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Journey Through ANXIETY

by REV. DR. MICHAEL ZEIGLER,
Speaker of *The Lutheran Hour*®

How do you react to a warning light on the dashboard of your car? Do you get anxious? Do images of you stranded on the interstate in a downpour with no cell service start to flash through your mind? Or, do you assume that it's probably not a big deal and will eventually clear out on its own? Either way, sooner or later, you'll get it to a car mechanic who can tell you what you actually need.

I bring this up because I want to talk with you about anxiety, which, like a flashing "Check Engine" light, alerts you that something needs attention. Anxiety is like a warning light for your soul. We have indications that our culture may be suffering from an epidemic of chronic anxiety—a warning system that's out of control. In fact, of all the free topical booklets Lutheran Hour Ministries offers, two of the most popular, most requested, and most downloaded by people of all ages are *Journey Through Depression* and *Journey Through Anxiety*.

So, what does the Bible have to say about anxiety? In the Bible, the word for *anxiety* (sometimes translated as "worry") also has the more neutral meaning of "care" or "concern." We feel concern for the future because God created us with an internal warning system. We were made by God "wonderfully" and "fearfully," (Psalm 139:14) the Bible says, which means that, unlike non-human creatures, we have this God-given capacity to care about the future. So, in the right context, some anxiety can be good, when it functions as cautious concern. It's a biological, God-given response that helps keep you and others safe. As the Bible says, "The prudent person sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it" (Proverbs 22:3). In

Anxiety is
like a warning
light for
your soul.

other words, check your tires *before* you drive.

The blessing-and-curse of these warning lights for the soul is that sometimes they steer us toward appropriate caution, but other times, they malfunction. If you've ever struggled with anxiety, you know what this is like. You don't know what the future holds, but you assume the worst. Your mind spins. Your heart races. Your palms sweat. No matter what you do, the warning lights won't go off. And you can't tell the difference between real danger and false alarms.

Jesus assumes that in this life we will have anxiety, both the healthy, cautious care kind, and

the unhealthy, worrisome variety. When Jesus calls you not to be anxious (Matthew 10:19; Luke 12:11, Philippians 4:6, Isaiah 35:4), it's not a demand for you to fix yourself. It's an invitation to rest, like a child, and let God, your Father, deal with whatever comes tomorrow. You're not a self-driving vehicle, but you are a part of God's "fleet." And sometimes you are called on to be the driver and the problem-solver to help get God's children home again. In that context, some anxiety can be good, when it helps you care (see 2 Corinthians 11:28) But anxiety won't be doing its God-given job until it leads you to take it all to the Lord in prayer, to cast all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 55:22), because you're worth it to Him. And even better than a mechanic—your Father knows exactly what you need. In the Name of Jesus, Amen. ♦

Adapted from a sermon for The Lutheran Hour that aired June, 14, 2026. This was the first of a three-part series based on LHM's "Journey Through" topical booklets (lhm.org/projectconnect) and is also one of the topics covered in this year's Nurturing Your Faith Bible study series found in this publication.

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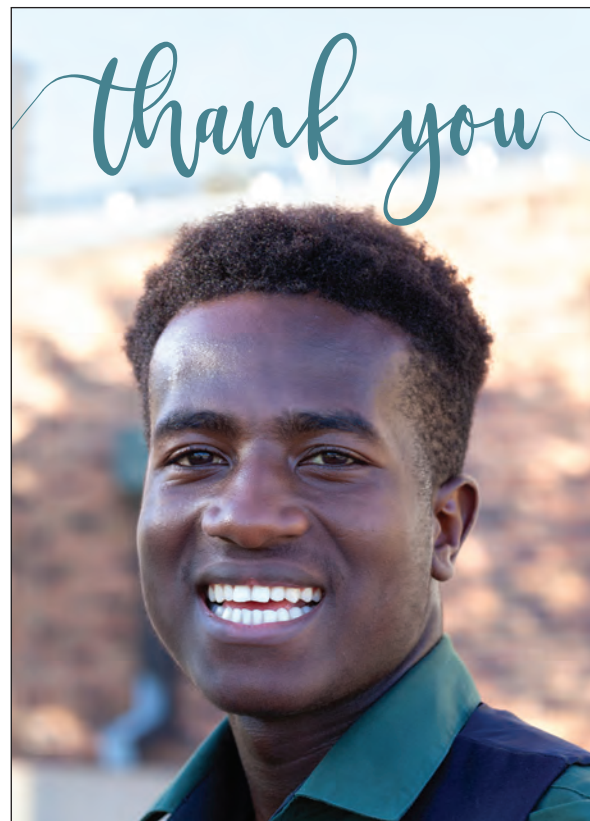
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Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church

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*Thirty-year-old Junior has carried a deep grudge against his sister following an inheritance dispute. Over time, bitterness took root in his heart and hardened his resolve never to reconcile with her. When he heard a radio drama from **LHM-Kenya** focused on forgiveness, he realized his bitterness had imprisoned him for years. Seeking freedom and peace, he acted on the teaching and reconciled with his sister. He continues to listen to LHM programs and, through the power of God's Word, has developed a renewed interest in attending church services.*

Your generosity allows people like Junior to experience Christ's love. Visit **LHM.ORG/GIVE** or send a gift in the enclosed envelope today.



CONNECTING HISPANIC COMMUNITIES to Christ

by MEGAN MCDANIEL

As one of the fastest-growing populations in the country—with projections expecting Hispanics to constitute more than 27 percent of the American population by 2060—the need for culturally relevant resources for Gospel outreach has never been greater. Hispanics are our friends, co-workers, neighbors, and family members. About half of those who identify as Hispanic in the United States today speak Spanish primarily. The Hispanic culture is deeply relational, using a variety of means to grow and extend their communities and stay connected. For Lutheran Hour Ministries, that means that digital pathways for nurturing faith and sharing the Gospel with Hispanics abound.



... the need for culturally relevant resources for Gospel outreach has never been greater.

CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF HISPANIC MINISTRY AT THE *Hispanic National Convention*



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) celebrated 100 years of Hispanic ministry in the United States at the 2026 VIII LCMS Hispanic National Convention. More than 250 leaders from across the United States gathered at the convention, which took place this year from July 28 to 31 at Concordia University Irvine in Irvine, California.

This national convention takes place every three years and is the principal national gathering of LCMS congregations and ministers who are engaged in Hispanic ministry in the United States. The main objective is for pastors, deaconesses, other leaders, and church members and families to gather and strengthen our collaborative work together.

LHM was one of the main sponsors of the convention, and staff in attendance included Sarah Willis, chief marketing & engagement officer; Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies, vice president of ministry engagement; Rev. Nilo Figur, LHM Latin America director; and Rev. Germán Novelli, LHM Hispanic ministry director, and members of his team.

During the convention, attendees had the opportunity to hear a presentation about the **Vivenciar.net** program given by Flavio Knopp, international director of Vivenciar.net, and Katherine Sanabria, our U.S. Vivenciar coordinator.

For eight years, the Vivenciar.net

program has been offering spiritual companionship through digital means to people 18 years old and older. “The next step of Vivenciar is to recruit and train Hispanic leaders from the United States (generally from four designated areas: California, Texas, Florida, and the Midwest), who will be responsible for serving people through this program,” says Novelli.

LHM hosted the banquet gala that closed the gathering on Thursday, July 30, where staff shared a short documentary-style film created about the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Andrés Meléndez, the first Spanish Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour**. Watch this video at lhm.org/hispanicministry.

“You can’t tell the story of Latino ministries in the United States and beyond without talking about the positive influence of Dr. Meléndez,” says Novelli. “He truly was a champion of the proclamation of the Gospel through mass media channels and was also a pioneer of ministering to Hispanics and doing church planting across the nation.”

The gala ended with some words from deaconess Noemí Guerra, host of LHM’s podcast, **Sentido Latino**. The podcast is now on YouTube, and its channel already has more than 90,000 subscribers since launching on this platform last summer, becoming one of the most popular Lutheran podcasts in the world.

see next page



THE EVOLUTION OF LHM'S *Hispanic Ministries*

At LHM, Hispanic ministry has always been more than simply translating materials written for English-speaking audiences into Spanish. As a mass media Gospel outreach organization, LHM is committed

to reaching this rapidly growing audience with the Good News of the Gospel.

Since 1941, LHM has produced Spanish-language Gospel programming designed to reach Hispanic audiences both in the United States and abroad.

Meléndez, a native of Puerto Rico, was named Spanish Lutheran Hour Speaker in 1941, and for the succeeding thirty-one years his voice was heard throughout Latin America, Spain, and cities in the United States with Spanish-language radio stations. The messages Meléndez delivered on the Spanish Lutheran Hour urged its listeners to be sensitive to God's mission. While Meléndez spoke in a different language to people of a different culture, the call of Christ remained

the same and opened additional doors for the use of radio as LHM's ministry expanded around the world.

Today's Hispanics are digital-first, so they can

to ask for help, so resources quickly accessible from home are very attractive to them.

Religion—or the practice of—is a private matter for many, so meaningful interactions that may

spark conversations about Jesus usually take time.

"We have seen an exponential growth of Hispanic ministry in our country," says Novelli. "There are more than 150 Lutheran congregations/missions serving Latinos in the United States, and our work at LHM is focused on supporting them and helping them to keep growing, so more and more people can hear about Jesus and His



LHM is committed to reaching this rapidly growing audience with the Good News of the Gospel.

be reached across all social media platforms and channels. They are hungry for resources that bring them hope and courage in today's challenging times, and they long for good family relationships, but they don't always know how to foster or encourage them. While some older Latinos may not know how to access our digital content, Hispanics are often hesitant

Gospel message."

Through Bible-based teaching, sermons, videos, devotionals, community outreach efforts, and a highly successful Spanish-language podcast, LHM is dedicated to developing programs and content made for Hispanics by Hispanics.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month, which takes place from September 15 to October 15 each year, is an opportunity to celebrate and thank God for the cultural, historical, and spiritual richness He has planted within our Spanish-speaking communities in the United States.

It's a time to remember that our roots (whether Hispanic or not) and our stories are part of a greater plan, and that our identity is not only shaped by our cultural heritage, but also by our faith in Christ.

This commemoration began in 1968 as a special week implemented by President Lyndon Johnson, and in 1988 it was extended by President Ronald Reagan to a full month.

September 15 marks the independence of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, followed by Mexico (September 16) and Chile (September 18).

It's a month to honor the legacy and impact of our Hispanic neighbors, thank God for His good gifts, and share His love with the next generation.

Being a global organization is about working and walking together, and collaborating with each other while we serve God, His kingdom, and His people.

