

District Resources

NORTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH – MISSOURI SYNOD

the Happenings



The President's Message - April 2019



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Mission Lessons Learned from Peru

I am writing this article in Lima, Peru. Our district supports the mission work that goes on here by encouraging the workers and giving financial support. Two times a year we hold a meeting with our partners called a FORO to hear and see what is taking place, what has changed, and what the plans are going forward.

Presently we have worship in two places – one is at La Victoria and the other at Los Olivos. Some of the missionaries that were here in the past have returned to the USA. So Bo Brink, a former missionary for 17 years in Venezuela, and his wife Barb, came out of retirement to help out for 6 months. They will be going home in a couple of weeks but their wisdom and experience have paid off. Pastor Bo shared what they did to reach out.

They worked hard to get adults and children baptized and confirmed. They asked the congregation to implement the "Andrew Prayer Plan" where members choose to pray for some relative or friend who are not followers of Jesus. This was followed up with the "Philip Plan" where members were to invite the people they had been praying for to a Friendship Sunday. At Los Olivos over half the congregation participated and they had 5 first time guests.

Another idea was to survey 50 of the neighbors who live near the ministry to discover their opinions on how the church can serve them better. Thirty-three people in the La Victoria area took the survey and they learned parents wanted help in: raising their children, teaching the Bible, personal safety, good communication within the family, marriage, and help for single mothers.

They had a goal to have the people study the Bible and learn where people are spiritually. They learned that the people were not coming to the church for Bible study. So they went to the homes. The new pastor – Pastor Osmel from Bolivia – led Bible studies in 12 homes or businesses with a total of 25 people present. People trusted Pastor Osmel as many of the people's children are attending Castillo Fuerte where children are cared for and where worship takes place.

Every month they schedule an evangelistic event to help members invite their neighbors and friends. In October, they had a workshop – "Raising Happy and Responsible Children" – and 30 parents attended. They've also held: a "chocolatada" (afternoon party where people drink thick chocolate), an event about the creation and care of birds led by a volunteer zoo worker, a talk on "The Characteristics of a Happy Family", and now they are inviting the children and parents to Lent on Wednesdays.

(continued on next page)

The President's Message (continued)

As Pastor Bo shared, "What we are attempting to do is get evangelism to be a part of their DNA. We want them to see that they need to share Jesus and invite people to come and learn about Jesus." He also pointed out that in a church plant in urban ministry it takes two pastors - one to evangelize, get into homes of people & get to know the community and the other to care for members & their needs. This is very important if the church is going to grow and become a congregation.

They make it a goal to get into the members' homes and places of work. They have shared lunches and dinners with members of the church, comforting and encouraging them. *Portals of Prayer* are shared to train the members to have daily devotions in their homes.

Stewardship is an important part of any church plant. "You can't plant a church without stewardship," reported Bo. Giving is slowly increasing. One of the strategies they have implemented - they read a Bible passage together every Sunday before collecting the offering that motivates members to give offerings to please God. Sunday they read 2 Corinthians 8:9... *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.* During the offering people are invited to bring goods to be put in a "love basket" and then given to people in need at the end of worship.

When it comes to developing lay leaders, they discover their spiritual gifts so they can serve their Lord. As soon as the people are confirmed, they are asked to participate in some way, as this will help their maturity and spiritual formation as a part of the body of Christ.

I asked a fellow FORO member, Ron Bostick from the Southeastern District, what impressed him since our last FORO. He said, "The workers here do not let a NO stop them. They trust the Spirit to work in the hearts of these people. Pastor Osmel going into the homes and teaching Bible studies has been positive. It is refreshing to see that the workers here are going where the people are." God has blessed this ministry in Peru.

So what? There are congregations in our district that are struggling. Maybe there is an idea or two that could be used from the list above. Maybe you could be so bold as to start praying for someone not attending your congregation with the hope that someday you will invite them to join you at church. Or maybe you invite them to a Bible study in your home. I would hope that you do something. We need to let people know what Lent and Easter are all about. It is about a Savior who was graciously sent by His Father to die for our sins on the cross and then rise from the dead and conquer death. It is a story worth sharing, but how can they hear unless someone invites them? You may be that person.

