

# foundations

Our vision is for all men to become bold and daring followers of Jesus Christ.

## The Man with God's Saturday Plan *Habitat for Humanity volunteer is a true champion*

By Dave Newman

**M**eet Keith Jedele. He has been volunteering at Habitat for Humanity since 2004, and God has touched many, many lives through Keith's efforts.



**Keith Jedele is happiest on-site at the Habitat build.**

Habitat for Humanity is an ecumenical Christian non-profit housing organization that enables low-income people access to affordable home ownership. Through 300 hours of "sweat equity," the accepted families earn a 25-year mortgage with no interest (typically a \$95,000 home for merely \$625/month). Keith has worked on approximately 25 of these homes; helping 25 families reach the impossible (a home of their own) and witness the spiritual (God's love in action).

Keith has also been a Habitat Coordinator twice: first at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and now at Zion Lutheran Church in San Antonio. Even when he is not swinging a hammer at the Habitat worksite, he coordinates work

dates between among other Lutheran congregations, plans and volunteers at fundraising events for Habitat donations, and spends countless hours recruiting other volunteers. In the process, he has built a large network of

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***God the Creator is building during those days also: not only a house, but also a spiritual camaraderie—among the volunteer workers, the Habitat supervisors, and even the future homeowners—that endures long after quitting time.***

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coworkers; witnessing to Christ's call to "Follow Me."

Keith is most visible (and happiest) on-site at the Habitat build. ELCA's mantra of "God's Work, Our Hands" perfectly describes Keith and his cohorts while raising a house. He says he realizes that "God is at work everywhere and through everyone" on the days spent actually hammering, painting, sawing—building construction. God the Creator is building during those days also: not only a house, but also a spiritual camaraderie—among the volunteer workers, the Habitat supervisors, and even the future homeowners—that endures long after quitting time.

**Jedele: God's Saturday Plan, continued on page 3**



### LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION

The *foundations* newsletter is sent to all who contribute to the ministry of Lutheran Men in Mission. Your contribution ensures that *foundations* will continue to be sent to you.

Our vision for *foundations* is that it be a source of personal spiritual growth, as well as a source of information for those involved in congregational men's ministries. Please contact us to share your stories of men's ministry that we can use in future issues, or to let us know what topics and issues you're interested in seeing featured in *foundations*.

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## Stay Healthy ... And Hold Onto Your Faith

**W**hat a year it has been! As 2020 comes to an end, all of us have discovered not only new words like *coronavirus* and *Covid-19*, but new things about ourselves, family and friends, and the world we live in.

It has been a year of pain and struggle for many. Depression and anxiety have become daily challenges for so many people. Now, as the year draws to a close, Covid fatigue is becoming a growing reality. Tired of being cooped up, tired of being careful and scared, people are becoming careless and going back to old habits. The result is that places and states all over the country are shutting down.

Abnormal has become the new normal. We are becoming stressed out and it is taking a toll on us physically and mentally. People are losing their optimism and taking risks in an effort to get back to what is normal. Unfortunately, it looks like we are a long way from getting through this. The Covid-19 pandemic is still going on and while there are reasons to be optimistic, the end is not in sight.

Yet, hope remains! God is still with us! There are things we all can do to get through this pandemic.

As I hope you are all aware by now, LMM has started a Men's Wellness Initiative, in part to help us collectively get through this time. For us to be healthy we have to healthy mind, body, and spirit. That may be the key to coping.

**Exercise:** A simple daily walk helps the body. Just getting out and moving can be helpful in so many ways. At the very least it helps alleviate frustration and is good for the body.

**Talking:** Talking about how we are feeling, our frustrations, our joys, can keep us from losing it. Think of it as holding a ball underwater; eventually you will lose control and it pops out of the water. When we keep our feeling internalized the same thing can happen, so talk it out. It will help keep your mind in a healthy place.

**Prayer:** Turn it over to God. We are not alone; God is with us. As we are reminded in Matthew 11: 28-30, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Your spiritual life will thank you.

