



A newsletter of LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

REACHING RURAL AMERICA FOR CHRIST



Our "Life Together"

- To follow the core beliefs of the LCMS
- To equip rural professional and lay leaders
- To support congregations in community engagement



Please Pray for These Important Dates

Feb. 13 – Webinar

"Rural and Small-Town Disaster Response"

with the Rev. James Daub,
pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church,
Havelock, N.C.
1–2 p.m. CST

March 12 – Webinar

"Domestic Abuse in RST Settings"

with Dr. Kim Schave, director,
Humanitri, St. Louis
1–2 p.m. CST

April 23 – Webinar

"re:Vitality"

with the Rev. Dr. Mark Wood,
director, LCMS Witness & Outreach
Ministry and LCMS Revitalization
1–2 p.m. CST

April 25

Engaging Your Community Event

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Waldport,
Ore., in partnership with the LCMS
Northwest District

"... 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, *Lutheran Service Book*

STRONG FAITH, FERVENT LOVE

Wait for the LORD

How's that new decade going for you?

How many times have you started to write the date 2019 and had to backtrack and fix it? A little over a month ago we said adieu to yet another decade, one more in the books. Some of you were, no doubt, glad to see the 20-teens go. Others may wish they could have stuck around for a while longer. But now, after a little bit of time, have you taken stock of where you are sitting in this new year?

For most of us, it is a foregone conclusion that our New Year's resolutions are already down the tubes or, at best, still a halfhearted afterthought each day. When the weight didn't fall off fast enough, when the boss didn't recognize me quickly enough, when my spouse hasn't changed a bit ... big hopes and plans dissipate into the daily grind and noise of everyday life. Perhaps because we just aren't patient enough to work through our waiting.

For each of us sinners/saints, this struggle is altogether real and constant. And how about for the church? We have been called to stand resolute against the passage of time, saying to the world, "Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD." So in strong faith and fervent love, we wait for the Lord. We wait for Him to use us as His handiwork to complete those "good works which God prepared in advance for us to do." He calls and equips us, strengthens and loves us, to wait. Not to wait idly as the world passes us by, but to wait for His return. And as we wait, we have the joyous opportunity to let others know the joy of our waiting. We can bear witness to the hope that we have in Christ Jesus and His Gospel message! For our God is faithful even when we are not: "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship." And so it is for us who wait. May God grant you fruitful "waiting!"

Pastor Todd Kollbaum





Rural & Small Town Mission

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Contact us

We want to hear from you! If you have ideas for future issues, comments, or feedback on articles you've read in *Reaching Rural America for Christ*, please contact the RSTM office.

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Support This Work

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.

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

GIVE NOW

Thrivent members: Remember that RSTM is eligible for Thrivent Choice Dollars!

Disaster Response in Rural and Small-Town Areas

by the Rev. Jim Daub, pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Havelock, N.C.

Greetings! My name is Pastor Jim Daub, and I serve St. Paul Lutheran Church in Havelock, North Carolina. I have had the joy of being the pastor here for almost 18 years. On Sept. 13, 2018, our city was hit with the major brunt of Hurricane Florence. It was absolutely amazing to see the power that is in a hurricane. We sustained almost 36 hours of downpouring rain, and steady wind speeds of about 50–60 miles per hour, with gusts upwards of 100 miles per hour. Our community has about 20,000 residents, and a major air station for the United States Marine Corps. However, we are the only LCMS church within an hour in either direction.

We truly became an island unto ourselves. Many of the roads were either washed out, flooded, or had power lines and trees across them. It was a great challenge for people to get basic necessities, as well as items to help clean and muck out their homes. Many people did not think to have these supplies on hand because Hurricane Florence had been downgraded from a Category 5 storm to a Category 1. The problem for many was that they did not heed the warning and became complacent in the days leading up to the storm. That complacency ended up hurting many people.

We were very blessed to become an unofficial distribution center for supplies



for our community at that time. It began with a load of 1/3 of the supplies from an Orphan Grain Train truck that was being loaded in St. Louis while we were in the midst of the storm. In addition to distributing those supplies, I had the opportunity to work very closely with a county commissioner who called me each day to say what items he had available and to see how much of it our church family could hand out to others. We didn't have major resources, being such a small parish, but the Lord was able to use us in a very mighty way.

I look forward to the opportunity to share with you more of my experiences of the storm, how we were able to share the love of Jesus with others, and what things we learned to do and not to do in the event of another storm that might hit our coastal area. I invite you to join the webinar live on Feb. 13, or listen to the archive recording.

RSTM Events Update

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 **Rural and Small-Town Disaster Response** on Feb. 13, followed by **Domestic Abuse in RST Settings** on March 12. Find past webinars in our archive.

RSTM's newest events, **Welcoming Workshops**, are something we think your congregation will love and benefit from. These day-long events will help congregations become more welcoming, providing God's Word to both current members and guests. They will offer practical resources on Welcoming Buildings, Welcoming Publications and Welcoming People.

Register for one of our Engaging Your Community (EYC) or Engaging the Wandering (ETW) events at lcms.org/rstm. These partner events offer practical resources and communication skills for reaching out to our wandering members and our communities with Christ's love. There is an upcoming EYC on **April 25 at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Waldport, Ore.**, in partnership with the LCMS Northwest District. Contact your district or our office if you are interested in holding an event near you. We are currently scheduling for 2020!

Please also pray for the new *Making Disciples for Life* conferences and watch for information on regional events near you!