

foundations

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

Men and the Lockbox of Faith

This old box had hung around the house long enough and its contents deserved to be set free.

By Vic Williams

Not long ago, out of boredom or curiosity or both, I decided to break into a small metal lockbox that belonged to my dad, who died more than a quarter century ago and whom I miss with no less intensity and deep respect now than I did then. I couldn't find the key to the box so I grabbed a big wrench, pried up one corner and wormed a hand in there enough to allow its contents to fall out with some gentle shaking.

I didn't expect any great discoveries or some made-for-TV financial windfall. Dad was a man of modest means and I'd long since distributed his meager estate among my siblings and his longtime partner. I just figured, hey, this old box had hung around the house long enough and its contents deserved to be set free.



So what did I find?

A whole bunch of orphan keys — Dad was as guilty as any of us of saving every key he'd ever put into a lock over the past several decades of his life. What's that all about, fellow key keepers?

Some old fishing gear — a few lures, an ancient California license and such. This warmed my heart and soul, because while Dad wasn't a churchy guy, he had his own spiritual energy that manifested in many ways, quite often while we were trawling for rainbow trout in the high lakes of the Eastern Sierra or dipping worms or crickets into the Owens River with hopes of hooking a big ol' German brown. Into his old creel the gear went, but the spirit stays with me.

A Santa Fe Railroad credit ledger — Dad was a switchman with the Santa Fe for nearly 20 years before an accident put him on permanent disability. In the late 1950s he started borrowing anywhere from \$25 to \$150 at a time, then paying it back as soon as possible, often within a few days or weeks, no doubt as his paycheck came through. It's all there, meticulously tracked and initialed in a clerk's script. Dad religiously paid his bills, whether to the bank or his bookie, and was generous with whatever was left. A fine legacy, for sure.

A copy of his and my mom's marriage license — In October 1958 they got a quickie Las Vegas wedding, making Dad, then childless, stepdad to my four half siblings. He was the best Dad they ever had, and in 1960 and 1962, mom

Lockbox, continued on page 3



Losing the Hold of Loneliness

Over the last few weeks, I have found myself confronting one question, or should I say one issue, at an unusual level.

Why are guys so lonely?

The topic comes up in a variety of ways. Women worried about their husbands or sons, guys struggling to be motivated, groups asking why do men disconnect if they are as lonely as research suggests? Regardless of the source, one thing has become clear: **Men are lonely and everyone is starting to notice the effects it has on men and society.**

NPR reported that 65% of men are lonely. I recently saw in multiple articles that in 2021 15% of men claimed that they have zero close friends. Personally, this does not surprise me. I think every man can relate to moments of loneliness, even amid a life full of friends. Yet all men know it is easier to talk football or politics than to open up about personal challenges. We have taught our boys to be strong and self-sufficient, which means never letting another guy see your weaknesses or that you are hurting.

This past week I had the blessing of being with my core, best friends. During one of our deeper conversations, we were remembering and mourning a couple of friends we lost to suicide recently. The utter shock in each case that we didn't see warning signs stuck deep. These were men who we saw and talked to regularly, and though not in our inner circle, we all considered them good friends. We pondered the why of it all. Were they depressed? Why didn't they reach out to someone? You all know the type of questions we struggled with.

The truth is we will never know. Loneliness, like depression, is often a hidden truth. We put on a brave face but deep down we feel utterly alone. The loneliness paralyzes us and in turn just makes things worse.

Yet there is a solution. A 2017 University of Oxford study found that men bond best through face-to-face contact and activities. Events such as One Year to Live, Bible studies, and your congregational men's groups can provide the sure cure to loneliness. Part of what makes the work and mission of Lutheran Men in Mission so powerful and needed is that we intentionally meet men face-to-face where they are. In doing so, loneliness loses its hold.

In this edition of *Foundations*, we take time to recognize all those who help support the work of LMM. Their faithfulness and prayers allow men to intentionally disciple other men. Their gifts help rescues men from loneliness. Building a community, a band of brothers, as we disciple bold, daring followers of Jesus Christ. I say all this to remind you that our work not only build disciples for Christ but also transforms the lives of each man it touches.

We are blessed to walk beside each other in this ministry. Together, we make a real difference in the lives of men. Freeing them from loneliness by surrounding them with men of faith. Providing safe places for men to unburden themselves and share their pain. As Isaiah said, to strengthen, help and uphold each other. For all of you who faithfully support Lutheran Men in Mission, on behalf of all the men you have touched, thank you!