I know it seems like we will never see the other side, but we will! Let me share a lesson from history. I am old enough to remember the smallpox epidemic. The year I was born, 1967, there were 15 million cases of smallpox across the world. Two million people died that year of smallpox. By 1977, we saw the last naturally occurring case. What changed? The smallpox vaccine, which had been around for a while, became a global initiative — and the result was the eradication of smallpox. Sure, it took time. Yet today, people no longer fear the disease. This time around, a vaccine is coming much quicker. One can almost see the day when we will talk about how we survived this pandemic.

Personally, I look forward to the day when we can gather together again. I look forward to scheduling a full schedule of One Year to Live retreats where men can discover God's call for their lives. To the day when we can gather in worship and around the Lord's table, celebrating communion. To attending weddings and baptisms, graduations, and funerals.

No one knows what the future holds. What I do know is: God will still be faithful. People will still need to hear the gospel. That Lutheran Men in Mission will still be intentionally discipling men to be bold, daring followers of Jesus Christ. Until then we must adapt, keep the faith, and stay healthy!

In the power of the Spirit,

God bless,

**John Sundquist**, Executive Director, Lutheran Men in Mission

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*"Come to me, all  
you who are weary  
and burdened, and  
I will give you rest."*

—Matthew 11: 28

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**Jedele: God's Saturday Plan,**  
continued from page 1

The frosting on Keith's Habitat cake comes when he attends Dedication Saturday—the big day when the homeowners are presented with the keys to their completed homes. (Fittingly, Habitat also presents each family with a tool box and a Bible, a great foundation for all homeowners.) These dedications typically have crowds of people celebrating, food, media teams, a spiritual leader with a message, prayers, and compassionate thank you statements from the families. There are always many tears. Keith says the dedications provide spiritual closure for another successful project and the many hours of service—a “peace be with you” reward.

Keith has announced his “retirement” from his role after 2020. His leadership, friendship, role modeling, and examples of service to God have been appreciated and will be missed.

Thank you, Keith, for providing *our* plans on many Saturdays!



*The [completed home] dedications provide spiritual closure for another successful project and the many hours of service.*

# Looking for a Few Bold Men

I recently agreed to my LMM appointed position because it fits with what I've been doing in San Antonio since retirement—trying to get (Lutheran) men more comfortable/involved with their church, as well as with men of other area churches. Perhaps this sounds like your story? Now I am doing the same on a national level—and requesting your help.

LMM is looking across the country (65 synods) for men to fill a position called "Ambassador." LMM develops a quarterly flier called an Ambassador-Gram, basically a snapshot of current events and initiatives within LMM. Before release, Ambassadors meet via Zoom to preview of the upcoming Ambassador-Gram and discuss the featured blurbs. However, their primary task is to simply forward the emailed Ambassador-Gram to any/all the church men he has within his contact list. The theory is that the readers are more likely to open an email from a someone they know (you) than from a corporate email list.

From the Ambassador's personal perspective, an Ambassador-Gram gives you another reason to connect with your network of guys—a topic of discussion, programming ideas, possibly an agenda item for your

next meeting. Ambassadors also benefit from being linked to other men from across the country—sharing men's ministry ideas, hopes, and dreams. Eventually, we will upgrade LMM's webpage to include a listing of all Ambassadors and their locations.

From LMM's perspective, the goal is to expand our network and help LMM programming become more available to men in all locations. Each of your contacts is encouraged to forward your Ambassador-Gram to **their** buddies and the LMM network continues growing, enabling our vision: "For every man to become a bold, daring follower of Jesus Christ."