Finally, the ministry in Peru is looking for mission teams to come to Peru. Interested? Call me.

Rev. Dwayne M. Lueck,
District President



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NORTH WISCONSIN DISTRICT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD

Across My Desk: DJ Schult

The Lord has won the spiritual war, yet we must continue to fight and stand firm in the battle for the souls of our young people. The below article is from the WI Department of Public Instruction website. This resource and many others are provided so we may be aware and act on behalf of those who need us most. Lord have mercy. Review the full document from below and other resources at: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/youth-suicide-prevention>

Facts About Youth Suicide in Wisconsin

Youth Suicide Deaths in Wisconsin

- Boys have more suicide deaths, more than 4 times as often as girls.
- The White race has the highest suicide death rate for youth.
- Firearms were the most common method for boys and suffocation is the most common method used by girls in the last 13 years (2000-2012).
- January, March, April, & May were the most common months for emergency room visits and hospitalizations for suicide attempts (2002-2012).

Comparing WI & US

- Suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death for youth in Wisconsin and 3rd in the country.
- Wisconsin had the 14th highest rate of suicide in youth among all states (age 5-19).
- Wisconsin has fallen below the national average only once from 2000-2013. (in 2008)
- Wisconsin's youth suicide rate has been higher than the national rate for 29 of the last 32 years (1981-2013).
- After dipping in 2012, Wisconsin's suicide rate has resumed the trend of increasing since 2008.

Youth Suicide Attempts and Related Risk Factors

- Wisconsin youth reported higher levels of binge drinking than most states. Binge drinking can be positively correlated with suicide attempts. (Higher binge drinking = higher suicide attempts.)
- 1 in 4 high school students don't feel like they belong in their school.
- 1 in 3 high school girls and 1 in 6 boys reported symptoms of depression.
- 13% of youth reported seriously considering suicide.
- More than 12% of students reported making a plan about how they would attempt suicide.
- About 6% of high school girls and about 6% of boys reported making a suicide attempt. About 3% reported requiring medical attention because of a suicide attempt.
- Among students that had sexual contact with someone of the same sex, 49% reported feeling sad/hopeless and 33% made a plan about how they would attempt suicide.



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2018 Required Notice of Youth Suicide Prevention Resources



More youth suicide prevention resources are available at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/youth-suicide-prevention>

Youth Suicide Prevention Resources Are Available

To get updated information on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention resources, visit [DPI's website](#). There are downloadable documents on suicide prevention requirements in state law, a fact sheet on youth suicide, and updated suicide prevention curriculum. It also includes a variety of resources for gatekeeper training for all staff and DPI's updated one-day training flyer, description, and calendar. Other resources include strategies on suicide interventions, memorial suggestions, and other topics.

Know the Signs

Suicide doesn't usually happen out of the blue—most often there are warning signs for others to see or hear. Get the *FACTs* and know the signs of suicidal thinking in your students, friends, and family members.

Feelings

- Hopelessness
- Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- Feeling trapped – like there's no way out
- No sense of purpose in life

Actions

- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and society
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Giving away prized possessions

Changes

- Decline in quality of school work
- Dramatic mood changes
- Anxiety, agitation, change of eating/sleeping habits

Threats

- Threatening/talking about hurting self

From American Association of Suicidology

Suicide Prevention: Warning Signs

Suicide Is a Complex Problem

Multiple factors are involved when someone dies by suicide. Oversimplifying the reasons someone takes their own life is not helpful. For instance, saying "caused" someone to end their life is not accurate. Not all bullying victims kill themselves. Research suggests many factors contribute to suicide. These include: biological factors, precipitating factors, and triggering events. Examples of biological factors include mental illness or losing a family member to suicide. Precipitating factors include poor grades, attending an unsafe school, victimization, or family rejection. Crisis/triggering events include experiencing a major loss, humiliation or bullying, and having access to lethal means. Suicide is a complex problem that is often misunderstood when oversimplified.