Connected to Vivenciar.net is our Hispanic Heritage Month theme for 2026, called "Abraza la Vida" (Embrace Life). September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, and the LHM team wants to use this time to promote awareness around mental health, spread the word on Vivenciar.net, and share more information about our topical booklets that are focused on mental health, which give people a Christ-centered perspective on these topics. In a world shaped by a culture of death, we want to invite our audiences to embrace life, and to have relief in the promises of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life we find in God and His Word alone.





PARAELCAMINO.COM

A Hub for All LHM Spanish Resources

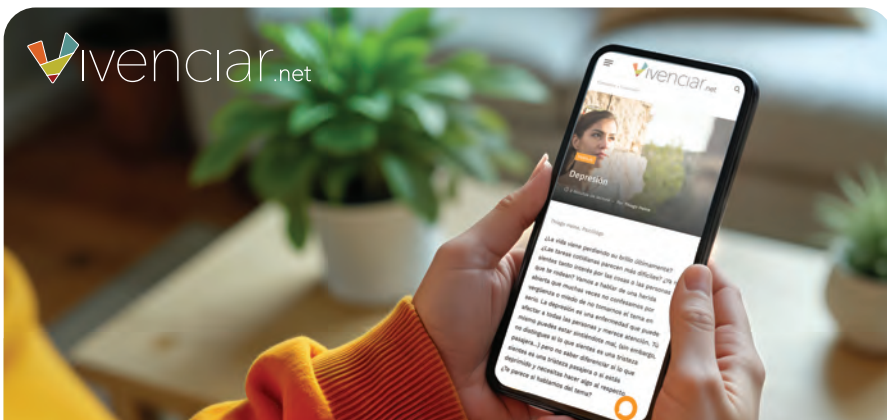
On the **Para el Camino** ("For the Journey") website, users will find practical, Christ-centered resources to help them successfully manage their daily lives in the United States. The website also offers daily and seasonal devotions, Bible studies, topical **Project Connect** booklets, children's booklets, a radio drama, **Ayer, Hoy y Siempre** ("Yesterday, Today, and Always"), a chat option that links to social media pages, and links to the Sentido Latino and Vivenciar websites. All these features bless Christians and non-Christians alike, encouraging them to grow in their knowledge of God and to follow in His footsteps.



SENTIDOLATINO.COM

Weekly Podcast

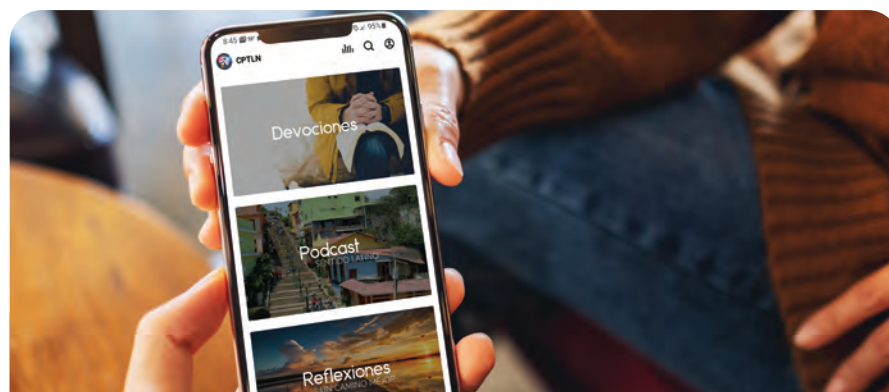
Drawing from a rich and time-honored Christian-Hispanic perspective, program hosts tackle relevant issues for Hispanics living in the U.S. with insight and humor, engaging listeners with a lively exchange of good advice and Godly wisdom for their journey. Launched in 2017, Sentido Latino initially aired its 15-20 minute podcast biweekly and transitioned to weekly episodes in 2019. The podcast's vision and mission are born out in its title. "Sentido Latino" means "Latin sense," and its tagline, "Donde tu vida tiene Sentido," means "Where your life makes sense." The program's objective is to raise and discuss issues and values that directly impact U.S. Hispanics' family, spiritual, and community life. In addition to the weekly episodes, Sentido Latino offers a weekly one-minute reflection, downloadable resources, and a chat option linked to social media pages.



VIVENCIAR.NET

A Digital Platform Offering Spiritual Guidance to Life's Issues

Pioneered and developed by LHM ministry center staff in the Latin America region, Vivenciar.net is a bilingual platform that reaches Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking individuals. Since it began in 2017, the purpose of Vivenciar.net has been to start conversations with non-Christians who are looking for help and guidance about relevant topical issues on the internet. Young adults are gravitating to the internet seeking help, including millions who are curious—or have doubts—about Christianity. Through Vivenciar.net, staff and volunteers enter into digital conversations with individuals and provide biblically based answers for their lives. Since its expansion into the U.S. in 2021, Vivenciar.net has offered help, support, and direction to Spanish-speaking individuals. The live chat, blogs, courses, and e-books give additional support to those seeking answers to their questions.



CPTLN MOBILE APP

lhm.org/apps

The CPTLN/Cristo Para Todas Las Naciones ("Christ for All Nations") app is a mobile hub for Para el Camino sermons, sermon notes, Daily Devotions, Project Connect booklets, Bible studies, reflections, Vivenciar, a Bible app, and a chat function. Hispanics use their phones extensively. When they are outside working, they have access to their phones, not their computer. Having LHM's resources on a mobile app gives them access to all the content they need without sitting down at a computer. They can conveniently use our resources on the go. This app offers a convenient way to connect Hispanics to Jesus and to equip them to share the Good News of the Gospel with others.

see next page

THE PIONEERING LEGACY OF THE *Rev. Dr. Andrés Meléndez*

While playing marbles as a young boy outside a church, a teacher invited Andrés Meléndez to attend Sunday school. This introduction to the Lutheran church paved the way for his future in ministry.

After studying at the University of Puerto Rico, Meléndez came to the United States in 1925 and enrolled at Concordia Seminary in Springfield, Illinois. Since the seminary classes were in German, he had to learn German while also working on his English. He wrote his first sermons in German. After graduating in 1930, he became a missionary to Hispanic communities in Texas.

It was decided early in the history of **The Lutheran Hour** that the program needed to expand into

a Spanish-language broadcast. A student at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis began translating Dr. Walter A. Maier's messages from The Lutheran Hour in Spanish, but something more was needed. In 1941, Meléndez took a train to St. Louis, where he sat behind a microphone at KFUP and began what would become a 31-year career as Speaker of *Cristo Para Todas Las Naciones*, the program title of the Spanish Lutheran Hour.

His influence extended beyond the radio. Meléndez helped launch and edit Spanish Lutheran publications, including *Noticiero Luterano* ("Lutheran Witness"), and in 1944 he became director of Spanish-language publications for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He translated, edited, and prepared materials that served

He sat behind a microphone at KFUP and began what would become a 31-year career as Speaker of *Cristo Para Todas Las Naciones*, the program title of the Spanish Lutheran Hour.



Spanish-speaking Christians around the world, often working late nights and weekends to expand access to faithful Lutheran teaching.

Meléndez also contributed to Spanish-language television projects, supported versions of *This Is the Life*, and helped develop the Spanish version of *The City That Forgot About Christmas*.

His familiar voice, clear theology,

and culturally accessible Spanish helped the program reach listeners across Latin America, Spain, the United States, the West Indies, and beyond. By the time he retired in 1972, his weekly messages were estimated to reach more than 14 million people. ♦

Megan McDaniel reports on the impact of LHM's ministry work around the world.

Vivenciar.net USA Launches by PAUL SCHREIBER

In concert with celebrations marking 100 years of U.S. Hispanic ministry in the LCMS, LHM launched Vivenciar.net USA (vivenciar.net) at the 2026 VIII LCMS National Hispanic Convention at Concordia University Irvine in Irvine, California, on July 28–31. First developed by LHM staff in Latin America in 2017, Vivenciar.net reaches Spanish- and Portuguese-speakers. The website is a digital outreach hub where staff and volunteers can interact with users (age 18 or older) in live chat after they complete a basic registration. Once registered, individuals can chat and download free e-books. In addition to its interactive nature, the website includes resources like two-minute reads on various topics and videos for spiritual and personal reflection—all designed to offer Christ-centered help to users.

Coordinating operations for Vivenciar.net USA will be Katherine Sanabria. A deaconess intern, she serves alongside her husband, Pastor Miguel Sanabria, at Immanuel Lutheran Church & School, a multi-ethnic congregation, in Brandon, Florida. She sees Vivenciar.net USA as having the same heart and mission as its sister ministry in Latin America. "Vivenciar.net USA provides a safe place where people



can be heard with compassion and introduced to the hope found in Jesus. Visitors can connect with trained volunteers through digital conversations and receive Christian encouragement. Vivenciar.net USA will address the unique realities and needs of the U.S. Hispanic community," Sanabria says.

Currently, the Vivenciar team is developing plans to instruct and equip volunteers in Florida, California, Texas, Illinois, and Wisconsin, with more coming. These individuals are trained to respond to various concerns. "Besides struggles like depression, anxieties, and addictions, Hispanics deal with

lack of family support and companionship, loneliness, migrant anxiety, and traumas. Vivenciar offers spiritual guidance in times of despair, bringing Jesus' light to a world darkened by sin, bringing hope when there is not much collective support, and connecting people with Jesus and faith communities," says Rev. Germán Novelli, director of LHM's Hispanic Ministries.

Sanabria agrees that Hispanics face many stressors in the U.S. "Migration brings grief over leaving family, lifelong friendships, and familiar surroundings. Many experience loneliness and the stress of cultural adaptation. Families face generational challenges when parents and children disconnect due to language differences and cultural changes. Financial pressures intensify these struggles. In all this, Vivenciar walks alongside people by offering a compassionate, listening ear, the hope of Christ and, whenever possible, connecting them with a local Lutheran congregation to continue receiving spiritual care and encouragement through God's Word and the Christian community." ♦

Paul Schreiber reports on the impact of LHM's ministry work in the United States.



Growing the Body of Christ— One Life at a Time

by KURT BUCHHOLZ, Global CEO, Lutheran Hour Ministries



One of my favorite parts of summer is seeing what God has accomplished through Lutheran Hour Ministries over the past year. As we share the results from our fiscal year that ended in May, I'm always humbled by the incredible ways the Holy Spirit continues to work through this ministry—and through faithful supporters like you.

This year, there is much to celebrate:

- Nearly **300 million people** around the world experience the Gospel each week through LHM programs, resources, or services.
- More than **two million people** shared their contact information for continued follow-up, and more than **650,000 people** were then connected with churches and Christian communities.
- Individuals equipped through LHM completed ministry activities nearly **925,000 times**—sharing Christ one conversation, one relationship, and one person at a time.
- More than **360,000 people** are actively connected to LHM through our resources or by giving their time, talents, and financial support.

