

January 2020

Proverbs 27:17 - Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

President

HQ

Dates

Happenings

Men

To Read

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Men of LCMC,

2020 is here and spring is quickly approaching - Punxsutawney Phil Says So! It's a new year with new challenges. The first challenge facing us will be in March when we kick off the campaign month for the Buck-A-Month Club. This is one thing that virtually every man in LCMC can be part of. Just think of what we could accomplish if all the men in LCMC sent in \$12.00. The good that could be done would be immeasurable...so I challenge all men to help make that happen.

In our first newsletter following the Gathering, I stated one goal...that of averaging 25 men per congregation donating to Buck-A-Month. We can do that, but in reality, we can do much better.

Last year we had one congregation that had 100% of the men donating, so it can be done. Sadly, that one congregation was a major percent of all donations. \$12.00 is a couple of dinners at McDonalds...very affordable for all.

Please send in information on anything your men's group is doing, has done or plans to do so I can let other men's group know what is going on around the country. This will also let other groups know there may be a place to pick up some "lessons learned" in case they are planning a similar activity.

Our ultimate goal is to get more men involved in the work of the church. Let's all do our part!

Blessings,

Chuck

**SHROVE TUESDAY IS FAST APPROACHING...HOW ABOUT
GETTING YOUR MEN TO MAKE PANCAKES FOR THE
CONGREGATION?**

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper



SHROVE TUESDAY



NEWS FROM LCMC HQ

LCMC ASSESSMENT

On December 3rd and 4th we gathered a group of people made up of District Coordinators, Board of Trustee members and Ministry Board members, along with our staff and a handful of others to work through a process with our consultant Bob Logan. The focus of the conversation was our core values: Free In Christ, Accountable to One Another, Rooted in the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions to work together to fulfill Christ's Great Commission. As the conversation unfolded it was clear that two areas that needed attention at this stage of our development. 1) How are we actually "accountable to one another", and 2) How are we holding each other accountable to the Great Commission. These two became central to our discussions as the two days wore on.



There were many ideas about how we might move forward in these two areas and some very creative suggestions offered. After the second day, the Board of Trustees met with Bob Logan to further unpack the concerns expressed about the future of LCMC, how they might be addressed, and what gifts and skills the next Service Coordinator might have in order to help the association continue to grow into its core values. It was a very positive time together and at the same time showed a genuine willingness to speak honestly about our areas of concern and revealing real hope for the future.

KEY UPCOMING DATES

MEETING JESUS IN THE GOSPELS, a 1517 Event - Houston, TX - February 22, 2020

CONFLICT COACHES – March 30-April 1 - Hosanna! Lutheran Church, St Charles, IL

CALLED TO LOVE – Application Deadline - April 1

LCMC YOUTH EVENT - CALLED 2: LOVE - July 21-24, 2020– Des Moines, IA

LCMC 20th ANNUAL GATHERING - October 4-7, 2020 – Arden Hills, MN

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Let me know what is going on with the men of your congregation. One of the major benefits of having a men's organization is the sharing of information, events and the invitation to events with other congregations. Together we get strength to grow in our individual congregations and to grow Lutheran Men across the country.



St Paul Lutheran Seminary has a weekly **online lectionary study** led by Dr. James Nestingen. He works through the texts for the coming Sunday, offering insights for Gospel preaching. CROSS Talk meets live on Tuesdays at 3:00 pm (Central Time). Recordings of the live sessions are also sent to all participants. Over 500 people are currently taking advantage of this program. This is a great vehicle to help you get prepped for a Bible Study or if you have the opportunity to serve in the pulpit to prepare your sermon. If you are interested in taking part, contact Pastor Jon Jensen. jjensengm@gmail.com

LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, SPRINGFIELD, GA PASTOR JAMES CANANAH

January 9, was Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. To honor our Law Enforcement, Firefighters, and EMTs in Effingham, Holy Trinity provided lunches all of our First Responders. The event was well attended and was actually covered by the local TV station WTOC news during their 6:00 PM new.

A special thank you goes out to everyone who helped and supported this even with your prayers. Thank you!



