

Reaching Rural America for Christ

A newsletter of LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

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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

Aug. 16 - Webinar

"Pastors Leading Churches with Schools" with Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador, pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Wis., and assistant coordinator, LCMS Stewardship Ministry 1–2 p.m. CST

Sept. 13 - Webinar

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

Nov. 8–10

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.

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"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, Divine Service, Setting One–Five, *Lutheran Service Book*).

STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE

God's Salvific Will

In his book on missions, Detlev Schulz says, "All missionary endeavors should be seen not merely as an extended arm of the church, but as an instrument of God's saving and loving desire to embrace the whole world. As God's positive will for fellowship and union with man motivated Him to send His son to the cross, so too, God's salvific will motivates Him to take the church into His service. Through the activities of His preached and sacramental Word, God wishes to bring the entire world into His loving fellowship."¹

Imagine if you will, in our own congregations, if we took this concept as a call to action. Indeed, we are motivated by the Gospel of Christ to reach out to give witness to Him who "called us out of darkness

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RSTM Events Update

Don't forget: RSTM provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is *Pastors Leading Churches with Schools* with Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador on Aug. 16, followed by *Teaching the Faith: Adults* with Rev. Dr. Heath Trampe on Sept. 13. Find past webinars on our website as a free resource for use when you need it.

Watch for information on all our upcoming events! You can register for either our Engaging Your Community events (EYC) or our Engaging the Wandering (ETW) events at lcms.org/rstm. Meant to partner together, each event offers practical resources and skills for reaching out to wandering members and our communities with Christ's love.

The next EYC event will be Sept. 29 in Cookeville, Tenn., in partnership with the LCMS Mid-South District. More EYC and ETW events are being planned. Contact your district or our office if you are interested in holding an event near you.

Register now for the **2018 National Rural & Small Town Mission Conference**, with the theme "Have No Fear," Nov. 8–10 in Kansas City, Mo. Learn more at lcms.org/rstm/conference.

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



Pastors Leading Churches with Schools

by Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador

A congregation with a school is truly a blessed place. With generations of students formed for faith and life in the world as servants of God, these congregations are inextricably linked to their school ministry. However, as those generations have passed, there are increasing pressures placed upon congregations with schools. It costs more today to teach each student than ever before. Staffing costs including salary and benefits, curriculum costs and the inclusion of and maintenance for ever-changing technology have raised the cost to alarming levels. It is critical that congregational leaders take a serious look at their education ministry.

As the challenges arise, there is temptation to cut corners. There are those who hire teachers not trained in the Synod. Others simply balance the ever-challenging budget on the backs of the faithful workers by freezing salary, increasing benefit contributions and the like. When this happens, there is a rise in "institutional survival" mode. This is a mentality that says that the institution must be preserved at all cost. This makes most congregations adverse to even considering other options for educational ministry.

For educational ministry to survive and thrive, corners must not be cut. Aggressive, out-of-the-box ideas must be pursued if the local Lutheran school is going to be the ministry that the Lord has given it to be. We will explore some of those options in the upcoming webinar on this topic on Aug. 16, 2018. Join us to add to the conversation. We will likely raise more questions than provide answers. But this is a critical conversation to be had!

Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador is senior pastor at St. John Lutheran Church and School in Plymouth, Wis. He also serves as assistant coordinator for LCMS Stewardship Ministry.



Scenes from Lutheran schools across the Synod.

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

STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE, *continued*

into His marvelous light." As Paul reminds us in 2 Cor. 5:14–15, "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." Here we find the joyous motivation to be the church in service to Christ with the mission to extend His loving message of salvation to all of those among whom we live, work and play. What a privilege it is for us to carry out this mission. So, as you plan and strategize, think and do, remember the reason why it is that we do all of the things that we do — we "are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim [His] excellencies" (1 Peter 2:9).

Pastor Todd Kollbaum

1 Klaus Detlev Schulz, *Mission from the Cross: The Lutheran Theology of Mission* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 157.