

Reaching Rural America for Christ

A newsletter of LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

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June 2017



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

June 10

Engaging the Wandering Event
Zion Lutheran Church in Chamberlain, S.D.
with South Dakota District

June 18 - Webinar

"Teaching the Faith: Adults"
with Rev. Heath Trampe, pastor,
Faith Lutheran Church, York, Neb.
1-2 p.m. CST

Nov. 9-11

RSTM National 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.gerds@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

Christ's Ambassadors

"The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?" Jer. 32:26-27

In Quentin Schultze's book *Communicating for Life*, he quotes Leslie Newbigin as saying, "Our problem is that most of us who are Christians have been brought up bilingual. For most of our early lives...we have been trained to use a language which claims to make sense of a world without the hypothesis of God." Yet, Schultze continues, "we spend only an "hour or two a week" using the language of the Bible. We forget that "the incarnate Word is Lord of all, not just of the Church. There are not two worlds, one sacred and one secular." As Newbigin suggests, Christian communicators are called to strain all symbols through the sieve of God's reality."

Over the last few months and in the coming months, we have focused our newsletters on different aspects of teaching the faith. This faith into which we have been baptized, confirmed, which is given by God's grace and through which we find our very life, is so precious, there is nothing that even compares. Yet, we often hold it out as an "after thought" of sorts. We put on our "church hat" on Sunday morning and take it off as we leave the narthex. However, if we take just a moment to consider this great gift, we can realize just how awesome it is to be Christ's ambassadors in our life and work. To be sure, it is often daunting and difficult. We too often feel threatened by society to "keep quiet" and fear what might come of speaking up. But, as Peter and John say, "we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

Imagine if you will the joy that could be ours if we looked for those opportunities to share our hope with those around us. Not only would those with whom we live, work and play be blessed by our witness but we ourselves would share in their joy. This is why we so desire to help cultivate methods and techniques, ideas and resources for those who would "teach the faith" within our congregations. Yet, we take great comfort and joy in the fact that this isn't left up to us but God has promised that He is always with us! The Lord of Church is active in our work and by the power of His Holy Spirit, we are equipped to do those good works He has established in advance for us! Thanks be to God, He does all things well!

Pastor Todd Kollbaum



TEACHING THE FAITH:

CONTRIBUTED BY REV. HEATH TRAMPE,
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, YORK, NEB.

Adults

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up... 1 THESS. 5:11

Reawakening

When I accepted the call to serve as Senior Pastor at Faith in York, Neb., I assumed that Adult Bible Class would be a walk in the park. I was coming from a 2,000+ member congregation in a large city. As Associate Pastor at St. Peter's, I helped to oversee and execute a weekly Wednesday evening Bible study that brought in 300-400 people a week. This was in addition to teaching the Adult Information Class for new members and administrating the youth confirmation program. It did not take long to discover that rural and small town ministry has its own unique blessings and challenges! Over two years later, we are seeing 40-60 adults every Sunday morning for the pastor-led Bible class, in addition to strong attendance at many small groups that meet throughout the week. But it was not always this way. Here are some things I learned in my first two years at Faith.

Get the Lay of the Land.

Every church is different, and it is important to understand where the congregation has been and where they would like to go. The first large-scale study we undertook at Faith brought new faces into the Adult Bible class, but it was also met with resistance. I might have avoided some heartache as the new pastor if I had been more patient.

Balance (διδάσκω) and (οικοδομή).

(διδάσκω) is a biblical Greek word for the kind of formal instruction at which Lutherans have historically been pretty adept. (οικοδομή) is the kind of teaching and learning we experience when we share life together. In 1 Thess. 5:11, Paul talks about "encouraging each other



Sunday morning adult bible study at Faith Lutheran Church

and building one another up." This is an important function of the local congregation. At Faith, all the teachers are encouraged to know the material and to be able to share it compellingly, but we also understand that much of what brings adults into Bible class happens outside of Bible class!

Be Multigenerational.

Early into my time at the first ministry I served, I discovered that adults will more likely attend a study if there is an option available for their kids at the same time. Also, just about everyone is more excited to study if there is food present! This has held truth at Faith, and we often try to make sure some kind of refreshment is available when we gather to study God's Word together.

Be Intentional.

Regardless of the generation you are attempting to reach, a congregation's leadership must be intentional. I frequently mention the current Bible class topic in my preaching, and new faces are regularly encouraged to consider joining the discussion on Sunday mornings. We even managed, by God's grace, to turn a potential Bible class destroyer into one of the most powerful evangelism tools at our disposal!

