

foundations

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

As Maundy Thursday descends ... the Christ prepares to wash our feet, to perform one of his final acts of unconditional love in human form.

Viewers watch as the moon slowly slides over the sun, in anticipation of the solar eclipse on April 8, 2024, in Ohio.

Living Love to the Letter

By Vic Williams

While I would never put myself in the same league as the Apostle Paul when it comes to sharing the good news far and wide, I'm taking a leap of faith to fashion this message to you, my brothers in Christ, in letter form.

Dear Fellow Believers,

You will read this as the light of the Easter season continues to warm our little section of God's kingdom, with the long green season coming into view. But at the moment I begin to write, the darkness of Maundy Thursday descends, with Good Friday on the immediate horizon. The Christ prepares to wash our feet, to perform one of his final acts of unconditional love in human form, before bracing Himself, and all, for His final journey the Cross. Though his twelve still cannot bear to acknowledge what's

just ahead, or the stakes involved—and the one of those twelve who will betray Him already knows his dark path despite his protests—Jesus knows he must carry the cup and bear those stakes to the end.

And the beginning.

And the return of the light.

...

Fast forward a week and a half, to the day America witnesses its last complete solar eclipse for two decades (I'll be in my mid-eighties in 2045, if I'm blessed to be breathing). Easter itself is in the rear-view mirror, yet the Resurrection abides, feeds our souls as millions of Americans witness a temporary, thrilling display of nature, a somehow mystical turning of day into night for a few moments within a 115-mile-wide swath of "totality" across the United States from Texas to Maine. Millions are donning special glasses, praying for no cloud cover, going silent while snapping photos as the moon obscures the sun, leaving only the eerie glow of the corona for up to four minutes.

Meanwhile, some folks are out there proclaiming this day as the "rapture," the "end of the world," the "apocalypse," some other headline-grabbing but ultimately misguided assertion. Even a cursory reading of Jesus' words reminds us that only the Father knows the day and time of His return, but still some humans think they have an inside track to the divine, choosing to speak for God rather than living out His love,

Living Love, continued on page 3



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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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Make Spring 'Go and Do' Time

"He is not here; he has risen, just as he said."

—*Matthew 28:6a*

I am still basking in the glory and promise of Easter morning. The refrain: "Christ the Lord has Risen; He has Risen indeed!" is ringing in my ears. Signs of spring are beginning to make themselves known. Hope is in the air. Warmer days filled with the laughter of children are on the horizon. It causes me to ponder: Why we do not proclaim the Good News of Easter every day?

You would be surprised how often people ask what I simply have begun to call the HOW question. How do we get our men involved? How do we get young people into church? How do we grow? How seems to be the question I hear most often. The questions are subtly different but, in their heart, they are asking the same thing. How do we get people excited about Jesus Christ?

When someone finds that personal relationship with Jesus, they get excited. It causes them to tell everyone what they have found. It is an Easter morning moment, regardless of the time of year. They shout out, "He has Risen for me!"

The question remains, HOW? People search for answers. They look for silver bullet solutions. Making the simplest solution so complicated, they lose sight of what is right before their eyes. The answer has not changed since the days of the Disciples. We come to know Jesus Christ because someone invited and introduced us to Him.

Evangelism, or telling people about Jesus Christ, has not changed since the days of the Twelve. Remember the words of Christ to the disciples found in Matthew 28:19-20?

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The answer to how is simple; go and do! Identify someone who needs to know Jesus. Invest your time and energy teaching them everything he has commanded us. Finally, invite them to accept Jesus Christ into their heart, particularly in this Eastertide season when the promise is fresh in our hearts and minds.

Remember these words from Paul to the Colossians found in this benediction:

Remember, you have been raised with Christ. You are chosen by God. You are holy and dearly loved. Therefore, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love. Share what you have discovered!

In the Power of the Spirit,
God Bless,

John Sundquist

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When someone finds that personal relationship with Jesus, they get excited. It causes them to tell everyone what they have found. It's an Easter moment.



The April 8, 2024 total solar eclipse with Venus below to the right.