How Do I Know I'm a Christian?

Look inside yourself to answer, "Are you a Christian?" and what will you find? There are questions about ourselves that are easily answered, and there are other questions that present more of a challenge. If someone asks me, "Are you a husband?" I can show them my ring, present my wedding certificate, point to the woman standing next to me who shares my life and my last name. Yes, I am 100% sure that I'm married.

If someone asks me, "Are you an employee?" I can show them where I work, present my pay stubs, point to the truck with which I make deliveries. Yes, I am 100% sure that I'm an employee.

Other questions are not so easily answered. If I'm asked, "Are you a good husband?" what immediately comes to mind are the times I've failed my wife, acted selfishly, and been anything but a good husband. I have no real external, tangible, objective way to answer that question. I must rely on feelings and speculations. Similarly, if someone asks, "What kind of employee are you?" my mind goes to the labor I've put in, but also to the times I've slacked off yet expected a full paycheck for a half-hearted performance. What if I think I'm doing an okay job but my boss thinks differently and fires me?

There are questions about ourselves that are easily answered, and there are other questions about ourselves where we have to explore our hearts to test their sincerity, take account of the good and bad things we've done, focus inwardly to find the answer.

We don't look within ourselves to find out if we are Christians, but within Christ.

What about the question, "Are you a Christian?" Does this one belong to that second category, where we must explore our hearts, test our actions, focus inside ourselves to get to the right answer?

That's certainly what some people think. So they urge folks to ask themselves if they really believe, if they really love their neighbor, if they really live a moral life. But no matter how well intentioned such an urging might be, rather than helping, it pours the poison of doubt into the souls of those for whom Christ died.

Look inside yourself to answer, "Are you a Christian?" and what will you find? You'll find a heart that is deceitful above all things (Jer 17:9); a heart from which flow evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander (Matt 15:19); a conscience that testifies that nothing good dwells in you, that the evil you do not want to do, you nevertheless keep right on doing (Rom 7:18-19).

Look at your deeds to answer, "Are you a Christian?" and what will you find? You'll find that all your righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa 64:6). And if such be your righteousness, how dirty and defiled must be your unrighteousness. Look at your deeds and you will find that even when you have the desire to do what is right, you don't have the ability to carry it out (Rom 7:18). Even if you did all that you were commanded, you must still say, "I am an unworthy servant; I have only done what was my duty," (cf. Luke 17:10). If such be the response of a person whose has kept all God's commands, then we who have broken those commands are worthy of nothing but punishment, now and forever.

How Do I Know I'm a Christian? (cont)

Thus, to answer, "Are you a Christian?" by looking inside ourselves, or by looking to our deeds or love of the neighbor, is to drink the poison of doubt. The more Christians look at themselves to see whether they are Christians, the more they will become convinced that they are not Christians.

We don't look within ourselves to find out if we are Christians, but within Christ. Our assurance is in his objective, external work of salvation on our behalf. Not in our hearts but in the heart and life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ do we receive assurance that we are the children of God.

It is not our faithfulness that saves us, but the faithfulness of Jesus.

In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19)—the world of which you are a part. In Christ you are reconciled to God, at peace with the Lord, adopted as a child of the heavenly Father. God loved the world in this way: by sending his only begotten Son to die as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And if the world's sin is taken away, then your sins are taken away. God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us in order that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21). His worthiness covers our unworthiness.

Your name is written in the wounds of Jesus. He has dipped his pen in the crimson ink of his veins and written your name, indelibly, in the Lamb's Book of Life. He has engraved your name on the palms of his hands. He has tattooed his name onto your soul and heart and mind and body—you are completely and everlastingly his and his alone. In baptism you did not commit yourself to Christ; he committed himself to you. More than that, in those waters he crucified you with himself, laid your body with his in the tomb, and he carried you forth into the light of life again. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved. That believing, that faith, is not a conviction you created but a gift you received. By the Holy Spirit you confess, "Jesus is Lord."

