

Mission Opportunities

October 2009

In driving around the District there are signs all around that the harvest is upon us. Combines and tractors are in the fields – often into the darkness of night – in a persistent and focused pace to bring in the harvest! What a reminder this is to those of us in the Lord's service what our ministries are all about – to work the fields of our congregations and local communities (and by extension to the ends of the earth!) in preparation for the spiritual harvest. May this month's listing of ideas and helps be a blessing to you in your service!



Take Your Witnessing Training to the Next Level - Follow-up training for Lutheran Hour Ministries' popular Equipping to Share witnessing workshop is now available online! You can find bonus training resources, such as Scripture references, resources for additional study, training articles, tips for sharing your faith online, role-playing exercises, and much more. Use the materials in groups or individually. To register and get more information go to www.lhm.org/equipping/login.asp.



Sharing the Faith – If you haven't already utilized it, don't overlook this helpful *free* DVD from Synod. Released in 2007, it contains clips of individuals from across the Synod telling of their personal experiences of sharing the faith. One congregation in IDW showed a clip on non-communion Sundays while the offerings were being collected in worship. As their members were encouraged to seize opportunities to share their faith, their stories were then recorded and shared with the congregation. Free copies of the DVD are available either from the District Office or

from Synod (www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=9024).

Sharing Your Faith With Those You Love – The District's Personal Missions Subcommittee is in the process of planning a series of regional workshops for next February. Be watching for more information on these opportunities to help equip your members for personal witnessing – including taking advantage of their life situations such as grandparent, public school teacher, etc.

Need 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. To download an application go to www.idwlcms.org/district_news/ablaze/information/ablaze_grants.pdf.

Reaching the Younger Generation – I think just about every congregation in IDW has a desire to have more young people in their congregation. Do we understand the fact that what might be familiar to those of us who are more “chronologically challenged” might leave the younger generation with a blank look on their face? Each August since 1998, Beloit College has released the Beloit College Mindset List. It provides a look at the cultural touchstones that shape the lives of students entering college. Most students entering college for the first time this fall were born in 1991. Go to www.beloit.edu/mindset/2013.php to read the list.



Raising Mission Awareness – The delegates at this summer’s District convention passed a resolution encouraging all congregations of IDW to participate in *Fan Into Flame*. If your congregation hasn’t yet made the decision to participate, contact myself or Peter Black (202-230-7578) and we’ll be happy to meet with you or your leadership to share information on how to get started! In addition to the opportunity to provide funds for mission outreach around the world, across our District, and in your own community, *Fan Into Flame* also will raise the awareness of what is happening in missions. All materials, including Bible studies on the book of Acts, are available from the District office.

Intentional acts of Christian Service – This summer’s District convention urged congregations, schools, and other ministries to *incorporate numerous intentional acts of Christian service into their annual ministry plans with the goal of serving especially the citizens and institutions of their local community (Resolution 4-05)*. One possible resource



is Faith in Action, a four-week, church-wide campaign that creates an outward focus and a heart to serve. FIA culminates on a Sunday when 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 or contacting me to look at a sample kit. For a list of ideas from Synod go to www.lcms.org/ca/dcs/SERVEevents/yrofsserv.asp.

Working Together to Bring in the Harvest – It seems like every year a story is shared of neighbors coming together to help an injured farmer bring in his harvest. We can learn from their example and pull together as District and congregation to bring in the spiritual harvest. 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
Mark.Gerken@idwlcms.org