KATHRYN BREWER

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his one true gift, here on earth in humility rather than hubris.



OK, brothers, the eclipse has come and gone. That gift of love is on my mind and heart constantly as a husband, father, grandfather, brother, friend, and believer. And I marvel at how Jesus' greatest commandment manifests itself in so many ways in our day-to-day lives.

Recently I shared the longtime love of the game of golf with some old friends in a sublimely beautiful corner of southwest Utah. We have known each other, worked together and shared many a round together over the past two decades. Like most "buddies" we choose not to overtly express our love for one another in so many words, but just let it play out on and off the course, over drinks or a meal, through life stories and jokes and the occasional veiled revelation about what in our

lives has filled or cracked our cups. We hadn't been together as a group in a decade, but once we were there on the doorstep of Zion National Park, among some of God's most incredibly spectacular and soul-stirring acts of creation—if you haven't experienced those red rocks and soaring desert peaks in person, I beseech you to make the trip—it was as if no time had passed, no new gray hairs had sprouted, no waistlines had increased or decreased, no further rapids in the river of existence had been navigated. We were just us, a band of brothers whose paths hadn't crossed in far too long. We were more than ready to throw around some buddy barbs, the silly "insults" that stand in for the words of affection we can't bring ourselves to say. And while my three compadres weren't ready to accommodate me as a brutal cold turned me into a sneezing, coughing mess for the entire trip, they did anyway, with great humor and understanding.

I marvel at how Jesus' greatest commandment manifests itself in so many ways in our day-to-day lives.

Hey, these guys do actually love me, and I them. And I carry that love with me always. I'm sure you can relate.



And now I'm back home, at my desk, treasuring that trip, and anticipating those to come with those guys, with other friends, my wife, our kids, my siblings ... and my fellow Lutheran Men in Mission leaders. In the immediate future is the first of our board's two in-person meetings for 2024, in Chicago. I look forward to spending three days with cherished brothers to review, pray, plan, create, break bread, set goals, and welcome the Holy Spirit into our midst as we discern how to more completely live out our

Living Love, continued on page 4

Zion National Park, among some of God's most incredibly spectacular and soul-stirring acts of creation



mission to be bold, daring followers of Jesus Christ—and carry the passion for this mission out into the world, and to you, our vital partners and supporters.

If you're reading this letter (in this *Foundations* newsletter), you know that in recent months we've been up to a lot of visioning, and now we're turning those visions into action. As 2024 progresses we have a lot of exciting developments to share in terms of how we present LMM to the world. A new logo is in the works, and with it, new looks for our website, events materials, social media sites, products, and materials. We also continue to explore and discover new ways to engage men across the belief spectrum, through every stage of life—not only through our ever-growing array of resources for study, fellowship,

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event planning and execution and more, but through our invitation to join us more deeply on the journey. I come to you, fellow believer, with hat in hand and heart extended, with a humble plea to consider contributing to the LMM movement in whatever way your spirit moves you to. Perhaps join our "Bedrock Society" as a monthly financial contributor, or sign up to be our eyes and ears in your synod or city as a Congregational Contact or Netcaster, or take the soul-opening plunge into a One Year to Live Retreat.

Let me boil it down: We want and need you with us, arm in arm, to make LMM even stronger, bolder, truer to God's promise and purpose. So consider this letter an open invitation to "go there" with us, without fear, bound in love.

To close, I circle back to Paul, the greatest of all letter writers, in his message to the Colossians, chapter 3, verses 12-14:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

UPCOMING LMM EVENTS & programs

2024 One Year To Live Retreats



April 26-28, 2024	Camp Cherokee Kings Mountain State Park Blacksburg, SC	Registration Information Online Registration
May 3-5, 2024	Good Earth Village Spring Valley, MN	REGISTRATION IS FULL!
August 23-25, 2024	Feliciana Retreat Center Norwood, LA	Registration Information Online Registration
October 4-6, 2024	Camp Agape Fuquay-Varina, NC	Registration Information Online Registration
November 1-3, 2024	Camp EWALU Strawberry Point, IA	Registration Information Online Registration

Visit www.lutheranmeninmission.org/events/one-year-to-live/ for information

Steeping the Leaves

Bible and Book Study are Pillars of Discipleship

By Kevin Burke

I'm guessing many of you have heard the statement, "Just because you go to church doesn't mean you're a Christian. I can go sit in the garage all day and it doesn't make me a car." That is attributed to Joyce Meyer. LMM tries to offer resources for men so that they can surround themselves with quality Christian influences.