These numbers are encouraging, but they represent something even greater: lives being transformed by the hope of Jesus Christ.

I recently had the opportunity to share several ministry highlights during the 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It was a joy to connect with lay delegates, pastors, church workers, and church leaders and hear how God is using LHM resources throughout our church body.

As one of the Synod's two grassroots auxiliaries, LHM is honored to come alongside congregations and individuals in extending Christ's mission. The convention was a wonderful reminder that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves. Together, we are sharing the Gospel with people who have not yet heard the Good News.

One conversation that continues to stand out is how Christians are sharing their faith in everyday life. Our ongoing research with

Whether someone is taking their first steps of faith or growing deeper as a disciple, we want to help them experience—and share—the love of Jesus.

Barna Group shows that many believers want to have faith conversations and are finding opportunities to connect with others in authentic ways. At the same time, many are looking for practical help in connecting their daily lives with the faith that sustains them.

That's why LHM remains committed to developing resources that encourage spiritual growth and equip people to confidently share the hope they have in Christ. Whether someone is taking their first steps of faith or growing deeper as a disciple, we want to help them experience—and share—the love of Jesus.

The need for this work has never been greater. Billions of people around the world still have not heard the Gospel. In a world longing for hope, the message of God's forgiveness, love, and salvation through Jesus Christ is as relevant as ever.

Thank you for making this ministry possible through your prayers, generosity, and faithful service. Your partnership allows us to encourage believers, equip Gospel outreach, and reach more people with the life-changing message of Christ. Together, by God's grace, we are growing the body of Christ—one life at a time. ♦



NATIONAL
good neighbor
DAY

SEPTEMBER 28

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**MEET
NEIGHBORS.**

**BUILD
CONNECTIONS.**

BELONG.



Loving Difficult People in Our Lives

by PAUL SCHREIBER

"As you slide into your chair at Thanksgiving, Uncle Fred says loudly, 'Still haven't found a decent job? It's probably your weight.' You consider dumping your potatoes over his head."

So begins LHM Theological Writer Dr. Kari Vo's new **Project Connect** booklet, *Loving Impossible People*.

Vo focuses on people who are challenging for us to love. For these folks, Jesus' words to love one another are particularly demanding. Difficulties include personality problems, behavioral traits, hurtful tendencies, strange beliefs, and even what side of an issue they're on.

Compound these obstacles with our own sinfulness, and our task is doubly daunting. Even so, these individuals are loved by God—and should be by us. "Such people are tiny unreached mission fields living right next to us—people who are likely to never hear the Gospel if we don't go to them in love," Vo says.

Vo suggests practicing this kind of love with someone who's only slightly problematic—not starting with your worst enemy but instead a "frustrating neighbor or an annoying person at church or at work." It's the simplest good deed that can be an inroad. "When it comes to what you do with an impossible person in the name of love, focus on actions," Vo adds, and "pray."

Easy to say, hard to do, right? "Our love for others means that we need to be deeply rooted in God's love for us. That's the only way we're going to truly love difficult people," Vo says. Reading John 15:1-17 we see how Jesus is the Vine, and we are the branches. We can do nothing without Him.

However, with Jesus living in us, and by the Holy Spirit's power, we can take baby steps—slow, deliberate actions to love another. We do this by picking a person to love, prayerfully considering their needs, choosing a small need to meet, doing it, reflecting and praying about how it went, and then, doing it again.

As we pray for strength and wisdom, we should pray for them. "Besides just being a good thing to do, this tends to make it easier for us to tolerate them, and in the end, to feel positively about them," she adds.

Ultimately, Vo says, "No matter what you end up doing, remember that our goal (our call) as Christians is to love our impossible people—NOT to change them. Our job is to obey Jesus and love others." God alone can change people's hearts.

Look for *Loving Impossible People* and all other **Project Connect** booklets at lhm.org/projectconnect. ♦



Our *Households of Faith* research has encouraged congregations to implement outreach activities that align with their Gospel-proclamation mission.

Spiritually Vibrant Home Book Becomes Foundation for Church Programs

by MEGAN MCDANIEL

Based on research done in partnership with Barna Group, Lutheran Hour Ministries has created convenient resources to meet people right where they are, connect with Jesus, and spread hope and faith throughout their community. Our *Households of Faith* research has encouraged congregations to implement outreach activities that align with their Gospel-proclamation mission.



The Spiritually Vibrant Home book.

"We called it 'Family Faith Missions,' and each week I released a new mission with a video on Facebook and a packet of materials for families to pick up after worship services to complete their mission," says Christmas. "This was all spy-themed, with 'Special Agent M' (myself dressed in a trench coat) as the mascot."

With the week one theme of "Pray Together," families received seven prayer-prompt cards with the mission of praying out loud together each day. Week two focused on spiritual conversations, with families receiving a Vibrant Conversations Deck. Their mission was to have four spiritual conversations that week. The third week highlighted hospitality, where families received a door hanger, recipe, and a gift with the mission of inviting someone into their home to share a meal.

"This is not my first time ordering the Vibrant Conversation Decks," says Christmas. "I also put them in our 'Baptism Boxes,' which are gifts for a newly baptized child and their parents. I also use them regularly in middle and high school youth group and at our high school girls' coffee group that meets weekly at a Starbucks."

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Oceanside, California, created a four-part sermon series this year based on *Households of Faith*. Pastor Michael Hansen came across the *Households of Faith* research through his interest in Barna Group. "I am always checking in on the latest research to make sure that our work reaches the most people in the most effective ways," says Hansen. "I was delighted that LHM partnered with them to make a resource like *Households of Faith*."

"Our message of evangelism is a hyper-local model," says Hansen. "We instruct and encourage our members to share the Gospel through their normal lives with the people already near them, like friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers."

Hansen wrote the sermons from scratch, using *The Spiritually Vibrant Home* book and *Households of Faith* research findings. About 20 members bought *The Spiritually Vibrant Home* book to read along during the series.

"It was a joy to have this thorough, eye-opening, and practical knowledge to share with our members," says Hansen. "I am looking forward to re-hashing this information on a regular basis, using this series as a foundation." ♦

**Photos provided by Immanuel Lutheran Church*

NURTURING YOUR FAITH: *Journey Through*

SESSION THREE *Journey To Freedom*



PART I: WHAT'S HINDERING US?

What do you turn to when life feels overwhelming or when you have a vague longing for ... something? We all have something—a habit, a relationship, a substance, a distraction. The question isn't whether we seek comfort outside of God (we all do), but whether what we turn to has become a snare keeping us from the freedom Christ offers.

You promise yourself this is the last time. Tomorrow will be different. You'll have more willpower, more discipline, more faith. But tomorrow comes, and the pattern repeats. The habit returns. The loop closes again. You feel shame wash over you—not just because of what you've done, but because you can't seem to stop. Most Christians wouldn't describe themselves as addicts. But many of us are bound by behavior patterns we can't break, habits we can't end, loops we can't escape. The Bible calls these "snares," or "entanglements," or "idols"—sins that bind us—and they thrive in secrecy and shame. So, we need honesty—with ourselves, one another, and God.

This study explores the entanglements that keep our hearts bound and the God who came to set the captives free.



REFLECT

*When life feels overwhelming,
what do you turn to for comfort?
How do you know if it has
become an entanglement?*

PART II: THE SPIRITUAL ROOTS OF ENTANGLEMENTS

Read Romans 8:20-22.

How It Is: A Creation Groaning

In Romans 8:22, Paul describes the reality we all face: "For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now." This groaning—this deep ache—is not just poetic language. It describes the world we actually inhabit.

Childbirth groaning isn't quiet or dignified—it's the sound of agony, of longing for relief that doesn't come easily. And we are part of that groaning creation. We groan too, longing for relief and redemption.

While we can hunger for unmet needs for a while, there comes a point when the pain becomes overwhelming. The hunger becomes unbearable.

People experiencing prolonged physical hunger will fill themselves with whatever is available—even "dirt cookies" in some parts of the world. It's not nutritious. It doesn't truly satisfy. But it's something. It makes the pain stop, at least temporarily. People with other kinds of unmet needs—emotional hunger, relational emptiness, spiritual

drought—will also do things to survive another day. They're trying to soothe or numb their pain and assert some control over their world to make things better.

This is the "bondage to corruption" (Romans 8:21b) Paul describes. We find ourselves trapped, bound by our own attempts to escape the groaning.

Trying to Get Control over Our Pain

Entanglements usually start when people are doing their best to get some control over their pain. We discover something that works—at least temporarily. We think, "I did this, and I felt better for a little while. If I follow this pattern, it will make me happy every time." We begin to run what we might call "programs for happiness" in our lives, treating our pain like a problem we can solve with the right formula or technique.

But here's the tragedy: life is not like software, and our mechanical happiness programs inevitably break down. The thing that once brought relief starts requiring more—more time, more money, more frequency, more intensity. Or it

see next page

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stops working altogether. Or worst of all, it creates even greater problems than the ones we were trying to solve. The solution becomes its own source of groaning.

This is the futility Paul speaks of in Romans 8. We are subjected to it. We cannot escape it through our own cleverness or willpower. Yet notice what Paul says: the creation was subjected to futility “in hope.” Even in the

midst of our groaning, even as we struggle with entanglements and failed happiness programs, there is hope. The same passage promises that creation “will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:21b).

We cannot free ourselves. But God can free us. And He will.



REFLECT

What “programs for happiness” have you been running? How are they doing? How have they broken down or created greater problems?

PART III:
STEPS ALONG THE LIBERATING PATH

With Jesus’ help, we find ourselves on a continuing journey toward freedom. As with any journey, it begins with a first step.

A Liberating Step: Powerlessness

Powerlessness is where it all begins—the point at which God can begin His work. It’s where we stop fighting Him and begin to open our eyes to what He can do in our lives. It’s a kind of death, isn’t it? Surrendering to reality hurts our pride and makes us feel vulnerable. It also makes us afraid—if we can’t fix our lives, what if nobody else can either?

The good news of the Gospel says that we are not alone, and the same power which raised Jesus from the dead also dwells in us (see Romans 8:11). Surrendering to that reality is the only foundation from which true and sustainable change is possible. Admitting powerlessness is the first step forward precisely because we are surrendering to a greater reality than any we can fabricate. And because we are human and long to be in control, this is a step we will need to repeat again and again.