As with all things in ministry, this is an ongoing process. If you want more information, I invite you to join the free RSTM webinar on June 8th at 1pm CST as I present on Teaching the Faith to Adults. I will also share some of the stories behind these revelations! In the meantime, feel free to email me at pastortrampe@gmail.com or give me a call at 402-362-3000.



Standing on our Heritage:

IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT JESUS

2017 NATIONAL RURAL & SMALL TOWN MISSION CONFERENCE

The 2017 National Rural & Small Town Mission Conference will be held **Nov. 9–11 in Kansas City, Mo.** at the Hilton Kansas City Airport.

We hope you'll join us by registering now and reserving your spot! The blessings and challenges facing rural and small-town congregations today will be addressed. Congregations will be encouraged to cultivate ways to become healthy churches, eager to bear witness for Christ, able to show mercy to those in need in communities and develop a robust life together with fellow members.

Keynote speakers will include:

- Rev. Todd Kollbaum, director, LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission
- Rev. Heath Trampe, senior pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, York, Neb.
- Benjamin Winchester, senior research fellow, University of Minnesota Extension and
- Rev. Benjamin Meyer, pastor, Hope Lutheran Church, Sandbury, Ohio.

This conference is meant for anyone living in, serving or interested in rural or small-town areas, with topics and resources specifically suited for this unique mission field. Breakout topics include:

- strategic planning
- witness and outreach strategies
- teaching the faith across all areas of the congregation
- stewardship
- opportunities for reaching young adults
- a case study in turning mercy work into an outreach opportunity
- many other topics affecting our rural and small town congregations.

Returning this year will be a special track for strategic planning; this option will have a limited number of seats and require attendance in all six sessions. There is something planned for everyone ... from lay person to pastor, student to teacher!

RSTM Shirts

We are happy to report that we are again making the snazzy Reaching Rural America for Christ polos available for purchase! Wouldn't you like to sport one of the stylish RSTM Reaching Rural America for Christ polos? Order by contacting our office by Oct. 13 and you can pick up your shirt at



Participants enjoy fellowship at the 2016 National RSTM Conference.

the RSTM National Conference. Available in gray or white, men's and women's sizes S to XL and are \$19 each, and sizes 2XL–5XL are \$21 each.

Registration and Lodging

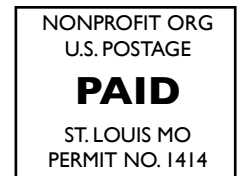
Adult registration for the conference is \$210/person and includes all plenary and breakout sessions, materials, Thursday dinner, Friday lunch and dinner and more. Rates are available for couples, meals only and groups. Contact our office with questions or group rates. Hotel reservations must be made separately from conference registration. The Hilton Kansas City Airport is offering a rate of \$104 /single, or \$112/double plus applicable taxes for our group including breakfast buffet per day per occupancy level; complimentary self-parking; complimentary airport transportation on request. More information and online registration can be found at lcms.org/rstm/conference.

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.

[Give Now](#)



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Upcoming RSTM Events

Don't forget Rural & Small Town Mission provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is Teaching the Faith: Adults with Rev. Heath Trampe, Faith Lutheran Church, York, Neb., on June 8 at 1–2 pm CST followed by Teaching the Faith: College/Young Adults with Rev. Marcus Zill, director of LCMS Campus Ministry on July 6, 1–2 pm CST. You can find our past webinars in our webinar archive on our website as a free resource for use when you need it.

Remember to register for our Engaging Your Community Events (EYC) at lcms.org/rstm. Watch for updates to our 2017 schedule happening all the time. These events provide excellent leadership training on community outreach and are ideally geared for a pastor along with three or four of his lay leaders to examine their communities and consider ways in

which they can serve those unique needs. Participants will be encouraged to identify congregational and personal assets and make plans to use them to engage their community. Leaders will be encouraged to see new opportunities and be filled with hope for the future.

Also look into our newest events, Engaging the Wandering! Meant to partner with the EYC, these events offer practical resources and communication skills for reaching out to our wandering members. Online registration is available for both types of events.

Lots of Engaging Your Community and Engaging the Wandering events are happening in partnership with a variety of districts right now! For instance, South



Dakota District will have events June 10 and Sept. 30, and Mid-South District will have an event on Dec. 2. Don't live in those areas? Pass the news to your friends who do!

If you are interested in having one of these events near you, contact your District office and ask them to begin the process of partnering with RSTM today!

For more information about our events or to see the rest of our calendar, visit lcms.org/rstm or contact our office at 888-463-5127 or rstm@lcms.org.