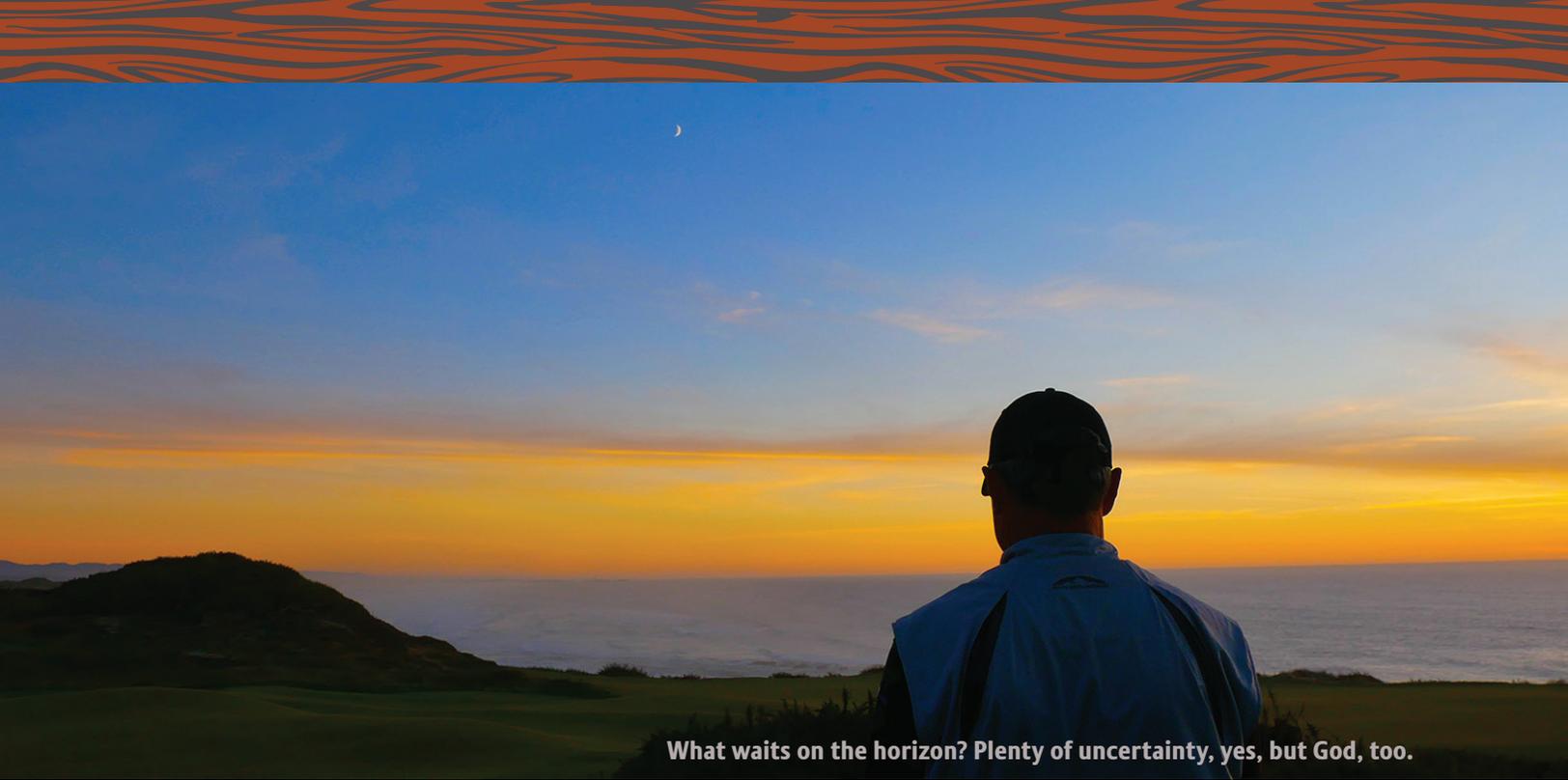
Would you be interested in being "that guy"? Are you hearing a small voice within you that's calling you to Christ's service? Becoming an Ambassador could be that next bold, daring step in your Faith Journey. Contact me if you are interested or need more information.

Peace,

**Dave Newman**, Zion Lutheran Church, San Antonio, TX  
LMM Director of Networking and Communications

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What waits on the horizon? Plenty of uncertainty, yes, but God, too.

## *In Uncertain Times, God Abides* **He's Also in Your Story. So Why Not Tell It?**

By Vic Williams

I recently came across a poem by Maya Luna via one of my Facebook friends, a guy whose life philosophy is what I'd call "pan-spiritual."

Titled "Where God Lives," the poem's voice asks for complete authenticity, for the reader to strip away all earthly affects—education, career, the various ways we hide ourselves (including, yes, via organized religion once in a while) and come clean in the here and now.

It's the simple but deep final line that got me, though:

"God lives in the uncertainty."

Have we ever experienced a time with the breadth and heft and relentlessness of uncertainty that our neighborhood, nation and planet face right now? In our lifetime, has the holiday season ever felt so fraught with danger and longing and fear?