In the Power of the Spirit,
God Bless,

John Sundquist
Executive Director, Lutheran Men in Mission
john@lutheranmeninmission.org

*"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."
—Isaiah 41: 10*

Part of what makes the work and mission of Lutheran Men in Mission so powerful and needed is that we intentionally meet men face-to-face where they are. In doing so, loneliness loses its hold.

Our work not only build disciples for Christ but also transforms the lives of each man it touches.

LUTHERAN MEN'S 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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Lockbox, continued from page 1

gave him two more boys, first me, then my brother. Their marriage ended in 1978, just as I graduated high school, but the blended family they raised together stayed intact and remains close to this day. No better paternal legacy than that.

A few other random trinkets spilled out, and that was it. The box was empty. No profound revelations forthcoming. No huge surprises or seismic shifts in my esteem for a man whose love for family, friends and life itself, despite the many challenges thrown at him over his 76 years, remain a powerful guiding force in my life.

And still, and yet ... a twinge of disappointment crossed my heart and mind as the box yielded another little bit of Dad's past, a few fascinating tidbits but nothing ... *more*. I'd have loved to have found a piece of his hidden heart beating there somehow, after all these years, but it'll stay silent, probably until God reunites us in His kingdom.

Born in 1921 and raised during the Great Depression, Dad shared the same learned traits with so many dads of that generation. You know what I'm talking about. I'll wager more than a few of my brothers reading these words can recall in their fathers a certain close-to-the-vest manner, a reluctance to go deeper with friends or spouses or sons and daughters, a stiff-upper-lip that couldn't be softened over a cold beer or big steak, or even in the occasional father-son bonding

I'll wager more than a few of my brothers reading these words can recall in their fathers a certain close-to-the-vest manner, a reluctance to go deeper with friends.



Vic and his dad, early '80s

they could have learned about themselves as true men, sustained and freed in the liberating light of Jesus Christ, not on their own, but surrounded by other

opportunity in the fishing boat, on the golf course, or on a road trip. A steely resolve to hold back those dark cards, to push the pain deeper. We didn't need to hear it anyway, right? What good would dredging that stuff up do us, or him, or anyone?

They did the best they could, loved us in whatever effusive, halting, strident, clumsy or cool way they managed, and that was that. Good enough.

It was certainly good enough for me when Dad was here, and I stand strong and comforted in that conclusion, that assertion to myself. Still, certain questions hound me. One biggie: Why I had to find out not from him but from my uncle that their mother, my grandmother, had committed suicide at age 37, when Dad was 16. Or why he never offered insight or the slightest detail about his relationship with his dad, who died when I was two years old. Or how the railroad accident that cost him half of his left foot must have left scars in other unseen and nameless places far down in his soul.

These days I imagine what an outfit like Lutheran Men in Mission could have done for my dad, or your dads or grandfathers or stepdads or whoever you called your earthly father — or still do, if you're blessed to have that role model here with you yet. Imagine what shame-sealed doors could have been opened for them at a One Year To Live Retreat or Bold Gathering. Imagine what

searching and hurting brothers, in a safe space. Imagine how they could have found the keys to sharing the same generosity and loving spirit they shared so willingly with those they loved, at least once in a while, with themselves.

Imagine how they could have busted open the lockbox of faith and thrown away the key.

These days I imagine what an outfit like Lutheran Men in Mission could have done for my dad. ... Imagine what they could have learned about themselves as true men, sustained and freed in the liberating light of Jesus Christ.

...

As another summer winds down and brings with it memories of our fathers or father figures in whatever setting — on the water, in the woods, next to the campfire, in the stands at a ballgame, over a grill — let us seize with gladness and grace the experiences and opportunities to be authentic and open with our own kids, our spouses or partners, our buddies. I ask you to join me in "doing life" differently, in honor of the countless men in our lives who wouldn't allow themselves to fully clutch the key that Christ offers every moment, every day. I pray that we pry open our own lockboxes and let in the light for good.

Bold Gathering Set for Nov. 11

It's time go bold again!



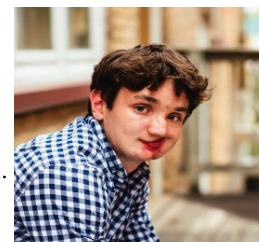
Lutheran Men in Mission's fall Bold Gathering is coming to First English Lutheran Church—North Site in Appleton, Wisconsin, on Nov. 11, otherwise known as Veteran's Day — though you don't have to be a veteran to show up in person or tune in on YouTube. (Vets welcome, of course!)