A Liberating Step: Reality

Confessing what is real is a necessary step on our journey toward a new way of life. It allows God to bring us out of lies and deception into reality—where we understand the truth about ourselves, our circumstances, and our needs. Entanglements taught us to lie, distort truth, and ignore painful realities. Now, with God’s help, we begin to see the world for what it is.

As we see the real world around us, we also begin to act in response—setting wrongs right, rebuilding broken relationships, and finding ways to meet our needs that no longer involve harm. We learn to rely on God’s strength and wisdom, knowing we could never do it alone.

A Liberating Step: Desire and Fulfillment

As we become more in touch with reality around us, we also recognize the reality within us—our hopes, wishes, and desires. It is human to long and to try to satisfy those longings.

Yet as we become aware of what our souls truly desire we may feel frightened. Many of us have been taught to repress our desires, to treat them as dangerous or weak. Getting past this is part of our liberation. We must learn to name and honor our desires, then seek to fulfill them in ways that are good, life-giving, and satisfying. We rely on the help of God who made us and redeemed us.

A Liberating Step: Gratitude

As we take our first steps toward a truth- and reality-based life, we will face times when we get what we want and times when we don’t. We will feel grief and loss, and at other times joy. Although we cannot directly change our feelings, we can choose our attitude. And gratitude is a very helpful place to begin.

Gratitude is a far better option. It is possible to decide, day after day: “I will thank God for what I had before my world changed, because it was good. And I will find what is good in this change, big or small, and thank God for it.”

CONCLUSION:
GOD IS WITH US

As we journey to freedom from our entanglements, we realize we are not alone. People who face this challenge with us offer their company and insights. Those who have loved us all along are with us, and even those we may have hurt during the hardest times may choose to come back.

Most of all, God is with us. God came into our world of sin, idols, and snares as Jesus Christ. He knows our suffering. He has carried it. Yet suffering and death are not the end of Jesus’ story—nor of ours. Jesus says, “I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). After His resurrection, He says, “Behold, I am making all things new” (Revelation 21:5b).

May you know His peace and kindness as you journey toward freedom from those things that entangle and derail us. And may you rejoice as you see that Jesus is making you new—into the healthy, blessed, beloved person you were always meant to be.



REFLECT

What is one specific step you can take this week to begin walking the Liberating Path? Who can you ask to walk alongside you?



Watch an interview with Dr. Rick Marrs discussing the journey to freedom at lhm.org/biblestudies



REFLECT

Which step on the Liberating Path—Powerlessness, Reality, Desire and Fulfillment, or Gratitude—feels most attractive? Most challenging? Why?



PRAY

Heavenly Father, give me wisdom to recognize entanglements when they come and power to stand strong on Your Word against them. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.





Is God Calling Someone You Know to Board Service?

by DR. KURT SENSKE, Chair, Int'l LLL Board of Directors

... God works through faithful individuals who simply say "yes" when He calls.

One of the greatest blessings of our ministry is the willingness of God's people to serve. Whether through prayer, volunteering, financial support, or sharing professional expertise, every act of service helps advance the mission Christ has entrusted to us. I have seen firsthand how God works through faithful individuals who simply say "yes" when He calls.

Each year, we also have the opportunity to identify new leaders to serve on our Board of Directors, and our nomination process for the Spring 2027 election is now underway. As Board Chair, I have had the privilege of serving alongside thoughtful, Christ-centered men and women who care deeply about this ministry and the people we serve. Together, they prayerfully provide oversight, steward our resources, help shape long-term strategy, and

ensure we remain focused on the mission God has given us.

Board service is not about having all the answers or being an expert in every area. It is about bringing a heart for Christ, a commitment to servant leadership, and a willingness to listen, learn, pray, and work collaboratively. God equips His people with different gifts, experiences, and perspectives, and those differences strengthen our conversations and our decisions. No one person possesses every gift, but together we can faithfully discern God's direction for the future.

Strong ministries depend on strong, faithful leadership. That is why we invite members of our ministry family to participate in identifying those whom God may be calling to serve. We are seeking individuals who demonstrate integrity, spiritual maturity,

sound judgment, humility, and a genuine commitment to advancing our mission. Some may bring leadership experience, financial expertise, legal or business knowledge, ministry involvement, or community connections. Others may simply possess a servant's heart and a desire to help guide this ministry faithfully into the future.

Would you take a few moments to pray about who God might be calling to this important role? Perhaps someone immediately comes to mind. Or perhaps, as you pray, you begin to wonder whether God is calling you. If so, I encourage you to consider submitting your own name. Self-nominations are welcome.

Being nominated does not obligate anyone to serve, nor does it guarantee selection. Rather, nominations begin a thoughtful and prayerful process of discernment as

we seek the leaders God is preparing for this season of ministry. Healthy organizations intentionally cultivate future leaders, and every nomination helps us identify individuals who may contribute to God's work in meaningful ways.

If you know someone who would be a faithful and effective board member, please submit a nomination by November 1, 2026. To learn more about board service and complete a nomination form, visit lhm.org/nominations.

Most of all, I ask you to pray. Pray for wisdom as nominations are reviewed, for discernment for those considering service, and for God's clear guidance as we prepare for the future. Thank you for your faithful partnership in this ministry. Your prayers, encouragement, and willingness to serve continue to make an eternal difference. ♦

Your Monthly Gift Creates Eternal Impact

by CHAD FIX

God works through Lutheran Hour Ministries—and faithful supporters like you—to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to people across the United States and around the world. Your partnership in this mission is a blessing from God, and we thank Him for your generous heart.

Did you know there is a simple way to make an even greater impact? By joining LHM's **Mission Monthly** giving program, you become part of a community of Christians committed to sharing the hope of Christ with people around the world. Your recurring monthly gift of \$10, \$20, \$100—or any amount—provides dependable support that helps sustain and expand Gospel outreach. Because your giving is consistent, more people can hear the life-changing message of Jesus.

As a Mission Monthly partner, you will also enjoy these special benefits:

- A welcome gift as our thanks for joining.
- The opportunity to request featured ministry resources without making an additional gift.
- A 20-percent discount on select ministry resources through our online store.
- Monthly stories showing how your support is changing lives through the Gospel.

Your faithful generosity helps bring Christ's love and hope to people searching for truth in every corner of the world.

Each month, more believers choose to make a lasting difference through Mission Monthly. Will you join them? Sign up today by visiting lhm.org/missionmonthly. ♦ Chad Fix oversees the corporate communications of LHM.

Start your day with Daily Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries!



 LHM.ORG/DAILYDEVOTIONS



MINISTRY in an Age of Acceleration by CHAD D. LAKIES

Since at least the middle of the 1700s, people have lived with the sense that life feels like it's moving faster. There is less time in which to get everything done and seemingly more to do.

Everything goes so fast and seems to be getting faster. Indeed, it's not just a feeling. Social and historical scholarship support this sense of social acceleration.

Technology usually features in explaining this phenomenon. From machines to wires, radio waves to processors, we're able to do a great deal faster, more efficiently. As a result, we can get more done in the same amount of time. To the extent that technological advancements and efficiencies remain synchronized, the experience of life can be exhilarating.

Yet, it's exactly when technology and efficiency get out of sync that we tend to have problems. And it has everything to do with how much we try to get done in shorter and shorter periods of time. When technology and our to-do list are out of sync, when there's not enough time to do everything we want or believe we need to do, we feel exhausted, overwhelmed, and frustrated. We feel sapped of creative, spiritual, and mental energy. Sometimes, we begin to despair. In other words, many of us suffer from what theologian Andrew Root calls, "time-sickness."

Maybe your life feels like you're stuck trying to go up the down-escalator. You've just got to keep going or you're going to fall so far back that you're uncertain you could start again. At the same time, you're just not sure you'll ever make it to the top. In an odd sort of way, even "getting some rest" has begun to feel like a task. That is what Root means by "time-sickness."

It's not wrong to blame technology for feelings like time scarcity or social acceleration—none of the time fatigue we're feeling would be possible without it. But blaming everything

on technology would be incomplete. It's more complicated than that.

In 1930, the sociologist Max Weber argued that a certain sense of work had come to dominate and orient our imaginations. How we think about time offers an example. Vacation, retirement, schooling—all these are periods of time when we are "not working." It's as if life itself is based around when we're working and when we're done—whether that means preparing for a career (schooling), taking a break from work (vacation), or ending our season of work (retirement). That we've become so oriented around work comes from what Weber called the "Protestant work ethic." The ethic is something we've inherited, mostly from the Puritan Christians, who taught that hard work is the basic form of Christian faithfulness. We are to work hard and give it our all, it is said, because

Jesus gave everything for us. Good Christians are good workers, according to the Puritans.

According to the ethic, what counts as good work is productive work. The busyness of productivity, however, tends to affect how we think about what we're worth. Are we busy enough? Are we productive enough? Our inner accountant is not just counting the dollars in our bank accounts but also harangues us about the fact that we're not working hard enough, that we haven't accomplished enough. We start to believe that we're not worthy enough. As a result, busyness, productivity, and how we use our time—all these get tangled into a complicated web that can cause a spiritual crisis.

Our inner accountant really is the voice of the devil. It tries to make you pay more attention to your efforts, your achievements, and the unaccomplished items of your to-do list than to all the truths that matter most. Those truths include that you are a baptized child of God whose sins have been washed away (see 1 Peter 3:21), that nothing can separate you from God's love (see Romans 8:38-39) and that God's power is not revealed in your efforts and achievement, but made perfect in your weakness and failures (see 2 Corinthians 12:9). That little voice of the inner accountant causes us to question whether those truths could possibly apply to us.

Our striving in the workaday world signals we believe that we haven't arrived. That we aren't enough. But the Gospel has something to say about what it means to be enough. Having a busy life does not equal having a worthy life. Neither your productivity nor the length of your to-do list says anything about whether you *are* enough.

There's only one marker that determines any of our worth. God has made his Son Jesus more than enough for all of us. His death on the cross and resurrection from the tomb have secured our redemption. Rather than working for it, we're simply invited to receive this good news as

... busyness, productivity, and how we use our time—all these get tangled into a complicated web that can cause a spiritual crisis.





We can rest in the promise that God is indeed working through us, present in, with, and through us as we care for those He's brought to Himself by bringing them to us.

a gift. Jesus says to you, "My child, there's nothing more to do. You have been loved before the moment of your creation.

There's no more pressure, no more 'you have to's' or 'you must's,' no more efforts to make to find yourself acceptable, lovable, affirmable—there's only freedom and rest in Christ. All that needed to be done has been done." Jesus said it Himself: "It is finished." (John 19:30b).

