

**LMM**

Lutheran Men in Mission
Building Men for Christ

Summer 2025

foundations

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

What Does Your Spirit Weigh?

by Vic Williams

The power carried within our hearts and souls to keep us going up those mountains, and through life, is generated not by reps..., but revealed by faith.

During a recent hike with my daughter and her friends near the town of June Lake, Calif., high in the Eastern Sierra Nevada, I felt the full force of gravity bear down on my 65-year-old legs and lungs. Bennie, our year-old Airedale terrier, dragged me across a trail of crumbled granite and sharp boulders as we made our way up some 700 feet from the lake below. Our destination? A waterfall that had raged a month before but was now a mere midsummer trickle.

It was slow going. My daughter, a personal trainer and professional “stretcher” (trust me, it’s a thing), and her friends left me in the dust, and I was OK with that. I was just thrilled to

be there, under God’s own sun, at 9,000 feet above sea level surrounded by 12,000-foot peaks, in my beloved childhood chunk of the Mountain West. It’s where I first felt closer to heaven at age 8 after my Dad moved us north from Los Angeles. He and I would fish that lake below us, and the three others in the June Lake Loop,

pulling trout into our small trawler between sips of Oly, the frigid water lapping at the low gunwale in a freshening evening breeze as he maneuvered the little 10-horse motor from one known hotspot to the next. It was father-son heaven 50 years ago—a heaven I did my best to bring to life in the poem accompanying this piece—and I here I was again, with my own daughter up the trail ahead of me, feeling the familial line come full circle. Feeling that divine chill yet again, right now.

Sure, this time my body might have been weighed down by age and fatigue, but my spirit soared, carrying me forward. Didn’t matter that yeah, I could be in better shape and lose the gut. Didn’t matter that starting out on the trail, my ego out overruled reality. Didn’t matter what the scale says back home in my comfy house. I was out there, doing what I do when I can do it, with the ever-present, older-than-history holy spirit at my side.

Most of you reading this can relate at some level. Earthly age has its way with all of us. Health worries, or at least the hint of worries, worm into our daily train of thoughts, and if we’re not stressing about what the next day may bring—“darn, I didn’t have that pain yesterday!”—we’re praying for a friend or family member who’s dealing with some brand of decline or challenge.

And then there’s the relentless media telling us that we’ve gotta drop the pounds, pump the iron, take up the

Spirit, *continued on page 3*





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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More Milestones for LMM's Ministry

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."

—Proverbs 17:17

Have you ever scheduled a time to celebrate a birthday or an anniversary? Of course you have! In our calendars we have written down those important dates that we need to remember: weddings, birthdays, and even deaths. We do it so we don't forget them. Marking these days signifies just how important they are and how important those we celebrate are to us.

These are not the only days we celebrate! There are holidays like Christmas and the Fourth of July. There are milestones—first man on the moon, assassination of Dr. King, November 2, 2016 (Chicago Cubs won the World Series in Cleveland), just to name a few. We celebrate these passages of time, but why?

It's a great feeling when people remember the day of our birth, the anniversary of our wedding, and even the passing of a loved one. When we remember the birth, death or marriage of a person, it shows them how important they are to us and the love we hold for them.

The same is true for organizations. July 15, 1988, and October 4, 2014, are important dates for the ministry of Lutheran Men in Mission. They are respectively the genesis of LMM and Project Twelve. Each year we celebrate the work that God has done with and through LMM, transforming the lives of men now for over 37 years, and we are just getting started. If you take a minute and think of the impact of LMM over that time it could take your breath away. In the 13,515 days between July 15, 1988, and July 15, 2025, how many lives have been touched? I will let you do the math, but it just scratches the surface of the work that still needs to be done.

Each of you is part of the story and success of LMM. Your prayers and support have enabled the ministry to flourish and grow. Together, we can meet men where they are and intentionally disciple them to be bold, daring followers of Jesus Christ. Together, we can turn the tides of isolation and loneliness so many men experience. Together we can work to being men back to church. All this can only happen together. You are crucial in meeting the needs of men today.

I am already looking forward to the summer of 2028. I also look forward to seeing all that God will do through your support and prayers, and through the work of LMM. Today LMM is six months into its new three-year strategic plan, "LMM is..." This plan will help to lay the foundation for the next 40 years.