LMM's Events Team is finalizing the full slate of speakers which will be announced soon at www.boldgathering.com and via email, but two have been confirmed as of late August.

First is **Dan Doersch**, a retired high school science teacher who will give a fascinating and timely talk on how faith and science are united together. He has spent years helping lead 8th graders during their confirmation classes in Seymour, WI. Parents are eager to help with confirmation this year because of the God-centered yet worldly wisdom Dan shares.



Next is **Carson Molle**, a young man who is currently attending UW-Oshkosh. When he was a sophomore in high school, he tried to take his own life by shooting himself. He is excited to present and to spread more awareness about mental health. [Here's a link](#) to a moving introduction to Carson and his parents telling his inspiring story.



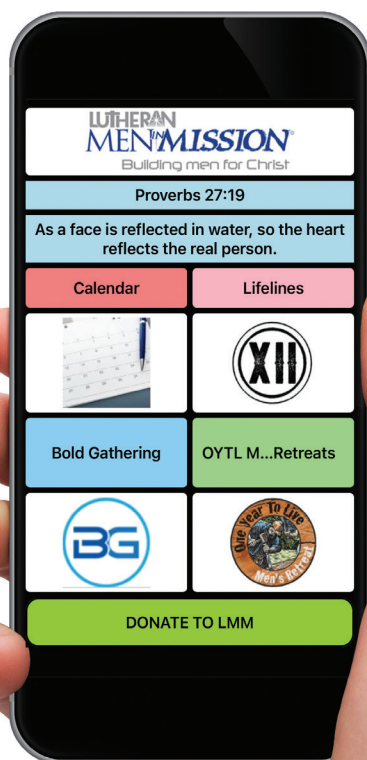
As always, the Fall 2023 Bold Gathering will be streamed live on the LMM YouTube channel, with each presentation available afterwards for further viewing. Mark your calendars for Nov. 11, with presentations available online starting Dec. 2 for further viewing. Gather your local group of guys and get ready for a day of witness, hope and faith.

Download the LMM App Today!

How about carrying all the ministries you love about Lutheran Men in Mission right there in your pocket?

The new LMM Mobile App for both Android and iOS is available right now for download, giving you access to a wealth of features and tools to help plan your next event, schedule a get-together with the guys, make a contribution, find about retreats and more.

Open the app to an inspiring Bible verse, then make your way to buttons for our Calendar of events, information on Bold Gatherings and One Year to Live



Retreats, and one that links to a series of Project XII Lifelines — Bible-based group study guides designed for today's busy guys who want to gather for conversation, prayer and deep discussion.

Many thanks to app developer and designer Bruce Krueger for giving LMM this powerful, valuable and easy-to-use resource.

Available right now for download

We Thank Our 2022 Donors!

The board and staff at Lutheran Men in Mission give our heartfelt thanks for the generous financial, prayerful time and talent support that so many of you have given to help further our ministry for men, their families and their congregations.

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Another Way to Give

Let Us Know What Books Inspire You!

Have you read a book or used a resource recently that that has helped you grow in your faith as a man?

Project XII would like to know about it! Is your men's ministry (or a men's ministry you are aware of) doing something unique to reach all men and make bold and daring followers of Jesus Christ? Please let us know. By sharing with Project XII, you will be sharing with men who relate to the many ministries involved with Project XII and more.

See what Project XII has to offer you at <https://projecttwelve.net>.

