

Reaching Rural America for Christ

A newsletter of LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

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THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod

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

April 27 - Webinar
"re:Vitality for RST Churches"
with Rev. Mark Wood, director,
LCMS Witness & Outreach
1-2 p.m. CST

May 25 - Webinar
"Teaching the Faith: Sunday School"
Angela Kollbaum, youth director,
St. Paul's, Concordia, Mo.
1-2 p.m. CST

Nov. 9 - 11
National RSTM Conference
Hilton Kansas City Airport
Kansas City, Mo.
lcms.org/rstm/conference

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

Phone: 888-463-5127
Email: amy.gerdt@lcms.org

"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

Time to Get Hands On!

Here at **LCMS RSTM** we spend a lot of time developing resources and training groups of folks how to reach out with the love of Christ to those around them and to those who have become lost along the way. This training is great and I am so glad we have the opportunity to partner together with districts and congregations in order to bring these valuable resources to bear.

However, one of the biggest drawbacks to training is, that it is just that ... training. After we leave it is all up to the congregations and their members to carry out their ministries in their respective places. There is little else we can do but equip and encourage. Unfortunately, while intentions are good and plans are made, when faced with the daunting task of getting beyond ourselves and carrying out these ministries, they often fall flat. As busy schedules fill up and routines set



Community outreach event

back in, it becomes easier and easier these congregations to slide back into their old self-interested ways.

So, by way of encouragement, I urge you to get hands on! Take some baby steps and start doing. You don't have to eat the whole elephant in one bite, just start **DOING**. There is no substitute for trying. Even if it doesn't turn out the way you'd like or hoped it would, there

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.





The group on a field trip to the Hemme Bros. Dairy & Creamery



One highlight was getting to learn to drive a tractor

Thoughts from a Seminary Student on a RURAL IMMERSION

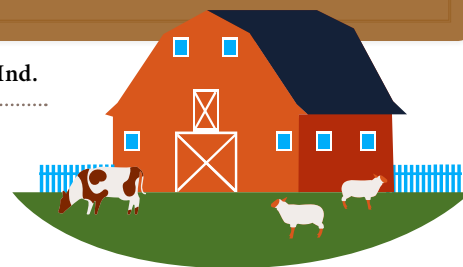
Contributed by Craig Rinkus, seminary student, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

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 stomp- ing 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 pas- tors. For people accustomed to city liv- ing, it was eye-opening to hear presenters mention how they are able to keep their doors unlocked at night. And, that am- bulance 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 Gerds and Pastor Todd Kollbaum for their warm hospitality, and for work- ing overtime that particular week to ensure that our stay in Concordia was informative and intriguing.

Strong Faith, Fervant 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 salva- tion, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns'" (Is. 52:7).

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.

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

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