Have you made a cup of tea by steeping the leaves? This process of surrounding the tea with hot water influences the quality of the taste. We all could probably use some more time steeped in Christ-like resources and communities.

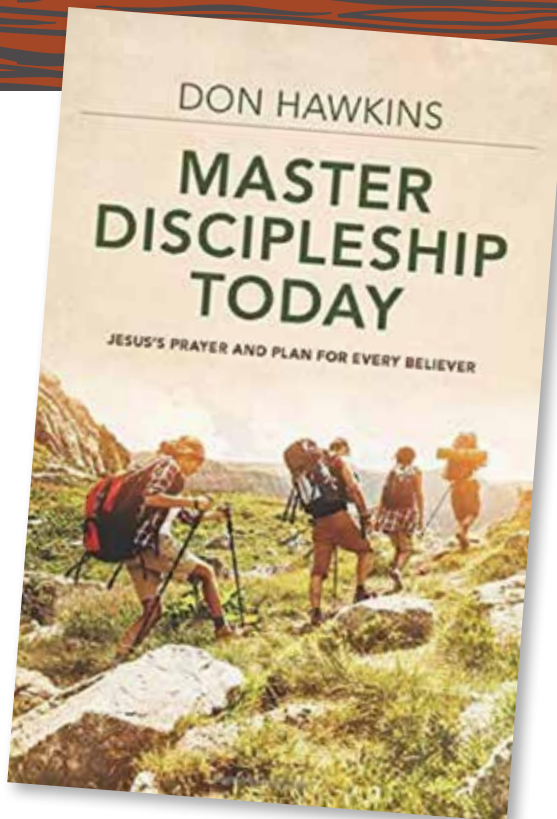
We at LMM want you to be a part of and worship with a congregation. That is one of the markers of being a disciple. The Seven Marks of Discipleship, in no particular order, are inviting, serving, blessing, studying, encouraging, praying and worshipping.

One way LMM offers men a way to "steep" in their faith is by leading a Bible study every Thursday evening online. For some this might be the only Bible study they participate in. For others, it could be a second or third study they do during the week. This is a valuable time spent regardless of the number.

Many great scripture passages encourage us to dive into God's Word. Based on the old joke ("How does Moses make his tea?" "Hebrews it!"), let's use this one:

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

—Hebrews 4:12



This is your invitation to come join the book discussions on Tuesday evenings and/or the Bible studies on Thursday evenings.

May we all make time to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn like the original disciples. In fellowship with others, let us have soft hearts that listen, absorb and discern how we are called to live.

On top of Bible studies, LMM offers a weekly book discussion. Starting in 2020, we started reading *Season of Life* by Jeffrey Marx. Since then we've discussed books from John Ortberg, William

Paul Young, Max Lucado, Larry Moeller, Bishop Michael Curry, Mitch Albom, and Kyle Idleman, to name a few.

Starting on April 23, the book group will be starting to discuss *Master Discipleship Today: Jesus's Prayer and Plan for Every Believer* by Don Hawkins. Usually, each week we cover a chapter or two with no hurry. The conversations and depth of the content is more of the purpose instead of racing through one book and grabbing another.

This is your invitation to come join the book discussions on Tuesday evenings and/or the Bible studies on Thursday evenings.

If you need the zoom link, email kevin@lutheranmenin-mission.org. Let's take time to truly sit with what we read. Give the words a chance to impact and change us. Take the opportunity to soak in the fellowship of other disciples and in the truth of God's Word.