Thank you for all your support and encouragement. Together we will continue to fulfill the mission that drives LMM—that "by God's grace, intentionally disciple men by modeling the character of Jesus and lead a transformative ministry of loving and serving our neighbors." Together everything is possible! In the power of the spirit, God bless,

John Sundquist
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pickleball (I remain a card-carrying member of the resistance), get in the 10,000 steps, and curtail the fries and pizza and ice-cold beer. And we listen, we really do. We try. Mostly.

But one thing we don't worry about is what our spirits weigh, or even what the Holy Spirit weighs. It is beyond matter, beyond time, beyond the limits of our breath and muscle, beyond earthly decay. And it doesn't discriminate based on genetics, poor eating habits, lack of exercise, bad decisions, or bad luck. It doesn't discriminate at all. It welcomes and animates. The spirit connects us all and lifts us all together, up mountains physical, mental, and emotional. It gives us the impetus to attend that men's Bible breakfast, start a small group "pub ministry" or arrange a community service outing. It leads us to seek out other men and share our stories via Lutheran Men In Mission events and resources. It is the breath that we share with Jesus, and His Father, down through the centuries and on until eternity.

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[The Holy Spirit] doesn't discriminate based on genetics, poor eating habits, lack of exercise, bad decisions, or bad luck. It doesn't discriminate at all. It welcomes and animates.

machine, but revealed by faith, ever so slowly but as surely as the sunrise that greets our thoughts of gratitude each morning.

Earlier this summer, I was blessed to give the Father's Day/Holy Trinity Sunday message at my home church in Reno. (For you current and former pastors out there who recognize that this Sunday on the liturgical calendar is often doled out to seminary greenhorns and, in my case, unsuspecting but optimistic lay preachers, please hold your snickering until the closing credits, thank you.) I pondered what to write and say about the prickly Gospel passage in question—John 16:12-15—and ultimately did my best to tie a neat bow around the whole concept of Father, Son, and

Fishin' With the Old Man

"First most and biggest" the old man said to me,
"A quarter for each, a dollar for all three"

Once again he and I went at it
As the Sierra sun haloed him from behind
His holy straw hat canted just so,
One hand on the five-horse,
Our reels ticking in slow unwind
Surface ripples marking the moment
Old 10-fish limits setting our course

Hunched and ever hopeful
We watched the pole-tips in rhythmic dance
To the gentle purr of outboard motor,
Nearly two miles up, granite bound
Sharing silence, a joke, a glance —
When a breath of breeze slid by
And the shore pines sang a whispered round

Answered Dad in chorus, "No luck here,"
"Pull in your line and hand me a beer"

But at that moment, as in many more since,
His line gave a jerk and strained to the deep
I silenced the motor and raised the net
While up from the lake came a mountain trout
With a glint, a splash and one final leap
Into the boat and a chain through the gills
Two bits to Dad, he'd won the first bet

Then a sudden sweet peace settled over us
As we trawled on toward the summer day's end
I scored the biggest and Dad took the most
The peaks above disappeared in shadow
Water and sky shared a blackish blend
A chill came on quickly, we mounted the dock
Dad first, or his outline, a benevolent ghost

They call it Sabrina, the lake he so loved,
Trading each trout for a slice of his soul
Left behind freely, as if he then knew
Of a reunion held close like the breath
Between our words, wild and whole,
Until they, years on, as I spread his ashes there,
Took flight at last, over the icy blue

—Vic Williams

Spirit, continued from page 3

Holy Spirit, and how it forms the central conceit of our Christian worldview while giving a sturdy three-sided structure to how we relate to God and vice-versa, with Jesus the Son as the living God yet and always with us. To help tighten that bow, I came across the following passage from a young and forward-thinking Lutheran pastor named Clint Schnekloth:

"The Spirit is that which resists being known and yet insists on being given. It arrives in tongues, foreign to us, ours only by fire, not by ownership. The tongues of fire rest upon but are not possessed. The Spirit is not the third in the Trinity. This would be the mistake of giving the Spirit an identity ... an un-free Spirit. The Spirit is not afterthought. The Spirit is *before and beneath* and *beneath-the-before*. The Spirit is the phenomenon too full to be contained in the horizon of expectation. So full it empties (only the suffering God can help). So close it becomes ungraspable. The Spirit gives before we are subjects who can receive. It gives when we are still chaos, void, breathless.