Do we still struggle to believe? Of course, we do, for we are far from perfect in this life. As a father once prayed to Jesus, so we also pray, "Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief," (Mark 9:24). And he does. He enlivens and strengthens our faith by continuing to forgive us, to love us, to heal us, to give us himself. It is not our faithfulness that saves us, but the faithfulness of Jesus. For even if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself (2 Tim 2:13).

How do you know you're a Christian? Not because your heart is good and pure but because the heart of Christ pulses with a love for you that will never end. Not because your deeds are righteous but because he has been righteous on your behalf and clothes you with that righteousness. Not because you have lived for him but because he has lived and died and risen again for you. Not because you asked him to be your Savior but because while you were yet a sinner, Christ died for you, chose you, called you, and washed you clean in his own divine blood.

If someone asks you, "How do you know you're a Christian?" the answer is as simple as it is beautiful: you know you're a Christian

...because Christ has made you his own

...because Christ will hold you fast

How Do I Know I'm a Christian? (cont)

...because nothing can separate you from the love of God
...because Christ knows you, forgives you, baptizes you, and will never let you go.
That's how you know you're a Christian.

Chad Bird holds master's degrees from Concordia Theological Seminary and Hebrew Union College.

1517.
theLEGACY
PROJECT

THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE-A WINTER AWAKENING

DATE: January 18-20, 2020

SPONSORED BY: St Paul Lutheran Seminary and the SEC Fellowship

It's not too early to make plans!

This will be the 5th year for our conference, and each year it has gotten better. It serves as both a theological conference and retreat for pastors, spouses, and laity, so you won't want to miss this event. So, mark your calendars now.

**COME – HEAR - LEARN – UNDERSTAND – CONVERSE – FELLOWSHIP
– ENJOY**

Men

We have two primary goals in Lutheran Men...first, to get men involved in the work of the church and also to praise God through the loan fund and the gift fund. Those two funds are ways the men of the church can help congregations across the church to grow and flourish. The loan fund provides no interest loans to mission congregations for building purposes. If you have ever been involved in planting or growing a new church, this is always one of the major challenges. It is funded by the Buck-A-Month Club...\$1.00 per month or \$12.00 per year...something virtually every man in LCMC can afford. Unfortunately, during 2019, only **65 individuals** and **7 churches** contribute.



100
Committee of 100

APPROVED GIFT

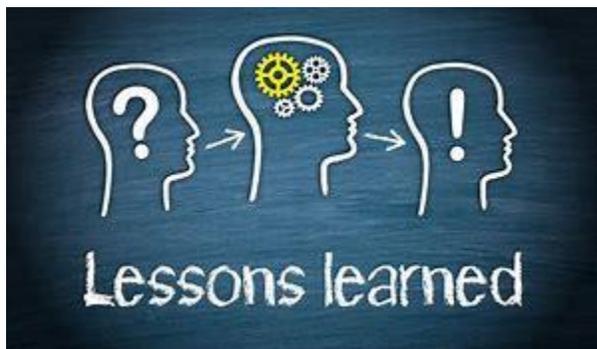
Just before Christmas, our award's board approved \$9,220.00 for Falls Community Church in Sioux Falls, SD. They were in desperate need of a furnace and air conditioning unit. This is a great example of how Lutheran Men can help small, mission congregations to become established and to grow.

There are more congregations out there that need help, and we have money that we would love to give away. This money does no good sitting in the bank. Help us pass the word.

You can also help by donating. The more money we have, the more congregations we can help.

The point man for all of our activities is the Congregational “Key Man.” This is simply a man in the congregation we can contact, and who can provide information to the men of the church. It doesn't entail a great deal of time. Sadly, although we have 765 congregations across the US, we only have 174 key men. There is no requirement to head up the men's organization in the church, simply to be our point of contact. I'm asking each pastor to help us find a man in their congregation who can serve as our Key Man.

One of my goals for 2020 is to get a key man in every congregation.



One of the great lessons I learned in the Army was the value of after-action reports and lessons learned. If you want to do something, I'll bet someone else has done it. Why not learn from their experience, so please send me information on events you plan to do or those you have done. Include pictures. Those help make the newsletter much more interesting. Working together, we can make Lutheran Men a great resource in each congregation and across LCMC.

