness has so many layers of complication that it can be hard to keep track. I have noticed that one many-layered complication to worker wellness is empathy. This complication affects our own well-being and our relationships with our families and colleagues. Just as the Gospel goes out from each of you by the work of the Spirit and impacts in ways we cannot see, people's problems, pains and struggles impact each of us who serve — too often in ways we can't see but that God sees. This is the gift and the struggle with empathy.

I do not know a single person involved in Specialized Pastoral Ministry who does not have an empathetic spirit. It seems incongruent with the vocation to lack empathy. God has gifted each of us with the ability to sometimes sit, sometimes care and sometimes do in order to minister to others — all with great empathy. My question for you today would be “How is your empathy wellness?”

God is our helper and our shield. He gives us tools to be able to sit with those hurting or struggling, but He also gives us boundaries to protect our hearts. Are you able to get enough rest and sleep? Are you able to rest in the Word? Do you have others that you serve alongside to remind you that God is the Maker and Redeemer in every situation you encounter? Is your empathy “on target”?

When we lack empathy, that can be a sign that we need more rest and a moment to decompress. Are you taking on too much from those you care for? Over-empathizing — that is, taking someone's burden deep into ourselves — can have consequences for wellness also. God is the actor; we are not. We listen. We share His hope. He heals. He solves.



Here is a practical, mental health article that I think applies well to ministry for empathy and relational wellness:

- [psychologytoday.com/blog/wander-woman/201704/can-you-have-too-much-empathy](https://psychologytoday.com/blog/wander-woman/201704/can-you-have-too-much-empathy).

Don't forget to consider Synodical resources such as Grace Place Wellness Ministries ([graceplacewellness.org](http://graceplacewellness.org)), Doxology ([doxology.us](http://doxology.us)) and Shepherd's Canyon ([shepherdscanyonretreat.org](http://shepherdscanyonretreat.org)). Even looking on their websites may give you suggestions and ideas for your own wellness, as well as your ministry.



Deaconess Heidi Goehmann is a licensed independent social worker and mental health care provider, writer and speaker. She received her deaconess certification as well as her bachelor's degree in theology and psychology from Concordia University Chicago, and she received her master's degree in social work from the University of Toledo. Heidi is the founder of [ilovemyshepherd.com](http://ilovemyshepherd.com), which provides resources and advocacy for women, mental health and genuine relationships. As part of her ministry, Heidi serves as a contract worker with the Office of National Mission in the area of health and wellness.

**DISASTER RESPONSE CHAPLAINCY UPDATE:**

# Relief and Support for Church Workers

**LCMS Disaster Response (DR) Chaplains** were deployed to the scenes of two recent disasters in cooperation with LCMS Disaster Response.

- **In February, Chaplain Ron Norris deployed to Marathon, Fla.** Ron provided support to the congregation, which is still recovering from last year's hurricane, and enabled the pastor to attend respite care provided by the district.
- **In March, Chaplain Jim Wright deployed to Watseka, Ill.,** where extensive flooding recently occurred. The community also experienced flooding last year. Jim assisted the pastor with pastoral duties by visiting shut-ins, preaching and leading Bible Study. This enabled the pastor to work with LERT teams that were providing clean-up assistance. Jim also spent time with the pastor and his family providing guidance in how to deal with stress following a disaster.

The purpose of providing chaplains is to help local church workers deal with the stress of the situation and stay healthy



Florida neighborhoods were flooded by Hurricane Irma last September.

(physically, emotionally and spiritually) so that they can be of help to others. Further, the purpose is to provide them with guidance and resources to help them minister to those who have been through very stressful situations.

LCMS Disaster Response (DR) Chaplains are LCMS ecclesiastically endorsed Emergency Services Chaplains (ESC) and other endorsed specialized pastoral ministers who have received additional training, have agreed to serve and have received approval from the Office of Specialized Pastoral Ministry.

Check out the new brochure online at [lcms.org/spm](http://lcms.org/spm).

## Prison Ministry News

### Prison Ministry Conference

We are very busy preparing for our next Synodwide Prison Ministry conference on Aug. 17 and 18 at the Hilton St. Louis Airport. Our theme and Scripture verse is "Captive Souls — Mercy for All" (Rom. 11:32).