"The error is to imagine the Spirit as an agent in a chain of divine command. As in: the Father sends, the Son obeys, the Spirit animates. But the Spirit evades sequence. The Spirit is the collapse of linear time. The messianic is not the end but the interruption. The Spirit is interruption as Person. Rupture as relation."

It's a mystery, a beautiful and powerful mystery, but we know it's there, breathing within us and lighting our paths. So, as brothers, let's keep weighing what the spirit does for and within us, together.

Jesus was and is that person, that interruption, and the Spirit is what connects Him to us, and us to each other. It was there before all, and will be there after all.

Got all that squared away, right? All clear?

No?

No worries. It's a mystery, a beautiful and powerful mystery, but we know it's there, breathing within us and lighting our paths. So, as brothers, let's keep weighing what the spirit does for and within us, together.

And yet, and yet: There's still that question of what your spirit actually "weighs." Is it the "21 Grams" of the

2003 movie, whose plot connects people who are connected, and ultimately resurrected, by the spirit amid confusion, death, and despair? Is it whatever heft we need it to take on as we negotiate through the next life challenge or loss? Is it the ultimate gift, as Jesus says in verse 15, "...the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you?"

I say it's all of the above, and an infinite number of other things, too. Just as Clint says it can't be owned, nor can it be weighed, or weighed down—not by sharp rocks on mountainsides, or faint memories of youth and boundless health, or nagging regret, or debilitating grief. It's above, around, and through all that.

And, of course, it can and must be shared. It begs for us to reach out to one another, if only to check in and say hello, and remind each other that we're not alone.

So what does your spirit weigh? Nothing, and everything.



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Report from the Churchwide Assembly

Aug. 2, 2025—Fellow LMM brothers, I write to you from Phoenix, AZ where we are gathered as the churchwide assembly of the ELCA. It has been a worship and prayer centered assembly in which the Holy Spirit has been present among us.

In this assembly we have:

- Centered ourselves in daily worship. Singing with 900+ others is a joy to behold.
- Given thanks for Presiding Bishop Eaton and for Secretary Sue Rothmeyer.
- Vetted, rejected, and approved multiply memorials and constitutional amendments. These included our social statement on Faith and Civic engagement, making small amendments to Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust, and called for peace in the Holy Land affirming our commitment to our Lutheran siblings in the ELCJHL and an end to the violence in Gaza.
- Amended the ELCA constitution to call for more inclusion of youth and historically marginalized groups in our decision making processes.
- Recognized the reality of decline in our church and how that impacts budgets. The budgets approved for 2026-2028 reflect this reality faithfully and realistically.
- Elected Bishop Yehiel Curry (Metro Chicago Synod) as our next presiding bishop.
- Elected the Rev. Lucille “CeCee” Mills as ELCA Secretary.

For our LMM community I was heartened to hear Bishop Curry acknowledge LMM as one of the vital ministries of the church in



Newly elected ELCA Churchwide Secretary Rev. Lucille “CeCee” Mills and Bishop Yehiel Curry.

his address to the assembly. I have immense respect for and appreciation of Bishop Curry’s leadership. While I do not know Secretary-Elect Mills well her reputation is strong, she is from North Carolina, and I believe knows of the work of LMM.

Both of our newly elected Executive Team members need our prayers and support in this time. I encourage you to commit yourselves to prayer for Bishop Curry, Rev. Mills, and the new leadership of the ELCA Churchwide expression including new council members and committee members elected. The challenges are clear and those who have been elected need your prayerful support and encouragement. As I mention above the budgets for churchwide reflect declines in resources. This will make for difficult decisions and it is important for us to honor the 8th commandment and seek to listen and understand.

I encourage you to commit yourselves to prayer for Bishop Curry, Rev. Mills, and the new leadership of the ELCA Churchwide expression including new council members and committee members elected.

