RSTM Events Update

**Don’t forget:** RSTM provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is “re:Vitality for RST Churches” with Rev. Mark Wood, director, LCMS Outreach & Witness, on April 27, followed by “Teaching the Faith: Sunday School” with Angela Kollbaum, St. Paul’s, Concordia, Mo., on May 25. Find past webinars in the webinar archive on our website as a free resource for use when you need it.

Register for our Engaging Your Community events (EYC) and our Engaging the Wandering (ETW) events at lcms.org/rstm. You can also see our full calendar. Don’t forget to check out all the RSTM National Conference details at lcms.org/rstm/conference. Now is a great time to register! Contact our office at 888-463-5127 or rstm@lcms.org.
During an unseasonably warm week in November, I and a group of four other students from the LCMS’ Fort Wayne seminary, along with beloved professor, Dr. Timothy Quill, had the opportunity to visit Western Missouri for several days to get a taste of rural life. Having been raised in various cities around the country, we students had much to learn about parish ministry in small towns and rural areas.

The week before Thanksgiving, the Synod’s Office of Rural & Small Town Mission kindly hosted our small group of city slickers on the campus of Saint Paul Lutheran High School in Concordia, Mo. There, we were treated to several days of presentations, field trips and new experiences. The field trips were some of the most enlightening and engaging parts of our stay. We were able to visit the typical stomping grounds of an average small town parish pastor. Schools, farms, funeral parlors and even homes of local LCMS members welcomed us. They eagerly taught us about their way of life, what they expect from their pastors and what future pastors can expect in the unique environment of rural America.

We were also able to hear from a motley group of speakers, ranging from Synodical officials, to farmers, to young students from Saint Paul High School. Each group of presenters had its own unique bit of advice for us student pastors. For people accustomed to city living, it was eye-opening to hear presenters mention how they are able to keep their doors unlocked at night. And, that ambulance helicopter insurance is actually quite common in rural areas. And, that a hot topic of conversation in many small towns often concerns the current price of corn and beans.

While each group of presenters had their own distinct bits of advice to share, we noticed several common warnings running through them all. One of which was, “Be careful what you say, because everybody knows everybody in a small town.”

On behalf of Dr. Quill and my fellow students, I would like to extend thanks to Amy Gerdts and Pastor Todd Kolbaum for their warm hospitality, and for working overtime that particular week to ensure that our stay in Concordia was informative and intriguing.

Strong Faith, Fervent Love, continued

is great value in trying. Because, the more you try, the more seeds you scatter. The more seeds you scatter, the easier it becomes to continue sowing, even in some cases, watering and tending.

Trust the Lord and get hands on! It will be a blessing!

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns’” (Is. 52:7).