All of this means something for how we imagine ministry in our time. Whether we are pastors, church workers, or lay people, it's easy for us to become captive to the busyness and productivity, to the optimization strategies and efficiency requirements that are derived both from the Protestant ethic to work hard as well as the technological advancements that both enable us to and subtly demand that we do more in less time.

But who said ministry is supposed to move quickly? And when did ministry become about productivity? Is not ministry, after all, introducing people to Jesus and walking with others through the midst of their difficult moments, caring for them as Christ would? This is what everyday Christians can and are called to do.

What does this look like in an Age of Acceleration? We can consider ministry through the lens of *pace*. Ministry moves at the pace of relationships. Relationships are slow, messy, and require a great deal of time. If we stop to think about it, the fastest ministry can go is about 3 mph. Why? Well, it's kind of silly to think about, but that's roughly how fast Jesus ever would have moved. That's the average pace of a human walking. But He wasn't always walking.

Most of the Gospel records tell that Jesus often stopped and was teaching or in conversation with people for extended periods of time. This should be a primary point of reference for us when we think about ministry.

God has chosen to involve us in His work of care, compassion, mercy, and redemption. He reaches down from heaven and uses the variety of gifts, talents, skills, and abilities that He has formed within us to accomplish His good work in the lives of people He's drawing to Himself in our midst. We can rest in the promise that God is indeed working through us, present in, with, and through us as we care for those He's brought to Himself by bringing them to us. In all of this, God is the primary Mover, the One who is in charge, the Star of the show, all for the sake of the needy ones that sit across from us. This is how Jesus has arranged for you, your work, your gifts, skills, talents, abilities, training, and trials to work for the good of others.

Ministry doesn't have to be captive to the pressures built into the Age of Acceleration. But many of the people God will bring into our lives will be struggling with a kind of status anxiety that's only been made possible by our workaday world and all that it demands. In these moments, God will use you to proclaim the Good News. And your freedom in the Gospel will be a witness that ministry in the Age of Acceleration only moves at the pace of human relationships through which God does His redemptive work. At Lutheran Hour Ministries, we stand ready to support you in all of this. ♦

Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies oversees ministry engagement for Lutheran Hour Ministries.

God's Gifts and Light Shine Forth in 2026 Advent Devotions

by PAUL SCHREIBER



Two original Advent devotions in English and Spanish will be available from LHM in 2026. In English, Dr.

Kari Vo has written *Love's Pure Light*, and in Spanish, Deaconess Noemí Guerra has penned *Regalos del Cielo* ("Gifts from Heaven"). *Love's Pure Light* finds its inspiration in the Christmas carol, "Silent Night," and looks at Jesus' birth through Scripture and the Nicene Creed. *Regalos del Cielo* speaks to the manifold gifts of God we experience each day, most notably the Gift of the Christ Child at Christmas.

God entered our world at Christ's birth. Vo says, "It is Jesus who shows us what real love really looks like. He makes it clear that God wants us and intends to have us as His own children forever. None of us is too small or too broken for Him to want; He cares about all of us, even the ones who have been living in darkness so long they've forgotten what the light looks like."

In "Rescue Mission," Vo writes, "So God solved our problem within Himself, within the Trinity. Acting out of sheer love and mercy, God the Father sent God the Son into our world to rescue us. Jesus came so close to us that He took on human nature. God Himself became a Man In that helpless baby we see God's love, lighting up our darkness and bringing us home to the Father."

How important is it to find Christ in Christmas? Guerra says: "It is deeply important for people to find Jesus as God the Father's true Gift during the busyness of Christmas. ... especially for someone who may be tired, hurting, questioning God, or unsure whether they still believe. Each devotion points back to this truth: God does not wait for us to climb up to Him. He comes to us in Jesus, by grace."

Guerra echoes this thought throughout her devotions: "In this season of Advent, remember that Jesus is our most important Gift: God with us, God for us, and God giving us in Him, by pure grace, the forgiveness, life, peace, and hope that we cannot reach or sustain by our own strength. Now, with the help of the Holy Spirit, how can you respond to this gift of God in your daily life?"

Advent devotions will run from Sunday, November 29, 2026, through Epiphany on Wednesday, January 6, 2027. Find them online at lhm.org/advent and paraelcamino.com/adviento. ♦

"It is deeply important for people to find Jesus as God the Father's true Gift during the busyness of Christmas."



CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY IN JAMAICA by CHAD FIX

For decades, LHM has shared Christ's love with the world by identifying and equipping local laypeople to develop ministry programs contextual to the culture in which they serve. Since staff members and volunteers understand local needs, LHM can create customized programming and resources that resonate with people in their local communities and meet them right where they are.

The **LHM-Jamaica** team recently held a women's seminar titled, "Women as a Treasure in the Church." The workshop started with a fun treasure hunt activity where the clues were Scripture verses. The women competed

in teams of two to complete the activity and the winners received LHM coffee mugs as a prize.

Following the opening activity, the women were each asked to share which woman in the Bible inspired them. One attendee focused on Naomi, highlighting her strength and perseverance in her faith. To close out the seminar, the ladies took part in an activity where they painted their own treasure boxes to store their personal treasures. As they departed, participants were given several topical **Project Connect** booklets to share with friends and family members.

The ladies were grateful for

the opportunity to be part of the seminar and shared that the time together in fellowship left them feeling renewed in their faith. May this gathering serve as an encouragement to continue sharing their faith with others.

LHM-Jamaica's annual men's domino tournament was held at the ministry center in June. Due to the popularity of soccer throughout the country, LHM staff were concerned that attendance may be low with the Jamaican national team participating in this year's World Cup. The team came up with a plan to air the World Cup matches during the event and widely advertised this opportunity.

Staff shared the Gospel in an inviting environment with the more than 40 men, women, and children in attendance. LHM provided food for everyone and prizes for the winners. Participants also learned more about LHM's outreach and received packages containing several booklets as well as a T-shirt with the ministry center's logo and contact information to provide additional opportunities to share the ministry's work within the community. Attendees were also invited to attend a worship service hosted by LHM on the following Sunday. ♦

New Board Members Begin Terms Following LHM's 2026 Election by CHAD FIX

Nearly 71 percent of Lutheran Hour Ministries' registered voting members cast ballots in the recent election to fill open seats on the Board of Directors for the International Lutheran Laymen's League/Lutheran Hour Ministries. **Mary Scott** of Irvine, California, and **Ron Wheeler** of Lee's Summit, Missouri, are beginning their first terms on the Board; **Karl Abraham** of Lochaber-Ouest, Quebec, Canada, has been re-elected to his second term; and **Jim Dankenbring** of St. Louis, Missouri, has been re-elected to a third term. Each of these individuals started a three-year term at the July Board of Directors meeting.

As part of a change previously approved by the membership, the Board is responsible for appointing its four Officer positions each year from among sitting Board members. The Board of Directors has re-appointed its officers from last year: **Kurt Senske** of Austin, Texas, as chair; **Donald Scifres** of Greenwood, Indiana, as vice chair; **Kirk Farney** of Hinsdale, Illinois, as treasurer; and **Linda Arnold** of Oswego, Illinois, as secretary.

Learn more about your elected Board members at lhm.org/leadership/lhm-board-of-directors.



Thank YOU for voting!

Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's election process! **Want to vote in 2027?** Anyone who gives a gift to LHM between July 1, 2025, and Dec. 31, 2026, will be eligible to register for next year's voting membership. Look for a postcard in the mail in February 2027 with details about how you can register to vote in next spring's election.

Board Nominations Now Open for 2027!



Do you know a mission-minded individual who is looking for a meaningful leadership opportunity? Nominations for the Int'l LLL/LHM Board of Directors are being requested now for next spring's election.

The Board is seeking dynamic, visionary candidates who are committed to helping LHM share the Gospel around the world. You are urged to prayerfully consider the God-given talents, skill sets, passion for outreach ministry, and service to the Lord of potential nominees from your personal and professional networks. In addition to being a current LHM/Int'l LLL member, all nominees must be members of a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod or Lutheran Church—Canada and cannot be ordained clergy.

To download a nominations form, or learn about additional eligibility requirements for nominees, visit lhm.org/nominations. Nominations must be received by Nov. 1, 2026, to be considered. ♦



LWML Mission Grant to Support Digital Mission Field

by CHAD FIX



LHM was honored to receive an initial disbursement for a \$100,000 mission grant from the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) during a check presentation at the 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. LHM's mission grant submission, "Gospel Outreach Through the Digital Mission Field," was one of 33 approved by the LWML voting body during their 2025 convention for the 2025-2027 biennium.

As people today become more present online, LHM has developed numerous digital resources that allow staff and volunteers to enter into conversations with individuals and provide biblically based answers for their lives. **Thred** encourages an open and honest conversation about life, faith, and Jesus with young adults and helps them discover how to integrate their faith into their online presence. **Gospel Adventures** provides grade school and middle school youth a virtual opportunity to experience kids from another part of the world while seeing God's work in action. A digital resource called *Spiritual Conversations: Sharing Life, Faith, and Jesus with Friends* equips high school students to become effective witnesses for Jesus. **LHM Learn** offers digital "equipping" resources to help families and congregations reach out with the love and Good News of Jesus Christ in their everyday lives.

"We are so thankful to the LWML for their continued partnership," says Lois Engfehr, LHM's director of grants and foundation relations. "We look forward to seeing this grant's impact to connect more souls to the saving message of Christ." ♦ Photo above: (L-R) LHM Board Chair Kurt Senske; LWML Public Relations Director Debbie Yocky; LWML President Eden Keefe; and LHM Global CEO Kurt Buchholz.

Ambassadors Support LHM Through LHM Sunday

by MEGAN MCDANIEL

LHM Ambassadors are important representatives for LHM products and programs, serving as leaders in outreach within their churches and communities, and their ministry efforts result in more people being impacted by the Good News of the Gospel.

One of the ways Ambassadors support the mission of LHM is by hosting a **Lutheran Hour Ministries Sunday** at their church. Historically, LHM Sunday has taken place on the first Sunday in February, but Ambassadors can work with their pastor to choose any day of the year that works best for their congregation.

The most northern congregation in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), Zion Lutheran Church in Fairbanks, Alaska, celebrated LHM Sunday in March this year. LHM Ambassador at Zion, Bill Slayden, shared LHM materials encouraging members to get involved with the ministry. "The children's **Project Connect** booklets have been very popular with the kids at our church," says Slayden. "Our adult members have taken many of the outreach booklets home and have enjoyed the topics within them."