Here is a short prayer for opening a church group meeting

Lord God, You are the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. We meet You as You as you come to us in Word and Sacrament and as You come to us in grace and blessing. We thank You for calling us into Your kingdom. We thank You for allowing us to be members of the organization and the congregation. We thank you for appointing us as workers with the saints in this church body. We need Your power to work effectively and to overcome the forces of evil that frustrate Your saving intentions.

PRAYER (cont)

We seek Your grace, to care for people as You do and to endure hostility and misunderstanding in our efforts to help. We ask that Your holiness full our lives. Overcome in us the temptation to adopt the ways of the world for the work of your kingdom in order t enjoy some success. You justify us by Your grace: now sanctify us also according to your great mercy. In Christ our Lord.

Amen



Ever planted a new church???

Money is usually a major priority.

We can help!!!

MEN'S PROGRAMS

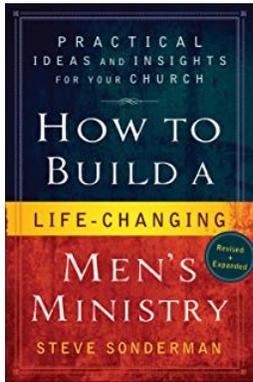
There are no requirements for a congregation to have a men's "club" or to do any specific men's programs. If you are interested in either of these, however, we can help.

Pr. Wilson Metz is our pastoral advisor, and he has about 40 years of experience in men's ministry. He is always available via e-mail or



phone to pass on that experience and help with your men's ministry or programs. Phone: 402-521-0046; Email: Pastor@LCMC-LM.net

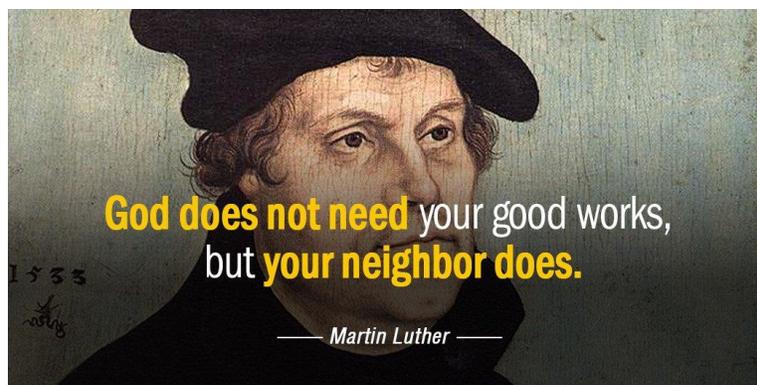
Men's Ministry Ideas - Provide opportunities for spiritual growth for your men - Recreational activities ought to be exciting and also offer Christian value formation - Give the members the opportunity make use of their particular natural skills and gifts to impact those they come in contact with - Serve your local community.



The past few years have brought a God-sent explosion of opportunities for men to grow spiritually. Large meetings, weekend retreats, urban and overseas mission projects lead men to want more: What can men in a local church or fellowship do--week in and week out--to grow into what God wants them to be? As one of only a handful of full-time men's pastors across the country, Steve Sonderman is on the leading edge of local church ministry to men. *How to Build A Life-Changing Men's Ministry* overviews the nuts and bolts of putting together a men's ministry that works. It provides both inspiration and expert guidance for men who want to bring the fire home. – Available from Amazon

A SPECIAL PRAYER FOR MEN

Loving Father, thank You for sending Jesus to come as our perfect example of a godly Man – a Man Who demonstrated that godly living means to walk in spirit and truth – in submission to the Holy Spirit and in obedience to You, His heavenly Father. Lord we lift up Christian men everywhere and pray that Your Spirit of grace and truth may rest and remain on each one. We pray that Christian men may grow in grace and in a knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, and that they become strong in the Lord and in His mighty strength – and not rely on their own abilities but rest in Him alone. May the beautiful character of the Lord Jesus be increasingly reflected in each one and may the Christian men throughout the world be godly witnesses to the truth of the gospel both in their own home and with others, with whom they come in contact. Build up the body of Christ we pray with an army of Christian men who will become a reflection of the Lord Jesus so that they may grow into mighty men of God, in Jesus name we pray, Amen