I'm writing this the day before Thanksgiving, which, in "normal" times, gives us a mutually agreed-to time to hit the giant pause button, cook and eat ourselves silly and count our many blessings. It's my favorite holiday, as it is for many people, and I'll still cook and cook some more, because, as one of my best buddies has told me, "It's how you love." But instead of family gathering en masse at our place, it'll be just my wife and I, and at least one of our two daughters, both of whom were exposed to coronavirus but tested negative (my other two kids are having scaled-down celebrations of their own). We will pack up and deliver meals to other family members, including my 86-year-old mother-in-law. And we will cherish this pandemic-altered time as much as we can, while doing our best to keep ourselves and others healthy.

Still, uncertainty lurks all around me, as I'm sure it does for many of you. The virus is circling people I love like a vulture; my wife was

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*The virus is circling people I love like a vulture.*

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exposed at her job recently, my daughter at hers. People they work with have gotten sick and, thank God, survived. So have others in my circle, including a good friend and fellow One Year To Live graduate and leader, who was sick for a week, tested positive and was on the mend.

Perhaps you've had similar close calls. Perhaps you've known folks who have succumbed, and had your faith tested. Indeed, it's a testy time. Ten months after losing my job, and all the months since of watching coronavirus strike our shores and worm its way into the population and set communities and families against one another, I'm as weary and burned out as anybody. But, like most of us, I've been doing "the right thing," staying basically

isolated, with the blessing of three of four children nearby and in my orbit—though I’ve taken a couple forays away from home to play golf with my son. And I will continue to do what I know is best for the greater good, and urge others to join me, for as long as necessary.

Make no mistake, that’s a manly thing to do—accept one’s limitations, accept the world as it is and protect one’s self and loved ones from the threat of a microscopic yet brutal biological threat ... and the even larger and more lasting spiritual threat: Despair.

Yet this scourge still hasn’t taken its eyes off me, or anyone else. Sure, a vaccine is imminent—praise God for working through some of the finest medical researches and scientists in human history—but it’ll take the better part of 2021 to get it distributed on a level that will lead to herd immunity, and even then, a lot of people won’t take it. Covid-19 ain’t going anywhere anytime soon.

But neither is God. He is with us. It’s tough sometimes to see, hear and feel his presence through Zoom and YouTube-distanced worship. Sometimes it seems he has decided to sit out 2020, with all its pain and death and divisiveness. It’s tempting to just chuck our faith, too, wander through this wilderness alone, without hope, without a clue of which direction to go next. Jesus dealt with that uncertainty among his disciples, some of whom wanted his story to end a different way, to avoid the hard truths that come with being human—and with being a believer. And what was his favorite phrase even as he made his way to the cross, through a doubting and violent and woe-wracked society? “Do not be afraid.”



Twenty centuries and counting later, we must still heed those words, embrace them, make them the very road we walk, whether it’s rutted and rocky for what seems like forever, or smooth for a few blessed miles. Uncertainty will no doubt hound us as we trudge forward, but only if we stop dead in our tracks—or, God forbid, turn around—does darkness have any shot of tracking us down.

That’s not the Christian man’s story. Our story is one we live in the light, however weak it appears at those times when it hides behind the horizon of fragile hope. And we need to keep telling that story to each other.

I’ve told such stories in these pages in past issues. There’s no better way to demonstrate God’s love for us than acknowledge his presence, his persistence, in our day-to-day lives.

So, as a fellow Christian traveler, I invite you to reach out to me with your own God stories—tales of doubt and uncertainty, of redemp-

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*There's no better way to demonstrate God's love for us than acknowledge his presence, his persistence, in our day-to-day lives.*

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tion and joy—that would help other men on their own journeys. If you’re willing to put it out there, visit [www.lutheranmeninmission.org](http://www.lutheranmeninmission.org), click on the **Support** menu and select **Share a God Story**. Fill out the brief survey and I’ll get back to you to set up a conversation where, I’m certain, we’ll find that God is with us.

Until then, through this holiday season and as what we hope is a brighter and healthier year dawns, know that you’re not alone in your uncertainty.

