

Mission Opportunities

July 2009

The 37th convention of Iowa District West has come and gone. God's people gathered to worship, study the Word, fellowship, serve, and conduct business. Many resolutions were passed that can have a positive impact upon your ministry. It is good for God's people to gather to be reminded of where we are going in our ministry. Perhaps you might want to consider passing some additional resolutions, either informally or formally, within your congregation to help guide and encourage you in ministry. Here are some areas to get you started.

Older adults - If your community is a typical one in Iowa, the number of older adults is on the rise. How can you best reach them? For ideas and thoughts check out IDW's Older Adult Ministry committee (Rev. Dennis Angland, adviser (515-887-3261); Association of Lutheran Older Adults (www.aloaserves.org); or Christian Association Serving Adult Ministries (www.gocasa.org)

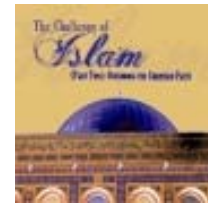
Young adults (20-29 year-olds) – Not only are younger adults leaving many of our rural communities, many are also leaving the church. A recent research project has shown 3 of 5 younger unchurched respondents agreed they would be willing to study the Bible if a friend asked them to do so and over 60% said they would attend a church if it presented truth in an understandable and relevant way. Research has shown that building relationships is the key to reaching young adults. In an article adapted from the book Tools for an Essential Church (LifeWay), Dan Garland writes: *What can your church do to help heighten the need for building intentional relationships with the unchurched and the dechurched?* If you'd like to read the rest of the article go to http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article_main_page/0%2C1703%2CA%25253D168726%252526M%25253D200826%2C00.html?emid=22.



Mission trips – Many who participate in a short-term mission trip testify to the life-changing affect it had. Perhaps you'll want to make such a trip a part of your plan? Contact IOWAY Director, Ellie Menz (ellie.menz@idwlcms.org) to help you get started. I'm aware of three groups traveling on trips this month: IOWAY to Los Angeles; Faith, Adel to Indonesia; and Trinity, Algona to S. Korea. Perhaps you could include them in your public prayers in worship and invite them to make a presentation at your congregation when they return to help build interest?

Service in your community – Looking for ways to serve and help your community? One approach gaining support is Faith in Action, a four-week, church-wide campaign that creates an outward focus and a heart to serve in your congregation. FIA culminates in a Sunday where regular services are cancelled, and the entire congregation engages in service projects in and with the community. This year's suggested date is October 11. Although you need not cancel worship services, you might get some good ideas by going to www.putyourfaithinaction.org.

Bible studies to understand other religions – Part 2 of *The Challenge of Islam* is now available on the Lutheran Hour Ministries' Men's Network website (www.lhmmen.org). You can download it, and any of the other five available studies, for free or review a DVD available from the district office.



Be aware of and learn from what others are saying – We are hopefully all life-long learners. While the Bible is the chief textbook, we can also learn from what others teach and say. This month's "talk" for you to review can be found at <http://www.qideas.org/talks/default.aspx?id=14>. It's one prominent individual's thoughts on influencing the culture. Although I don't agree with all he has to say, he does have some good thoughts. I'd welcome your thoughts after listening to him!

Funding - October 31 is the deadline for submitting an application for an LWML grant to be considered at next summer's LWML District convention. Partner with the wonderful mission-minded women of the LWML for an outreach idea your congregation is considering. Grants must be submitted by an individual IDW LWML member, society or zone, so contact your local LWML group for more information. In addition, there are still funds available for your congregation to receive an Ablaze grant from the District for 2009. These grants are available to help your congregation in some type of activity or event meant to help reach your community. Go to www.idwlcms.org and go to the Ablaze link to download an application.



Giving – As you think of all the possibilities for your congregation, you can realize the financial need to help accomplish them. That's why *Fan Into Flame* exists – to help raise the needed dollars to make possible many ministries that our church desires to undertake. For information and assistance as to how your congregation can be involved, please contact me today!



Closer partnership with District – Our task is too critical to attempt to accomplish on our own. That's why we have circuits, districts, and a Synod. As always, I stand ready to assist you in any way that I can to equip the people of your congregation to passionately, intentionally, and faithfully impact their community and beyond for the kingdom of God. Why not call me today at 515-570-2331 and let's start praying and planning!

Celebrating the Victory,

Rev. Mark Gerken, Executive Assistant for Missions
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