Registration will go live April 15 at the SID website and linked on the SPM webpage. The registration fee of \$50 will include Friday night lodging, several meals and great fellowship and sharing time. Travel scholarships will be available. We are thankful for a very generous grant from the LWML providing assistance.

Plenary speakers include the Synod's first vice president, the Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller; the Rev. Timothy R. Carter, author of *The Executioner's Redemption*; the Rev. Dr. Leopold Sanchez, professor at Concordia Seminary; the Rev. Dr. John Loum, professor at Concordia Seminary; and Chaplain Russell Helbig and Michael Raha, who will speak about ministry to sex offenders.

For more information, go to the LCMS Southern Illinois District website at [sidlcms.org/prison-ministry](http://sidlcms.org/prison-ministry).

### New Bible Study

In other prison and jail ministry news, the Prison Ministry Task Force of the Indiana District published a new Bible study for jail ministry, entitled "Christ in the Cellblock." For

more information or to place an order, contact the Rev. David Mommens at 260-244-3712 or [dmommens@icloud.com](mailto:dmommens@icloud.com).

### Humanitri Partnership

Finally, Humanitri of St. Louis and its predecessor have sponsored jail ministry for more than 40 years. In a recent move, a sub-group under Humanitri has formed to give intentional support to the local county jail chaplain, Rev. Vince Stanley, and work at expanding both the network of support and the number of paid chaplains. Chaplain Stanley is a full-time, fully paid chaplain at the county jail.

In you have questions, concerns or comments about prison and jail ministry, please feel free to contact the Rev. Jim Rivett, the Synod's contract prison ministry coordinator, at 618-694-4825 or at [jimrivett65@yahoo.com](mailto:jimrivett65@yahoo.com).

### Prison/Jail Ministry Coordinator Search

A new search is underway to find someone who will take over the duties of contract coordinator for the Synod's Prison and Jail Ministry. Because of health issues, the Rev. Jim Rivett needs to resign from his work as coordinator.

To find out more about the 40-hour-per-month position, contact Joel Hempel at [Joel.Hempel@lcms.org](mailto:Joel.Hempel@lcms.org).

# IMPACT of SPM Scholarships

*A letter from Deaconess Candidate Greta Bernhardt*

*Thank you for helping me with the tuition part of CPE by granting me a scholarship. The last four years I have been in graduate school with the goal to become a deaconess chaplain and social worker, so my funds are nearly depleted. The scholarship has made it possible for me to take an additional year to do a CPE Residency so that my four units will be complete this May.*

*CPE has challenged me on a personal and pastoral care level. I have had many enlightening moments during this residency. Personally, CPE has given me confidence in my leadership ability and has stretched me in this role. In pastoral/spiritual care, I have learned that sometimes words are not necessary. One day, a man came to me with tears in his eyes and asked, "Are you a chaplain?" "Yes," I said. He hugged me and sobbed. When he let go and looked at me, his tears had stopped. He said, "Thank you chaplain. I feel better now." Then he walked away. It is these moments of ministry of presence that show me the power of the Holy Spirit at work.*

To apply for a scholarship in preparation for entering or exploring SPM, contact the SPM Office at [spm@lcms.org](mailto:spm@lcms.org). To make a designated gift for scholarships, please contact the SPM Office. As Greta so poignantly stated, the need is real.

## Introducing the Henry F. Wind Award

At the Oct. 2–4 SPM Educational Event, the newly created Henry F. Wind Award will be given to its first recipient for outstanding leadership in SPM.

The creation of the award resulted from the SPM Advisory Committee wanting to lift up those who serve SPM administratively by advocating and promoting chaplaincy, pastoral counseling and/or clinical pastoral education. The symbol of the award is a new piece of art created by the Rev. Chaplain William Matzat. The art is created out of different kinds of wood and is in the form of Holy Spirit (dove/wind) descending upon clasped hands.



*(continued on page 7)*

## RESOURCES SHARED

### From the pen of Chaplain Charles Keogh

An employee was found dead in the washroom at the Denver VA the week before Christmas. Charles offered this poem as support to fellow employees:

#### **"A Vacant Desk"**

The doors swing wide, the lights are on, there's hustle in the air.  
Same walls, same floor, same everything, except for who's not there.