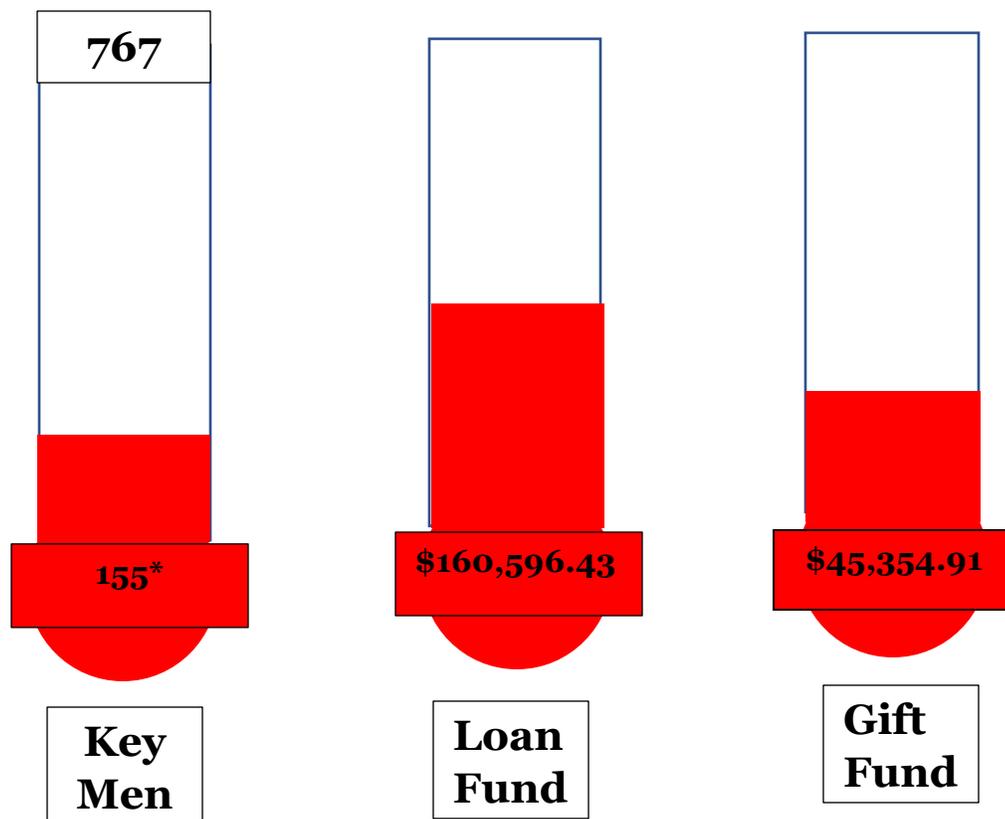
Health of Lutheran Men

As we look at Lutheran Men as an organization, we can determine the health of the organization by looking at several metrics.

Our most basic need is to have a Key Man in every congregation. Currently, we have 746 congregations across the United States, but only 174 Key men, so we are in need of approximately 600 Key Men.

Our goal is to help small and mission congregations to be planted, and once planted to grow. We do that through our two special funds, the Loan Fund, supported by the Buck-A-Month Club and the Gift Fund, supported by the Committee of 100.

The thermometers below indicate our current “health.”



HELP US MAKE THEM GROW!

***Down 19 from our previous newsletter**



WE WANT YOU!

TO BE A KEY MAN

RECOMMENDED READING LIST



Finding Christ in the Straw – Robert Hiller (Pre-Order at Amazon)

Faithless to Fearless - David Andersen

The Reformation - Cameron MacKenzie

Built on the Rock: The Healthy Congregation -

Ted Kober

Connected to Christ: Why Membership Matters -

Peter Speckhard

Roll up your sleeves and get involved.
And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “**Here I am! Send me.**”



LUTHERAN MEN

CHARLES R. (CHUCK) HUNSAKER

PRESIDENT

LUTHERAN MEN

706-464-1142

Pacific6@bellsouth.net