From: American Association of Suicidology (AAS) webinar January 2011.

Identifying mental illness or alcohol/other drug abuse problem is significant.

- The most common mental illness leading to suicide is depression. It is also the most treatable!
- In the 2017 YRBS, over one-in-four high school students experienced persistent sadness or hopelessness. About six percent of high school students attempted suicide. This shows that depression is somewhat common, but suicide is not.
- Binge drinking is highly correlated with suicide attempts. 90 percent of people who died by suicide had some form of mental illness and/or an alcohol/other drug abuse problem.

Reducing access to lethal means can be very worthwhile. (see www.meansmatter.com)

- Limiting access to the means for suicide provides the most significant reduction in suicide rates. Most often, youth who attempt suicide use a gun or drugs kept in the home.
- Do not allow youth to have unsupervised access to firearms and certain medications. Encourage safe/secure storage of all lethal means is a critical prevention strategy.

When youth are facing what they believe is a crisis and exhibit warning signs of suicide, be sure they are not left alone or sent home without supervision.

PO Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841 • 125 South Webster Street, Madison, WI 53703
(608) 266-3390 • (800) 441-4563 toll free • dpi.wi.gov

Additional information available at:

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/spmodelnotice2018.pdf>

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News and Events

Welcome Bill Jordan!

Bill Jordan is settling in to his new role at the NWD as the Lutheran Church Extension Fund Vice President and NWD Business Manager.

You may contact Bill at our office:

- 715-845-8241, ext. 102
- bill@nwdlcms.org



Thank You

Thank you to all those who support the ministry of the NWD and the Synod with their prayers and gifts. Click [here](#) for a special thank you letter from President Lueck that also highlights all we have accomplished together in 2018. You may also view the letter on the [Financial Resources page](#) of our website.

Lay Leader Training Offered Again – May 15

The Lay Leader Training offered in January was well received by the nearly 50 leaders attending. Because it was a snowstorm night and well over 100 were registered for the event, there will be a second offering on Wednesday, May 15 from 6-8pm at Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Wausau. The purpose of the event is to encourage, network and equip congregational key leaders to address the strategic, policy and conflict issues that arise in congregational ministry.

Registration is now open at this link: <https://conta.cc/2K3vmWS>

Midwest Flooding

Pr. Andy Weden is the NWD contact for disaster relief projects. He has been busy contacting people from the areas affected by flooding, as well as Synod and other LCMS district leaders preparing to send teams to serve. Pr. Weden has shared that flooding continues and states like Nebraska are not ready for teams to come. If your congregation would like to do something now, consider sending donations to Synod disaster relief and follow their updates at <https://www.lcms.org/how-we-serve/mercy/disaster-response>. We will share more as needs are communicated.

Professional Church Worker Student Grants - Deadline May 15

District financial support is available to all college and seminary students who are attending a synodically operated school to prepare for full-time service in the church as a pastor, teacher, deaconess, parish worker, DCE, lay assistant or other full-time ministry position. Aid is granted for one school year at a time; half for the fall semester, half for the spring. The student must carry a credit load that is considered full-time. A new application must be filed each year. Contact your school's financial aid office to get the District Financial Aid Application and return it to your school before May 15. The form and requirements of the grant program can be found on the NWDLCMS.ORG website under [Financial Resources/Financial Aid](#).



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News and Events

Youth Bible Bowl 2019—Location Change

The annual Wisconsin State Wide Bible Bowl for 7-12th grade youth will now be held at St. Paul, Bonduel on Saturday, April 6, 2019. Details are available on the NWD website under [Missions/Youth Ministry](#). Please contact Pastor Palmer, listed on the page, with any questions.

Bow the Knee

This dramatic Easter musical will be presented at:

⇒ St. Mary's Catholic Church, Tomahawk - April 6th @ 7pm & April 7th @ 2:30pm

⇒ Trinity Lutheran Church, Stewart Ave, Wausau - April 13 @ 7pm & April 14 @ 2:30 pm

Free admission and all are welcome as we focus on the Lenten season.