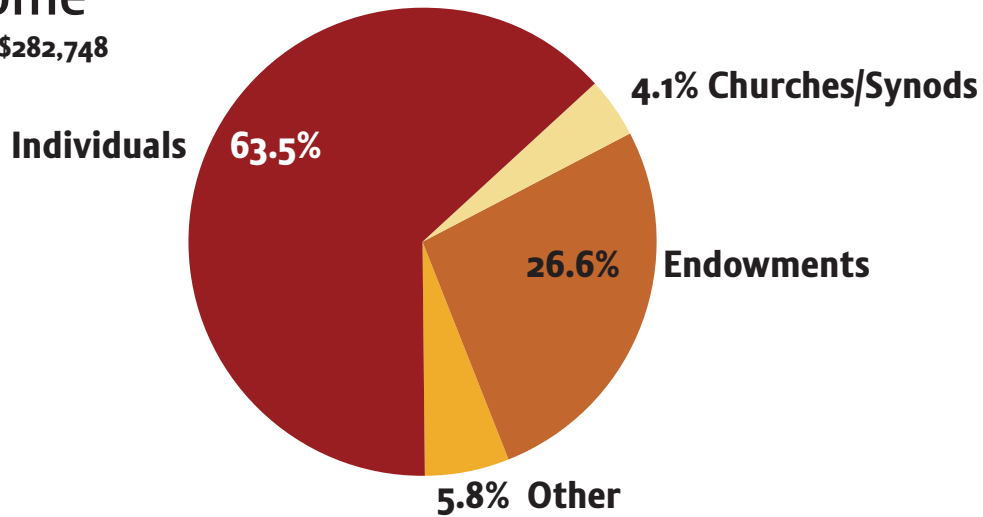
Submit your resource at [Project XII](mailto:doug.haugen@projecttwelve.net) or, share it directly with doug.haugen@projecttwelve.net.

Thank you for sharing!

Annual Fund Budget

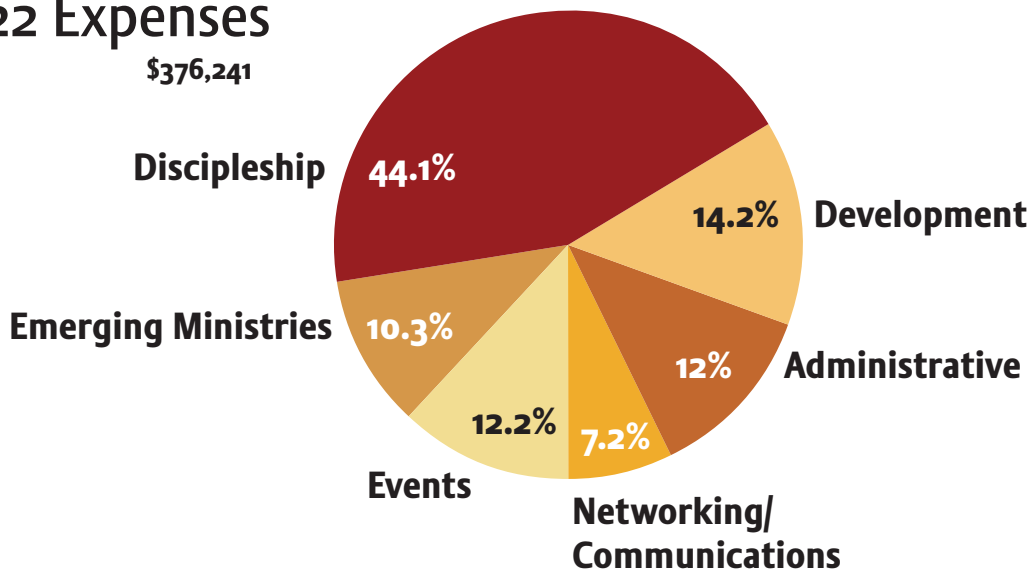
2022 Income

Total: \$282,748



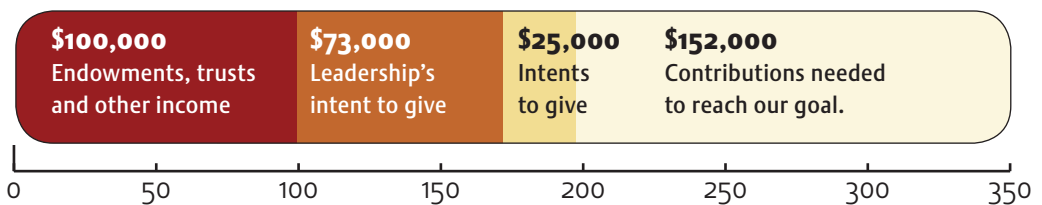
2022 Expenses

Total: \$376,241



2023 Goal:

\$350,000



Guys, Gifts and Going the Distance

As yet another summer season heads for the finish line—time flies, indeed—and temperatures give at least a hint of cooling off, I'm happy to report that the passion for men's ministry among our board members, and out there among you, our faithful and dedicated brothers in Christ, remains strong. Superheated, even.

Keeping that fire stoked takes the time, talent and, yes, treasure of many men who believe in our mission and vision of helping each other become and grow as Bold, Daring Followers of Jesus Christ.