In addition to LHM Sunday, Slayden wanted to share with his fellow congregation members how they could listen to **The Lutheran Hour**. He keeps up with the Project Connect fixture at his church, and after learning about the new digital listening cards that fit in the slots

of the Project Connect display, he was eager to display them alongside their booklets. "Many of our members have said the cards are helpful with finding local stations that broadcast The Lutheran Hour each week," says Slayden. He also compiled all the digital options for listening to The Lutheran Hour that were listed on the card and included the list in his Ambassador newsletter, allowing members to see all the ways to access LHM's weekly message of hope.

LHM Ambassador at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Iowa City, Iowa, Vaughn Davisson, shared how he changed the way he typically does LHM Sunday this year. In April, he featured LHM as the "Mission Minute," sharing LHM's resources and a video of Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, Speaker of The Lutheran Hour. "Our Redeemer places six big jars in the narthex where various missions are designated," says Davisson. "Members can put up to one dollar each week in whichever mission jar they choose. At the end of the six weeks, based on the rankings by the amounts in the jars, each mission gets a percentage of our church's mission budget for the year."

Being an Ambassador is easy! All you need is access to the internet, an active email address, and a love for sharing the Gospel with those around you (and encouraging others to do the same)! Visit lhm.org/ambassador to learn more and sign up. ♦

LHM Resources for Veterans



BIBLE STUDIES • BOOKLETS • DAILY DEVOTIONS
... and more!

For free resources created just for you, visit

 LHM.ORG/VETERANS



Congregation Spotlight: How YOU Can Join LHM's Mission

by MEGAN MCDANIEL

Congregation name:

Faith Lutheran Church

Congregation size:

210 baptized members

Location:

Shumway, Illinois

Contact person:

Pastor Jordan Peiser

How does your congregation support LHM?

We have an annual **Lutheran Hour Ministries Sunday** where our congregation's LHM Ambassador reports on the activities of LHM and appeals for individual donations. Our church budget includes an annual gift to LHM. We previously sent two mission teams to support LHM's work in Latvia. Our church sends teams to work at the Illinois State Fair booth sponsored by the Central Illinois District Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL), where **Project Connect** booklets and materials are distributed. Our men's group and Sunday school use LHM's materials, and we use the LHM devotions during Advent and Lent.

What was the motivation behind supporting LHM?

Our congregation is mission-oriented, supporting various Lutheran missions. We have fielded teams to Africa and Europe. Our members believe that media ministry has the ability to reach the unchurched with the saving Gospel message. Supporting LHM is a means of spreading the Gospel to those beyond our community, in ways that reach the unchurched.

What has been your members' feedback? What do your members like about LHM?

Our members have responded to mission team opportunities, hosted tri-circuit LLL rallies, and financially supported LHM. Individuals from our men's group are involved in community service projects such as highway litter pick up and the local food bank. Our local radio station features **The Lutheran Hour** each Sunday, and our members use the **Daily Devotions** from LHM. Our members like The Lutheran Hour, the LHM Rose Parade float, LHM's mission to reach international audiences, and LHM's variety of resources.

— Photo from Pastor Jordan Peiser

If your congregation would like to learn more about how you can support LHM's mission, contact Robin Forsythe at **314-317-4152** or **robin.forsythe@lhm.org**. If you would like to make a gift of support, visit **lhm.org/give**. ♦



Gospel Adventures™: *Go Mongolia* is an informative and interactive virtual learning experience, complete with five days of FREE curriculum in two formats and bonus materials. LHM, in partnership with Group Publishing, takes grade school- through middle school-aged children, and even some adults, on a week-long adventure.

Gospel Adventures gives kids an inside look into the day-to-day lives of people like them around the world through music, videos, and fun characters. The curriculum includes videos, maps, colorful graphics and charts, hands-on activities, questions for discussion, and more, all working together to highlight Mongolia's religion, ethnic groups, ways of living, culture and customs, history, and other features that make Mongolia unique. Students are introduced to kids just like them living in another country who carry their faith with them through day-to-day life. They learn about the foods, animals, people, and places of Mongolia with Gospel Adventures.

Although many parents and teachers choose to take part in Gospel Adventures during National Lutheran Schools Week (NLSW) in January, the curriculum is flexible and can be incorporated into your

schedule whenever is best for you. There is still time to register and complete this year's adventure as a group at school or at home. Visit **gospeladventures.org/mongolia** to sign up!

Bonus Materials:

Don't forget to utilize the bonus materials included with your Gospel Adventures registration. Bonus materials include a middle school workbook to accompany the online experience, a printable coin bank template, coloring pages of maps, and more. To access the bonus materials, simply register for *Go Mongolia* and look for the "coloring pages" header on the curriculum page.

Join the Facebook Group!

Want to join an online community of individuals who have used Gospel Adventures? Join the Gospel Adventures Facebook group to connect with others and get inspiration for your next Gospel Adventure! This is a great place to share examples of how you have used Gospel Adventures and learn new possibilities to incorporate into your program. Log in to your Facebook account and type "Gospel Adventures" in the search field to find the group. ♦





Sharing LHM's Mission at The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Convention

by CHAD FIX

More than 3,000 people convened in Phoenix, Arizona, July 18-23 for the 69th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This year's convention theme of "Christ Is Risen Indeed," was based on 1 Corinthians 15:20-22: "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a Man came death, by a Man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."



LHM Global CEO Kurt Buchholz shared greetings during Wednesday morning's general session and showed a new video highlighting how LHM fulfills its mission by offering programs and resources that allow people around the world to experience the Gospel nearly 300 million times each week. See the video at lhm.org/about.

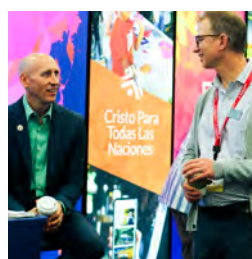


Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies, LHM's vice president of ministry engagement, led a breakfast workshop with delegates

from the LCMS Eastern District and provided information about relevant LHM resources and tools to help them most effectively share the Gospel in their neighborhoods.



A newly designed exhibit booth grabbed attention with a stunning display that maximized visual impact and clearly communicated LHM's mission, highlighted some of the ministry's most popular programs and resources, and showcased volunteer opportunities through our partnership with the Petal Pushers®. It received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with many convention attendees commenting that it was among the best booths in the exhibit hall. The booth layout also allowed individuals to have extended conversations with LHM staff, including Lakies; Chief Marketing & Engagement Officer Sarah Willis; Vice



President of Marketing & Communications Becky Pagel; Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour®** Rev.

Dr. Michael Zeigler; Director of Hispanic Ministries Rev. Germán Novelli; Associate Director of External Relations Nicole Heerlein; and Coordinator of External Relations Jennifer Wood. Staff were joined by LHM Board Member Vincent James, LHM Float Committee Chair Dick Gast, and Petal Pushers Chair Lynn Gast.



"The booth was a welcoming place where people could learn how LHM's tools and resources not only help to grow and nurture faithful Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit but allow them to effectively share their faith with others," says Heerlein. "Many attendees mentioned how they appreciate that LHM has a variety of offerings to connect with people at any stage of their individual faith journeys."

In addition to hosting the opportunity for engaging conversations about LHM resources, the booth also allowed church

workers and laypeople to receive giveaway items like Hispanic ministry phone stands as well as several topical **Project Connect** booklets, including *Journey Through Depression*, *Journey Through Anxiety*, *35 Character-Building Prayers for My Grandchild* (volumes one and two), *Getting (Re)Started with Prayer*, and *30 Days of Household Devotions*.



Another highlight was a Tuesday evening reception that LHM hosted for around 475 convention participants. After several days of meetings and business sessions, attendees appreciated the opportunity to simply unwind, reconnect, and enjoy meaningful conversations without presentations or an agenda. Every individual attending the reception also received a new LHM key fob in appreciation for their partnership in ministry.

"The venue, food, and welcoming atmosphere created an experience that felt authentically LHM: warm, engaging, relationship-focused, and mission-minded," says Willis. "It was a wonderful reflection of our organization and left a lasting positive impression on everyone who attended." ♦



Creating a LASTING FAMILY LEGACY

by MEGAN MCDANIEL

For Bernie and Judy Gordon, Lutheran Hour Ministries has been a part of their family legacy and desire to share the Gospel for decades.

Judy first connected with LHM as a child in Iowa, listening to **The Lutheran Hour** on the radio and attending Lutheran Laymen's League rallies with her father, who was involved in the organization and served several terms as president of the Iowa District East. Bernie learned about LHM through Judy and her family and appreciated the organization's mission and values. Judy's childhood experiences left a lasting impression and later helped shape the couple's desire to continue supporting LHM today.

Both retired educators, Bernie and Judy saw their connection to LHM grow even stronger after retirement. After moving to New Mexico, they served in a small church where pastoral resources were sometimes limited. LHM's Bible studies, **Daily Devotions**, radio broadcasts, and other materials became trusted tools for them at church and in their personal ministry efforts. They knew LHM's resources were scripturally accurate and helpful for sharing the Gospel.

"We appreciate that LHM's resources are accessible," says Bernie. "Whether you have internet or not, there's The Lutheran Hour on the radio. Just being able to pick up your phone and find just about any resources you want online is absolutely amazing."

"Also, having sermons available in Spanish with a Spanish speaker is very important to us," says Judy. "There are so many Hispanic individuals in the United States and South America, and being able to hear the Gospel message in their own language is really important."

As they gained more spare time and financial freedom in their retirement, supporting LHM



"We appreciate that LHM's resources are accessible."

became a meaningful way to give thanks for God's blessings and help extend ministry beyond what they could do personally.

What stands out most to the Gordons is LHM's unique outreach efforts. Bernie and Judy value LHM's commitment to ministry carried out by local people, allowing the Gospel to be shared in ways that connect with people's language, culture, and life experience. Like many supporters of the ministry, they recognize that LHM can go places, speak languages, and touch lives in ways they cannot, making their support part of God's work around the world.

"There's no other organization quite like LHM," says Bernie. "The mission statement [*Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church*] speaks for itself, but what is really important is that LHM has explored and researched. They found that the best way to do ministry is locally, with local people, and

that makes a lot of sense to me. Cultures are different everywhere. People may be the same, but their experiences, where they grew up, and their backgrounds are different. That affects how we sometimes see ourselves in the world."

Their generous support is also rooted in legacy, as Judy's parents desired to leave their home to LHM. They carried on that desire as they prepared their own estate plans, and they chose to continue that legacy by including LHM in their will. They see financial support as an important way to continue serving in LHM's mission.

"Because we don't speak foreign languages, and at our age, we don't travel like we used to, it makes a difference that LHM staff can go places and do things that we are not capable of to share the Gospel and the love of Jesus," says Judy. "We can do it locally in our area, but there is a greater need around the world where our support can make a huge impact."