Pastors' Wives Retreat

April 25-27, 2019 - AmericInn, Merrill

A link to all the details is available on our [homepage](#) or [directly here](#).

NWD Spring Pastors' Conference

The Spring Pastors' Conference will held May 13-14 at Camp Luther. Agenda, details and paper registration forms are again hosted on the St. John Pulaski website...

<http://www.stjohnpulaskiwi.org/nwd>. Please contact Pr. Ryan Fehrman with any questions at revzion1896@gmail.com.

Noah's Ark Youth and Family Day

The South Wisconsin District would like to invite the NWD schools and congregations to join them for Youth and Family Day at Noah's Ark, Friday, June 14. Here's the link to their website... <https://swd.lcms.org/june-14-noahs-ark-youth-and-family-day/>

\$16 per person, includes all day unlimited admission and a free lunch. Order passes by June 3. Questions? Contact Robin in the SWD @ 414-464-8100, ext. 741.

Ready for the National Youth Gathering?

The NYG is almost here! Critical updates continue to be posted on the NWD Facebook page. Questions? Contact District Coordinators Samantha Tracy samanthakaytracy@gmail.com or Tara Barret tbarrett@immanuelrapids.com for answers.

Servants of Christ Conference

The Servants of Christ Conference at Concordia University Wisconsin will ground youth in the grace of their baptism, teach them about the doctrine of vocation, give them information about college and careers, and allow them to take part in breakaway sessions led by CUW professors & other guest speakers. These sessions are designed to strengthen their faith and help them to live as servants of Christ in our challenging world. Open to all students entering grades 9-12 in Fall 2019 the event will take place July 28-29 on our Mequon campus. The \$25 cost covers lodging and three meals. Registration opens April 15th. Adult chaperones are welcome to attend for the same cost as students. Registration and details available at: www.cuw.edu/ServantsofChristConference.



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Counselor Corner

READY TO BE HEALED

John gives us a view of Jesus' earlier ministry that involved two sources of water. Jesus met the sinful Samaritan woman at "Jacob's well" (John 4:6-7). There He shared "a spring of water welling up to eternal life"... as He revealed Himself as her Savior (vss. 14 & 26).

In another encounter Jesus intentionally went to a pool called "Bethesda" (5:2). There He met a man who had been an invalid for 38 years (vs. 5). Jesus posed a pivotal question—"Do you want to be healed" (vs. 6b)?

The question may appear as rhetorical, holding a clean answer. We will let this question provide direction for the center of this article.

"Do you want to be healed?" This is a question that could be asked of anyone in need... a desperate need that holds no human solution. Such a needy soul needs to look to the One who offers "living water" (4:10b).

I am reminded of the "12 Steps" of Alcoholics Anonymous. Here are the first steps in paraphrase—

1. I admit my life is in crisis, and I can't fix it.
2. Accept that God offers hope and healing. And,
3. Turn my life to receive the plan He alone offers.

Like the man at the pool, there was a need to accept the healing plan that Jesus offered—

"Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.
(vss. 8-9a)

Our Triune God gave us life. Jesus expanded this—"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10b). Yes, we come when our life is in crisis, seeking the healing and wholeness He offers.

Too many in ministry are challenged by Jesus' pivotal question. They minimize the extent of the "crisis." They presume to have a personal solution. They may rely on the human option for years, as was true of the invalid Jesus encountered.

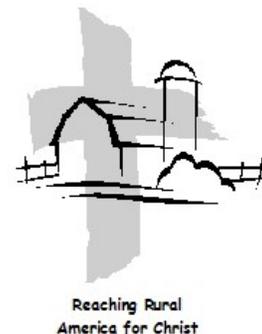
Jesus doesn't change His question... for you—"Do YOU want to be healed?"