God is there, waiting and willing.



# Let's Be Grateful for Our Blessings

As we reflect back on 2020, everyone recognizes that this has been a year like none other in our memory. The novel coronavirus and the enormous amount of sickness and death that it has wrought has come into all of our lives and has left its impact not only on the U.S., but on the entire world. It has changed almost everything we do, from wearing masks, to social distancing, to using Zoom to communicate and not seeing our loved ones at holidays. The racial strife seen by the murder of George Floyd and other people of color has inflamed our country and caused many to doubt their belief in justice. The large loss of jobs due to the virus has threatened the security of many families and our economy in general. Maybe we are becoming just like Job, who lamented, "woe is me."

But let's stop here and embrace our belief in the saving grace that God has blessed us with through his son, Jesus. Like Job of the Old Testament, God is good and gracious for all who believe in Him and in the good news we have in Jesus. Our salvation is the wonderful blessing that was given freely to us in Jesus. What a true and everlasting blessing. The love and sharing with others across the entire country in this new virtual format has become a blessing that none of us expected at the beginning of 2020. Also, we have been given the opportunity to share from our own abundance with those who have been so adversely impacted by this coronavirus crisis.

At LMM, we have met and connected with new brothers across the country as we to reach out in this new virtual world. Our weekly — and sometimes daily — Constant Contact messages, our weekly book studies, our weekly Bible study and a special prayer time every Wednesday are ministries that we did not have prior to 2020. We are expanding our virtual Bold Gatherings and plans are being made to resume a full schedule of our One Year to Live retreats in 2021 as soon as it becomes safe for us to gather in person.

We invite all to join with us these ministries and events. Our mission has not slowed down, and this is a blessing that we can celebrate during this very stressful period. Each of us can reflect on how we continue to be blessed and

*At LMM, we have met and connected with new brothers across the country as we to reach out in this new virtual world... [in ways] that we did not have prior to 2020.*

give thanks to God, because in this time, when we can't meet in person, He guides us in different ways to be fruitful in ministry for others.

I again ask that you participate with us in any or all of our virtual meetings, and help us to share our faith with others. Please continue to keep LMM, our ministries and our virtual events in your hearts and in your prayers. My sincere wish is that each of you and your families will stay safe and healthy and enjoy a very blessed Christmas season.

Your Brother in Christ,

**Hal Derrick**, President, Lutheran Men in Mission  
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Every Wednesday

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**PRAY AT NOON**

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When it is noon in your time zone, take a minute to pray. Have an intercessory prayer for all that is going on in our world.

[Encourage others to join in.](#)




**Lutheran Men in Mission Online** You can find us online at our website [lutheranmeninmission.org](http://lutheranmeninmission.org), or on:



and the **Reaching Men blog** at [reachingmen.blogspot.com](http://reachingmen.blogspot.com)

**PREPARING**  
2020 Advent Prayers

PREPARING OUR HEARTS AND MINDS  
FOR CHRISTMAS

Starting on November 29th

LIKE PROJECT TWELVE OR  
LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION ON FACEBOOK

Loving God, in a year that finds many of us more isolated than ever, I take strength and comfort in the knowledge that you are with me, that isolation cannot keep me from you or your coming Son. Thank you for walking with me. Amen.

isolation

Alpha and Omega, Help us prepare our hearts for the already but not yet of your kingdom. I want to intentionally wait during this Advent time. I don't want this season to just pass by. Amen

prepare

sign

God of Love,  
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.  
He is a sign of your love.  
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,  
As we wait and prepare for his coming.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.  
Amen

advent  
PROJECT TWELVE

God, just as You sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus, help me to clear the path in my heart, too. Help me to hear your voice. Be the light in the days ahead. Give me the courage to soften my heart. Give me courage to choose joy. Give me courage to seek you. With all that's gone on this year, I need you. Lord, I await Your coming!

AMEN

seek

Advent  
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# foundations

## Lutheran Men in Mission

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SAVE THE DATE

**Epiphany worship**  
**January 6, 8:00 pm central**

celebrating the arrival of the three wise men to the Christ child

GOD WITH US

LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION Access online worship at [LutheranMeninMission.org](http://LutheranMeninMission.org)