We Thank Our 2023 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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LMM values and appreciate support at every level. To become a member of our Bedrock Society, please visit <https://www.lutheranmeninmission.org/support/bedrock-society/>

A Board that Believes

Behind every successful not-for-profit organization is an involved, passionate, active board of directors, and that's exactly what Lutheran Men In Mission is blessed with at this very moment.

As I near my first full year as board president, I'm filled with the spirit of gratitude to be working on the regular with such a great group of fellow Christian journeyers, who come to every monthly meeting prepared to engage with their peers in service to LMM's mission to help men become bold, daring followers of Jesus Christ. They're always enthusiastic about whatever they're working on and never fail to keep the creative juices flowing when it's time to envision where our ministry is calling us, and you, to go.

And, boy, do we have a wide and bright road ahead of us, starting with how we bring our ministry and message to the public. As we speak, the board is working with creative partners to finalize a new logo that will, hopefully, fit well with those of the other "brands" in our suite of ministry sites—www.projecttwelve.net and www.boldgathering.com—as well as the familiar logo for One Year to Live retreats. We're eager to reveal it to you, and the world at large, later this year.

We're also hard at work on our next Strategic Plan for 2025-2027, one that will build on the incredible progress we've made over the past three years with our current plan, as we worked our way out of the shadow of Covid-19.

For one thing, with the dedication and guidance of Dave Newman, our Texas-based Director of Networking and Communications, we've added dozens of new Ambassadors and Netcasters from across the country. They have all signed on to be LMM's eyes, ears and hands among men's groups and in their congregations, and we truly couldn't hope to increase our outreach without them.

In terms of special events, Californian Matthew Love, with whom I attended a OYTL retreat a few years ago, is helping bring those events to a wider swath of the nation, and also working with our staff Discipleship Consultant, Kevin Burke, to get a new slate of Bold Gatherings on the calendar. Where will the next one land? We will let you know.

The kudos keep coming through the rest of the board. Jason Adams, my fellow Nevadan and vice president, brings such boundless spirit and a pastor's deep insight into everything we do, while Secretary Jim Schieble—many of you know him well—provides not only nourishment through his devotionals and prayers, but keeps meticulous meeting records and reports as well. On the financial side, Treasurer Jeff Kuchenbecker keeps us on budget and always provides positive feedback, reminding us that our organization's dollars, and the programming they (and you) support, give glory to Jesus every day of every year. Then there's Rich White, who for years held my position on the LMM Board, and now directs our Development Council. Working with guys like Lon Buss—who keeps tabs on our donor base behind the scenes—and consultants from the Focus Group, Rich has our finances heading in the right direction as we hope to gather \$250,000 in donations in 2024, and add 50 new donors in the process.

Clearly there's a lot going on with LMM. There's nothing else like it out there in the world of men's ministry, and on behalf of the entire board, I'd like to personally thank you for being a part of it, whether for many years or just the past few months.

To get the full picture of where we are and where we're headed, I invite readers who are also qualified LMM "delegates"—those who have contributed at least \$100 during the past fiscal year—to put our Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 11 at 7 p.m. Central Standard Time on your calendars. You should have received a 60-day notice by now, and a Zoom link will follow soon. We're moving the meeting from Saturday morning to Tuesday evening to hopefully attract more interest and participation. By tuning in you'll get reports and updates from the board and Executive Director John Sundquist, have the opportunity to make comments and ask questions, and give voice to your concerns, dreams, whatever.

And, we'd just love to see your faces on the screen.

In the meantime, if you haven't yet hit that \$100 mark for giving in 2024, please consider doing so sooner rather than later. As I've mentioned in past messages, our programming is 100 percent supported by folks like you who believe in our mission and want LMM to continue to thrive.

Once again, thank you for joining us on the journey.

Your Brother in Christ,

Vic Williams

Board President, Lutheran Men in Mission

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I'm filled with the spirit of gratitude to be working on the regular with such a great group of fellow Christian journeyers.

There's nothing else like [LMM] out there in the world of men's ministry, and on behalf of the entire board, I'd like to personally thank you for being a part of it, whether for many years or just the past few months.

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