Pastor Dan Kohn
District Counselor
revkohn@gmail.com / 715-610-2400



Rural & Small Town Mission

To check out the latest 'Reaching Rural America for Christ' Newsletter [click here](#). This month's edition includes the following article entitled...



"Engaging a Changing Community"

My entire 30 years as a parish pastor have been spent serving LCMS congregations in rural and small-town communities. That's remarkable when you consider the fact that I grew up in Houston — the fourth largest city in the country. I've truly been "converted" to the small-town way of life, serving the hard-working people whom I've had the privilege and blessing to know and love.

Yet, dramatic changes are sweeping across the rural plains of America. No doubt about it. I've seen it. We've entered an era of congregations closing because their memberships have literally died off. Offerings have dwindled dramatically. Pastors are becoming "bi-vocational," meaning they are employed and working outside of their called pastorates to supplement insufficient and declining salaries. Pastors are absorbing personally more of the costs of the routine day-to-day operations of their congregations. These changes can be nothing short of terrifying to a pastor and his family.

As is always true, the Lord nonetheless brings amazing and oftentimes surprising blessings and opportunities in this newly emerging ministry landscape. As some congregations die, others are born. Pastors who find themselves becoming "entrepreneurs" can be involved in their communities in truly remarkable ways.

In my own ministry here in southwest Iowa, we have given birth to a new congregation. I substitute teach in the public schools in five local school districts. The opportunities to witness and share my faith, to minister and pray with students, teachers and administrative people abound. Sometimes, I say tongue in cheek that I have the largest youth group in the Synod with over 6,000 kids, referring to the student populations of the schools in which I teach, on their own turf.

That we must engage our community is a fact of our ministry and congregational outreach that hasn't changed. How we engage our community is changing dramatically in ways we could never have imagined.

Personally, I love this new ministry field. I embrace it. To be able to maintain our Lutheran confessional integrity and continue to proclaim salvation only in the Lord Jesus Christ provides a Gospel message people need and desire to hear even today.

Ready or not, the future is now. It's here. And our Lord is still touching lives and bringing people to faith in Jesus. For that I will always rejoice.

Contributed through the LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission monthly newsletter by Rev. Dr. Keith Schweitzer



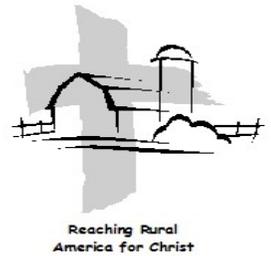
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Rural & Small Town Mission - Upcoming Events

Don't forget that Rural & Small Town Mission provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is Community Engagement on April 11, followed by Outreach Through Lutheran Braille Workers on May 23. Find past webinars in our archive and watch for information on all our upcoming events!



Register for one of our Engaging Your Community (EYC) or Engaging the Wandering (ETW) events at lcms.org/rstm. Upcoming events include an EYC on 5/11, in Waldport, OR in partnership with Northwest District. These partner events offer practical resources and communication skills for reaching out to wandering members and our communities with Christ's love. Online registration is available for both types of events. Contact your district or our office if you are interested in holding an event near you.

Register now for the 2019 National Rural & Small Town Mission Conference, *Running With Endurance: Eyes Fixed On Jesus*, Nov. 14-16 in Minneapolis.

To see our calendar, visit lcms.org/rstm. Contact our office at 888-463-5127 or rstm@lcms.org.

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 888-463-5127. "Like" us on our Facebook page at facebook.com/lcmsrstm.



- Check out the [CPS website](#) for a wealth of information or head right to the '[Blog & News](#)' section for the latest info!

- Visit the NWD website for a CPS corner listing the main contacts for churches using CPS, as well as links to the most important news and answers found on the CPS website. Bookmark it so you have it! <http://www.nwdlcms.org/concordia-plan-services.html>

NWD Financial Box Score **March 2019**

March Offering	\$89,528.99
March Budget	\$129,375.00
Year-to-date total offerings	\$236,413.10
Year-to-date budget	\$298,312.50

North Wisconsin District Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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