Before I elaborate on that, here's what we've been up to, and what we look forward to in the short and long terms.

First, in July we welcomed two new brand-new Ministry Team Directors.

Matt Love, with whom I first experienced the One Year to Live retreat more than a decade ago (we were in the same small group), and who remains a dedicated volunteer on many a OYTL leadership team, takes over as Special Events Director. His predecessor, Lon Buss, is helping Matt grow into the gig while continuing to serve as an LMM leader in many other ways (couldn't do it without you, Lon!). We look forward to working with Matt as he helps plan the many events on our schedule and perhaps come up with new ideas for getting guys together in Christ's name. Recently retired, he lives in Aptos, Calif.

Taking the reins from my new vice president, Jason Adams, as Director of Emerging Ministries is Elvaughn Riley, a young, lifelong Lutheran with a true passion for bringing men together in new, unique and powerful ways. The board is thrilled to bring his voice and spirit into the mix as we keep breaking down boundaries and bringing in men of all backgrounds, ages and occupations. Elvaughn hails from Wisconsin.

Second, our new LMM app for iOS and Android continues to take shape as creator/programming whiz Bruce Krueger donates his time to add content and functionality. Make sure to download it from your favorite app store, give it a spin, and let us know what new or expanded features you'd like to see.

Third, individual speaker videos from our Spring 2023 Bold Gathering in Tacoma, Wash., are now up and available at www.boldgathering.com. Check them out at your leisure and bring a friend.

Fourth, Dave Newman, our Director of Network and Communications, reports that **our armies of Netcasters and Ambassadors continue to grow**. They spread the good news of LMM to their synods, congregations and local men's groups. Want to throw your hat in the ring? Let us know!

Finally, we have several OYTL retreats planned this fall, from Olympia, Washington, to Wisconsin, Iowa to South Carolina. Get the lowdown on dates and registration [here](#). Perhaps the spirit is moving you to attend for the first time, serve as a leader or, most importantly, invite a buddy. Go for it!

Speaking of which, back to my comment about "keeping that fire stoked." Yes, that means spirit, and time, but since we are living and serving as modern men in God's creation, it also takes money. Some of you may not know that LMM receives no monetary programming support from the ELCA. We raise our own funding for the resources, materials, travel expenses, speakers and other earthly elements critical to our ministry's health.

For our loyal and growing group of annual "Bedrock" and other regular givers, we offer our deep and abiding thanks. Your generosity is key to our ongoing success.

Yet the need continues. Our annual spirit-led annual campaign to raise a goal of \$250,000 for our 2023 operations is in high gear. As I write this, we remain about \$150,000 from the finish line. I'd like you to prayerfully consider how and when you can share your blessings to help LMM reach as many men as possible. You may have received our biannual appeal letter this summer from Executive Director John Sundquist, but if you'd like a personal call to discuss the many support options we offer—including legacy gifts—please don't hesitate to reach out to me, John or Development Council Director Rich White and we will be happy to help. And you can always visit our donation page [here](#).

Again, on behalf of the entire board and leaders, I thank you for your partnership, your abiding faith in our mission, and your love of your fellow man through Jesus.

Your Brother in Christ,

Vic Williams

Board President, Lutheran Men in Mission

vic.williams@lutheranmeninmission.org



Keeping that fire stoked takes the time, talent and, yes, treasure of many men who believe in our mission and vision.

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Lutheran Men in Mission

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Lutheran Men in Mission Online

Find us online at lutheranmeninmission.org, or on:



and the Reaching Men blog
at reachingmen.blogspot.com

UPCOMING LMM

EVENTS & programs



2023 One Year To Live Retreats

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| October 6-8, 2023 | Black Lake Bible Camp, Olympia, WA |
| October 13-15, 2023 | MacKenzie Center, Poynette, WI |
| October 13-15, 2023 | Tracy's Camp, Pinewood, SC |
| October 13-15, 2023 | Camp Cherokee, Blacksburg, SC |
| November 3-5, 2023 | Camp EWALU, Strawberry Point, IA |
| October 19-22 | In-person Board and Executive Committee meetings, Chicago, IL |
| November 11 | Bold Gathering, Appleton, WI |

For information, visit www.lutheranmeninmission.org/events/
and www.lutheranmeninmission.org/events/one-year-to-live/

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become bold, daring
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PROJECT TWELVE

