

Mission Opportunities

As we draw closer to the holiest week of the church year, anticipation is building in congregations across IDW. Our Lenten journey will be culminating with the events of Holy Week, with Easter morning as the pinnacle! While professional church workers are often overwhelmed with the “busyness” of the season, don’t overlook the importance and necessity of journeying yourself through the events of this week. Allow God to strengthen, encourage, and refresh you through daily time in the Word! Here are some other ideas to keep the ministry of your congregation moving forward and out into your community and beyond:



Holy Week and Easter services are filled with traditions and visuals (from the palms to the Easter lilies). Why not incorporate simple explanations of the traditions and visuals in a children’s message, Bible class, or comments in your sermons? You’d be surprised how many people will thank you for explaining something they thought they should know or something they learned for the first time! It also helps them explain those aspects of your worship to their friends they invite!



Would you like to see your members getting involved with an **international mission outreach**? For 10 days to 1 month adventures available through LCMS World Missions check out http://www.lcms.org/uploads/mission/service-ops/teams_service_ops.pdf. Working at English camps, conducting VBS, serving in schools, working at women’s health classes, or being part of a women’s ministry or dental team are just some of the opportunities available. For additional information contact IOWAY Director Ellie Menz at 515-386-8420.



How about your youth? It’s still not too late to travel to Los Angeles and assist with the IOWAY event, including helping with VBS, doing multiple service projects in and around Los Angeles and making an eternal difference in the lives of children! Contact IOWAY Director Ellie Menz at 515-386-8420. Be watching for more information on Message Sent, a great afternoon of music, fellowship, and service to be held at Mission Central on Sunday, June 7.



Looking for ways to **energize the outreach vision and ministry in your congregation**? Consider *The 72—Partners on the Road*, a ministry of LCMS World Mission. It utilizes trained volunteers and provides three to four weeks of on-site assistance to congregations. For a minimal cost, you can receive encouragement, assistance, and training in reaching those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. If cost is a deterrent, please contact me for the possibility of an *Ablaze!* grant. For more information go to www.lcms.org/The72.



Lutheran Hour Ministries has produced another excellent **video-based Bible study**, this time on the subject of Islam. You can download it for free from their men’s ministry website. Go to

<http://www.lhmmen.com/studies.asp> for information on this study and the several other excellent resources they provide. Perhaps some men in your congregation could gather some of their friends together in their home for a time of fellowship, study, and relationship building. Let me know your experience with any of these studies!



Endeavoring to faithfully address 2007 Synod Convention Resolution 2-02A, “To Provide Guidance and Direction for Use of Diverse/**Contemporary Worship Resources**,” the LCMS Commission on Worship recently issued their report on 100+ contemporary Christian songs that are being used in congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. To access their report go to <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=14538>. You can download the report in either word or PDF and find suggestions for use according to scripture references, church year, and potential topic, similar to what is provided in the LSB Hymn Selection Guide.



A free audio New Testament Bible download is available on the *Ablaze!* website (www.lcms.org/ablaze). This amazing resource—perfect for sharing God’s Word with others—is brought to you through a partnership of Hosanna/Faith Comes By Hearing and LCMS World Mission. You can also go directly to www.lcmsbibledownload.com to download an audio Bible in one of 311 languages! The first download is completely free and for subsequent downloads, you just have to provide some basic contact information. Download your copy today to help you share God’s Word with others!



Outreach Challenge...reaching the younger generation of adults. REACH is a two-day conference (July 17-18) offered by Lutheran Hour Ministries to be held in Greensboro, North Carolina, that addresses the unique outreach challenges of people in their 20s and 30s by equipping them to engage their community for Christ effectively, and teaching them how to share the life-saving message of Jesus’ love in a way that is natural and informed. For more details, <http://www.lhm.org/reach/default.htm>



What do you think? How about a good discussion on the topic of church dropouts, especially the 70% that drop out between the ages of 18 and 22? Sam S. Rainer III wrote an intriguing article on research that was done which, among other things stressed the importance of depth and relevance of a church’s teaching and modeling authenticity, especially in the home. It would seem the LCMS has much to offer! Share your thoughts with me (mark.gerken@idwlcms.org) after reading the article at <http://www.sermoncentral.com/articleb.asp?article=Sam-Rainer-Squaring-Off-Church-Dropout-Rate&ac=true>.

Celebrating the Victory,

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