Bernie and Judy are grateful that LHM continues to adapt to a changing world, finding new ways to reach people who may not encounter the Gospel through traditional church settings. They hope more pastors, congregations, families, and individuals will discover and use the many resources LHM provides. Their desire is for people to know Jesus, and they are thankful to support a ministry they believe is guided by the Holy Spirit and faithfully shares Christ with people around the world.

You can join LHM's mission by supporting our growing global ministry efforts. Visit lhm.org/give to see the various ways you can make a gift that supports sharing the Gospel with people around the world. Are you interested in learning about gift options that provide long-lasting support for Lutheran Hour Ministries while also potentially being financially beneficial to you? Contact our gift-planning team at 1-877-333-1963 or lhm-gift@lhm.org. ♦

Celebrating 30 Years of Ministry in Panama

by CHAD FIX

When LHM began work in Panama in 1996, one of its first programs developed was **Project JOEL**. JOEL stands for Jóvenes con Espíritu Libre, or “youth with a free spirit.” This program brought a solid Christian witness to Panamanian youth by providing information to truly help them to share their values. It has now become an integral preventive program designed to expose and offer educators and students alternative faith-based lifestyles that are healthier and more productive for society.

The program’s success has led to it being integrated into school curricula in many other countries as part of LHM’s global strategy for reaching out to youth. Since its introduction by **LHM–Panama**, Project JOEL has also been recognized by the Ministry of Education in Panama and Guatemala for its positive impact



“This event was also a great opportunity to remember all those brothers and sisters who were pioneers in this ministry and to reflect on what God has provided and will continue to do through His work in Panama.”

on youth.

While Project JOEL and ministry to youth and families remains a ministry cornerstone in Panama, their work has expanded to include a variety of other successful programs and resources. These include **Equipping the Saints** evangelism-training workshops,

Bible Correspondence Courses, radio programs, television spots, social media, booklets, film showings, holistic outreach, counseling and comfort programs, and much more.

The ministry’s many accomplishments over the past three decades were celebrated

during a thanksgiving service at Castillo Fuerte Congregation in Los Andes. It was a fitting moment to thank God for His goodness and mercy throughout these years. Rev. Dr. Nilo Figur, LHM’s regional director for Latin America, provided the message during the service.

“This event was also a great opportunity to remember all those brothers and sisters who were pioneers in this ministry and to reflect on what God has provided and will continue to do through His work in Panama,” says Figur. “We were honored by the presence of several Lutheran pastors and leaders, whose participation we gratefully acknowledge. We thank God for allowing us to experience these meaningful moments and ask for His guidance to reach even more people throughout the country and share His message of hope.” ♦

LHM Materials Encourage Individuals at Successful Aging Festival

by MEGAN MCDANIEL

Stockton University’s Center on Successful Aging (SCOSA) holds an annual Successful Aging Festival where members of the community gather together for workshops, lectures, exhibitor booths, and fellowship, centered around positive experiences for older adults.

Pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Galloway, New Jersey, Rev. Renato Hoerlle, participated in this year’s festival with an “Aging and Spirituality” booth. This annual event brings together many resources related to aging well, and he realized there has been very little focus on spirituality and the hope we have in Christ.

Rev. Hoerlle took several of LHM’s **Project Connect** booklets with him to distribute at the festival. Some of the booklet topics included depression, anxiety, cancer, Alzheimer’s, grief, and devotions.

He shared that the experience at the festival was very positive. He and another member of the congregation who went to the festival had several opportunities to share the Good News. They had many personal conversations and directed people to additional LHM materials.

“The festival was a wonderful opportunity for us to share the Gospel, listen to people, encourage them, and also make Peace Lutheran Church more visible in our community,” says Rev. Hoerlle. “Thank you to everyone who helped in different ways—through prayers, preparations, materials, encouragement, and support. We are serving together in this effort.” ♦



A LEGACY THAT REFLECTS YOUR LIFE TODAY

Your life looks different than it did just a few years ago. This is why experts recommend reviewing your will about every five years.

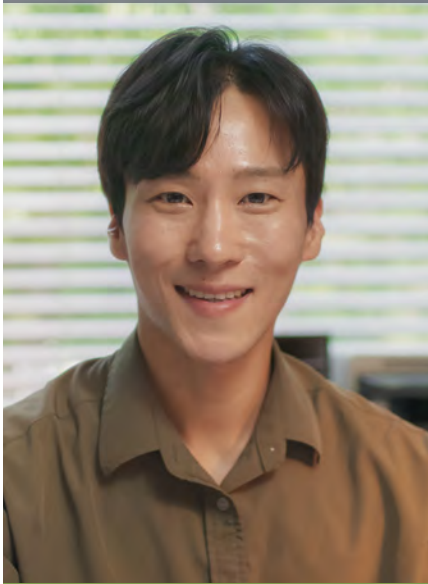
National Make a Will Month in August is an annual encouragement to make updates—or create a will for the very first time. It’s a meaningful way to not only protect your loved ones but shape a future that reflects your values.

Creating a will is easier than ever! Download our Will Planning Guide—our gift to you—at lhm.org/giftplan or request one by calling 1-877-333-1963.

 LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

CHANGING LIVES AROUND THE WORLD *with the Gospel*

by CHAD FIX



South Korea

Yonsei had been quietly following the **LHM-South Korea** prayer group online without actively participating. The LHM-South Korea staff realized he was in a period of searching and that was why he was hesitant to engage. An organ recital hosted by the ministry team was the first time Yonsei interacted with LHM staff in person. Through the event, he was able to meet other community members and engage in meaningful faith conversations. He received a devotional book, which helped deepen his connection to the ministry. Yonsei was referred to a local church community and is now actively participating in their programs and activities.

Through the event, Yonsei was able to meet other community members and engage in meaningful faith conversations.

Ester is regularly reading her Bible and is eager to learn more about Jesus.

Ester regularly listens to a radio program from **LHM-Peru**. A few months ago, Ester called the LHM-Peru ministry center after listening to a program about influential women. She entered and won the drawing that the ministry center was having at the time, which included a Bible, chocolates, and a family board game. During the call, Ester shared that the program helps strengthen unity within the home, promotes good values, and offers interesting and uplifting teachings. She also expressed her desire for the program to remain on the air for many years to come. Ester shared that she did not previously own a Bible, so receiving this copy was a great blessing for her life. Ester is regularly reading her Bible and is eager to learn more about Jesus.

Peru



Democratic Republic of the Congo

Ana has faced many trials in her life, including being sexually abused as a teenager and becoming pregnant. An LHM staff member was recently in her neighborhood in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and met Ana. She shared her story with him and they prayed together. They continued to stay in touch and after a few conversations, the staff member encouraged Ana to go to church. She started attending worship services and talked to the pastor. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, she felt a desire to learn more about Christianity and continues to attend church each week.

Ana started attending worship services and talked to the pastor.

"I realized that God can reach a person even through just a few simple sentences, exactly when they are needed most."

Forty-five-year-old Ilze is a nurse in Riga who came across **LHM-Latvia's** #LittleTruths posts while browsing online. The short message resonated with her more deeply than she expected and she began reading other brief reflections on the page that each provided encouragement and helped her view her situation from a different perspective. Before she realized it, several hours had passed. "I had reached a point in my life where I had more questions than answers and felt as though I no longer had the strength to keep going," she says. "Through these messages, I realized that God can reach a person even through just a few simple sentences, exactly when they are needed most." Through the power of God's Word, that unexpected encounter on Facebook became the beginning of her journey back to hope.

Latvia



Individuals around the world experience the Gospel through Lutheran Hour Ministries' culturally relevant programs and resources nearly 300 million times each week. Below are just a few examples to show how God has been using LHM recently to change lives around the world with His Good News.



Ethiopia

Eighteen-year-old Samuel has lived a troubled life and is currently imprisoned. He recently began participating in the **Bible Correspondence Courses** offered by **LHM-Ethiopia** at his prison. "Your lessons have taught me that there is salvation in no one but Jesus and have provided me with hope in knowing that God is working for me here even in these difficult circumstances and that He has a plan for my life," he says. "My understanding of the Holy Spirit has made me grow; I have found something in your lessons that I could not find anywhere else. They are one of the things that make me happy."

"I have found something in your lessons that I could not find anywhere else."

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Orapin became a Christian.

Orapin earns a living selling fruit juice. In the last few years, she longed for peace and strength to face her mounting financial losses. Raised in a non-Christian religious community, Orapin searched for truth. She met a volunteer from **LHM-Thailand** who shared her testimony with Orapin. The volunteer gave her a booklet and encouraged her to enroll in the ministry's Bible Correspondence Course. As she studied the lessons, Orapin's questions grew into faith, and she began praying for God's guidance and blessing. Wanting to learn more, she contacted the LHM-Thailand team for additional materials and was excited to attend a local church. She felt supported by the worship, pastors, and community, and she felt joy and confidence. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Orapin became a Christian. Orapin is grateful for the materials that helped her know Jesus. She is now active in a Bible study group and is preparing for baptism in the coming months.



Thailand



Guatemala

Raquel is a teacher who connected with **LHM-Guatemala** after hearing about their **Project JOEL** program for youth during a workshop hosted by LHM at her school. The LHM-Guatemala staff distributed children's booklets, and Raquel was excited to share them with her students. She used the booklets as part of their daily reading activities, helping the students identify key ideas and record them in their civic education notebooks. Raquel told LHM-Guatemala staff that her students learned a lot from the topics presented in the booklets. She was thankful for the program and the materials they offered.

The LHM-Guatemala staff distributed children's booklets, and Raquel was excited to share them with her students.

LHM staff had the opportunity to share the Gospel message with Yelda.

Yelda is a single mother in her early forties. She first reached out to LHM staff in Central and South Asia through WhatsApp during a tough time in her life. As she began talking to the staff, she shared several challenges she was facing and her desire for peace, stability, and hope for the future. Through ongoing conversations, LHM staff had the opportunity to share the Gospel message with Yelda. They shared who Jesus is and what He has done for us. Yelda has been receptive to learning about Christianity and has asked honest questions while expressing an interest to learn more about what it means to follow Jesus. LHM staff have encouraged her to worship at a local church where she can experience Christian fellowship and continue learning more about Jesus. ♦



Central & South Asia



Sharing God's Promises Through the Tournament of Roses Parade by CHAD FIX

Inspired by the upcoming Tournament of Roses Parade theme, "Welcome," the Lutheran Hour Ministries Float Committee has chosen the theme of "God's Promises Welcome All" for the 2027 Lutheran Hour Ministries Float entry in the Jan. 1 parade. Jesus commissioned His followers to go into all the world and preach the Good News to every person, and this year's float theme aligns with LHM's mission of sharing the Gospel around the world with people who have not yet experienced the transformative love of our Savior.