I walk around, then pause to look. There's no one in that chair.  
Forget it. I'll just carry on, pretending not to stare.

The work goes on. It's still the same. A new quiet is hard to bear.  
There's a vacant desk, just sitting still, sending memos about prayer.

Telephones ring and keyboards click, steady business everywhere.  
Memories and laughs, tears and grief, the price that comes with care.

The day wears on; so does the work; production seems just fair.  
That vacant desk remains unmoved, but how much can I bear?

The hours are done, and so am I. I think of words I wish I'd shared.  
The vacant desk waits undisturbed, a feat I wish I shared.

I touch the door, it opens wide; looking back there's the outline of a pair,  
At the desk I see your smiling face ... and God's image standing there.



**SPM Contact Information**

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or 314-996-1388

**SPM Staff**

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

Barbara Temples  
Administrative Assistant

**Contractors:**

Rev. William Engfehr  
LCMS Emergency Service Chaplaincy

Deaconess Heidi Goehmann  
ONM Worker Wellness

Rev. James Rivett  
LCMS Prison Ministry

**Reprints**

*A Pastoral Touch* may be reprinted  
with acknowledgment given to The  
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**Henry F. Wind Award, continued**

Who is Henry F. Wind? Rev. Dr. Wind (1891–1966) was the first executive secretary of the Missouri Synod's newly established department of social welfare in 1953. According to Dr. Martin Mueller (editor of the former *Lutheran Witness Reporter*), in his new position, Dr. Wind “helped coordinate the work of Lutheran welfare agencies throughout North America. He also helped develop special training programs for clerical and lay welfare workers. Under his aggressive leadership, synodical districts, as well as congregations, came to provide a ministry of compassion and concern by organizing welfare boards and committees.” Before coming to this post, Dr. Wind also served as a parish pastor and institutional chaplain.

The reader is invited to nominate a leader in SPM. To request a nomination form, contact Barb Temples at [barbara.temples@lcms.org](mailto:barbara.temples@lcms.org) or write to [spm@lcms.org](mailto:spm@lcms.org). Nominations must be submitted to the SPM office no later than Aug. 2.

**Dates to Remember**

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>April 23–25</b> | Fifth Annual Caring for the Human Spirit Conference<br>New Orleans<br><a href="http://healthcarechaplains.org">healthcarechaplains.org</a>                   |
| <b>May 9–11</b>    | ACPE Annual Conference<br>Atlanta<br><a href="http://acpe.edu">acpe.edu</a>  |
| <b>May 15–17</b>   | Combined ESC Conference and SPM Educational Event<br>Techny, Ill.<br><a href="http://lcms.org/spm">lcms.org/spm</a>  |
| <b>July 9–13</b>   | International Conference of Police Chaplains<br>Lexington, Ky.<br><a href="http://icpc4cops.org">icpc4cops.org</a>   |
| <b>July 12–15</b>  | APC/NACC Joint Conference<br>Anaheim, Calif.<br><a href="http://nacc.org/conference">nacc.org/conference</a>   |
| <b>Aug. 17–18</b>  | Prison Ministry Conference<br>St. Louis<br><a href="http://sidlcms.org/prison-ministry">sidlcms.org/prison-ministry</a>                                      |
| <b>Oct. 2–4</b>    | Combined ESC Conference and SPM Educational Event<br>Belleville, Ill.<br><a href="http://lcms.org/spm">lcms.org/spm</a>                                      |
| <b>Oct. 14–18</b>  | Federation of Fire Chaplains Conference<br>Fort Worth, Texas<br><a href="http://firechaplains.org">firechaplains.org</a>                                     |
| <b>Oct. 16–18</b>  | National Disaster Response Conference<br>St. Louis<br><a href="http://lcms.org/disaster">lcms.org/disaster</a>   |
| <b>Nov. 2–4</b>    | The Association of Certified Christian Chaplains Conference<br>Colorado Springs, Colo.<br><a href="http://certifiedchaplains.org">certifiedchaplains.org</a> |