Using imagery from the biblical story of Noah's Ark, the float will celebrate the beautiful truth that God's promises are for everyone and serve as a joyful reminder that we are all invited to follow God. The inclusion of a rainbow reflects the integral part it plays in Noah's story in the Bible (see Genesis 9) and serves as a visible, divine promise of God's grace, mercy, and covenant to never again destroy the earth with a flood. It symbolizes God's faithfulness and compassion, reminding believers that wrath is limited while His covenant of grace endures. The image is meant to focus on the meaning of God's promise and redemption.



As the only Christian float in the Jan. 1 Rose Parade, the LHM float carries on a mission of providing a Gospel witness to tens of millions of viewers everywhere, from along the parade route in Pasadena, California, to televisions and streaming platforms worldwide. The LHM float is a self-funded project of the Southern California District of the Lutheran Laymen's League and is not included in LHM's operating budget.

Has seeing the parade in person always been on your "bucket list"? Make this the year you finally go to Pasadena! Secure your spot today in one of the following ways:

- Register as a Petal Pushers volunteer at **petalpushers.org** to help decorate the LHM float and several others. Volunteers are needed the three Saturdays prior to Christmas (Dec. 5, 12, and 19) and then Dec. 26 until the floats are completed. Individuals ages 13 and older can work as little as one shift or as many as they want on a variety of tasks necessary to complete the floats. All skill levels are needed; whether this will be your first time, or you are a seasoned veteran, there are dozens of jobs to do.
- Register for one of the tour options available through Luther Tours at **shop.petalpushers.org/pages/decorating-tours**. The tours run from Dec. 28, 2026, through Jan. 2, 2027. Additional information, including pricing options and deadlines, are available for viewing online; airfare not included with either package.

Questions? Contact LHM Float Committee Chair Dick Gast at **chairman@petalpushers.org** or 949-230-2501. ♦



Give from the Heart—and Your IRA by CHAD FIX

There's nothing quite like a "job well done" feeling. It's that sense of joyful satisfaction many people also identify with retirement, often calling it one of the happiest seasons of their lives.

If you're age 70½ or older, you can multiply your joy by impacting lives with a Qualified Charitable Distribution through your IRA. A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) offers a simple, tax-wise way to support the mission you care about while making the most of your IRA.

By directing a gift from your IRA straight to LHM, your gift goes where you can't to share the Gospel globally today and into the future. If you're required to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), your QCD can count toward meeting that requirement while potentially reducing your taxable income. For many

donors, it's one of the most effective ways to give.

Making a QCD is straightforward. Simply contact your IRA custodian and request that your gift be sent directly to Lutheran Hour Ministries. Because every donor's financial situation is unique, we encourage you to speak with your financial or tax advisor about how a QCD can fit into your charitable plans. Additional questions about a QCD or other gift options? Contact our gift-planning staff at 1-877-333-1963 or **lhm-gift@lhm.org**.

Thank you for believing in our mission. Your generosity is more than a gift—it's a reflection of your values and your faithful commitment to extending the Gospel's reach. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and honored that you choose to invest in the critical work we do together. ♦



Day to Week: Upsizing National Good Neighbor Day by PAUL SCHREIBER

On September 28, people across the U.S. will be celebrating National Good Neighbor Day (NGND). It's a day dedicated to the spirit of being neighborly in its many forms: a simple hello, a shared plate of goodies, a hands-on effort that benefits a neighborhood, or a community project getting businesses, churches, or other civic groups working together. While most locations do their neighborly thing in one day, others spread their efforts out over an entire week.

In Orlando, Florida, the city is launching Orlando Good Neighbor Week, from Sunday, September 27, through Saturday, October 3. Spearheading this ambitious project is founder Megan Ginn. She says she and task force members "hope to celebrate and honor local communities to develop a sense of 'we-ness' across Orlando. In other words: What makes people proud to call this city home?" Taking ideas from other states, Orlando is creating Good Neighbor Nominations like Missouri did to brag about one's neighbors, and tying in area events to connect people and celebrate neighborhoods like San Francisco.

While Orlando's upcoming week-long celebration involves many dedicated individuals, often the impulse to do a Good Neighbor Day starts with a simple conversation—or even the inspired idea of a single person. "Every story I hear of good neighboring

starts with one thing: someone making a first connection. This could be taking flowers to a neighbor, sharing some home-grown vegetables, or just asking a few questions to learn more about someone," says Jennifer Prophete, director of The **Hopeful Neighborhood Project** and National Good Neighbor Day. "All these small things lead to celebrations, community, and a welcome sense of safety and belonging in one's community that changes a person's outlook on life and their well-being. Those are big outcomes, but they always start with one small act of connection."

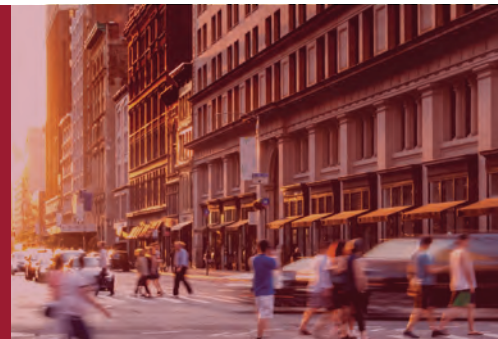
Wherever the spark comes from, at nationalgoodneighborhood.org, you'll find free "Getting Started" guides for involving churches, libraries, coffee shops, local governments, neighborhood HOAs, and individuals. New this year are guides for starting your own neighborhood good neighbor week and for engaging area businesses.

Each year's momentum is increasing. NGND now has 24 (and counting) official partners. More states and local governments are joining in, too. "This year Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont signed a bill to make NGND an official day of recognition in his state," Prophete adds. "The movement is growing one person, one state, at a time."

For ideas to improve your neighborhood any day of the year, visit hopefulneighborhood.org. ♦

**Would you like to share
Spanish resources with your
local church or community?**

We are here to help!



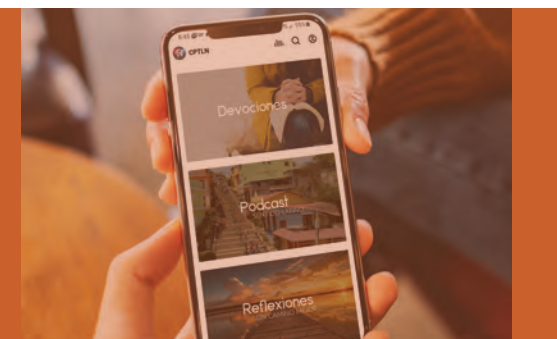

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Corrections Conference Venue Ideal for LHM's Prison Ministry Resources

by PAUL SCHREIBER



On May 14-16, LHM participated in the annual Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association (CMCA) Annual Summit at the Wheaton College Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois. Based on the theme “God Our Provider” (Philippians 4:19), the event hosted more than 300 people. The conference included plenary sessions, 20-plus workshops, exhibits, and the chance to network and collaborate with others working with the incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, their families, victims, and correctional staff.

“Conferences like this are vital for connecting people that do this specialized kind of ministry,” says Suzie Sallee, community facilitator, congregations.

Staffing LHM’s booth was Polly Gregali, community facilitator for the Lutheran Laymen’s League. She noted attendees’ enthusiasm to disciple the incarcerated and assist others who serve them in this mission.

“This is a tight-knit group. The conversation and comradery between vendors (exhibits) and participants revealed their passion for the incarcerated, those being released, and their supporting families. People from around the country and the Bahamas volunteered their time to serve this group and chaplains,” she says.

Exhibits featured ministry training programs for inmates, resources for corrections staff, evangelism-oriented materials, and ways to engage the church-at-large in prison ministry. These were geared to chaplains, prison ministry workers, church volunteers, and reentry specialists. “Many of the exhibitors were also session leaders presenting their materials in more depth. It was inspiring to learn about the variety of organizations present and to share resources LHM provides that can support their efforts in the field,” Gregali says.

The CMCA conference is an ideal venue to showcase LHM’s prison ministry resources.

For years, LHM’s *The Journey Home* Bible study has been used by chaplains and inmates across the country. Now, the Spanish version, *El Camino A Casa*, will likewise be helpful to many. Additionally, the 12-part Bible study, *More Gifted Than You Realize: A Bible Study for the Incarcerated*, can be accessed in print and online through platforms like Pando and Edovo. Also, a **Project Connect** booklet, *The Voice You Can Trust: Encouragement for the Incarcerated*, is another hope-giving text available. All these can be found at lhm.org/worthy.

Gregali highlighted other LHM resources for attendees such as **The Lutheran Hour**, the Daily Devotions, and LHM’s veterans’ Bible study, *Called to Serve: Utilizing Our Gifts As Veterans*. Also shared were LHM’s “Real Topics, Real People” booklet bundle, with texts on addiction, anxiety, depression, and the rat race of life. LHM’s pocket-sized, illustrated children’s booklets were available for attendees, too. ♦

Celebrating International Children’s Day in Laos

by CHAD FIX



International Children’s Day is observed on June 1 each year to celebrate the rights, welfare, and joy of children around the world. Established in 1949, it is one of several “children’s days” celebrated globally and is recognized across more than 50 countries with festivals, school events, and campaigns focused on protecting and empowering young people.

LHM–Laos celebrated this annual occurrence by hosting an event for around 220 people at a local church stadium. The atmosphere throughout the program was joyful, peaceful, and filled with unity among participants, volunteers, church members, and community leaders. A local pastor presided over the event, delivering opening remarks and sharing a message to make God’s love visible with those in attendance.

Participants received encouragement and education on the importance of avoiding drugs and other social evils that negatively affect families within the community, especially children and youth. The program also included exciting sports competitions, recreational games, and group activities designed to engage children while incorporating Christ-centered lessons and values.

LHM also had the opportunity to host a booth and distribute a variety of Christian materials. Many attendees showed strong interest in the content of the booklets offered and eagerly engaged in conversations with the LHM team asking questions about the Christian faith and the message of Jesus Christ.

We praise God for the positive impact of this event to connect with the community. Relationships were strengthened and many participants expressed interest in future engagement with local churches and LHM activities. ♦

Share Your Thoughts About *The Lutheran Layman*



We are grateful for your ongoing support of LHM and value your feedback. By taking a few minutes to complete a survey about *The Lutheran Layman*, you’ll help us better understand what our readers enjoy, what information is most helpful to learn about LHM, and how we can improve future issues. Your input plays an important role in providing content that best serves our constituents and supports our mission.

Click the “Take the Survey” button at lhm.org/layman or call us at 1-800-876-9880.