As your Bishop Liaison I pledge that I will engage Bishop Curry in conversation and ways that we can grow and reinvigorate the connection of LMM to the ELCA body and the Conference of Bishops. A question I continue to ask is how LMM can become more recognized within our church. This is work we have to do and I believe we have an opportunity with this new administration to see LMM better recognized and a partner in our work together.

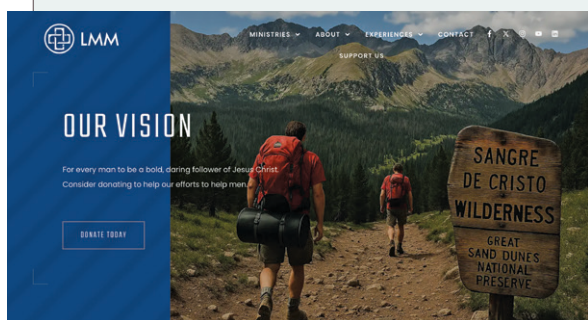
God’s peace,

Bishop Erik Gronberg
LMM Board Member

LMM's Fresh Digital Direction

Early in 2024, the Lutheran Men in Mission board gave the green light for a refreshed [website](#) with three goals in mind: simplicity, functionality, and visual attraction. I think we hit the trifecta. Hope you agree.

First, the visual attraction part. When Emerging Ministries Consultant Kyle Pedersen presented early design models in late 2024, I immediately zeroed in on the beauty and built-in messaging of the home page photo you see today. Taken by Discipleship Consultant Kevin Burke during a hike in the Great Sand Dunes National Preserve of southern Colorado, it shows two young men making their way toward dense pine forest with soaring peaks beyond. To their right is a sign: "Sangre De Cristo Wilderness." Blood of Christ. Wilderness. Men on a mission.



Sums it all up, doesn't it? We are all men on a mission together, journeying through the mountains and valleys of life with no goal beyond living out our faith in soul-filling service to God, our families, our friends, and each other. Our walking sticks? The Word, the presence of Christ, and our commitment to going deeper, boldly, with daring spirit. That screen-filling image invites us to go deeper into LMM's new website, too.

Second, simplicity. Thanks to Kyle and his web design cohorts behind the scenes, the new site is much easier to navigate. We've consolidated the old multilayered pull-down menus into a cleaner interface to quickly help you seek and find what you need to help reach your own men's group and larger church ministry goals. Under "Experiences" you can keep up on our many events and gathering opportunities, from weekly Bible and book studies to One Year to Live retreats (six are on the schedule for this fall at venues across the country including Iowa, Nebraska, South Carolina, Nebraska, Washington state, and Wisconsin) and Bold Gatherings (the next slated for late October near Detroit, Mich., with a full slate of speakers being assembled as we speak). In the main "Ministries" page you'll also find a quick link to Project XII, which recently celebrated its 12th anniversary of existence—I was part of the visioning and creation team for this all-important dimension of LMM's mission, and am delighted to see it resonating through the years via its own standalone site, [projecttwelve.net](#). It's home to more than 100 custom-built Lifelines, which I was blessed to help develop, too. The remaining top-line navigation points, "About," "Contact," and "Support Us," are as simply presented and easy to navigate as they've ever been.

Finally, functionality. The old site was often "clunky" in look and feel, weighed down by too much visual messiness or broken links to nowhere. The new site is far more welcoming and pleasant to use, especially under the "Support Us" menu. Since LMM is a self-sustaining ministry—still under the ELCA umbrella, but very much our own entity financially and otherwise—the board recognized that a retooling of the all-important fundraising page was in order. You'll now find every option for giving, from one-time gifts to ongoing Bedrock Society commitments to estate gift planning, on one streamlined page, with stand-alone buttons leading you to the stewardship avenue of your choice.

We are proud of this new "top line" website that will, no doubt, serve as LMM's introduction to many men in the future.

On that note, I invite you to [explore](#) the new and improved website at your leisure, take note of what we've done well, what could still use work, and what you'd like to see us add or expand on in future updates.

Also, as always, as editor of *Foundations* I'd love to hear your faith story for an upcoming issue. Please email me at vic.williams@lutheranmeninmission.org. I look forward to your feedback on all fronts, and thank you for your brotherhood.

Blessings,

Vic Williams

Board President, Lutheran Men in Mission
vic.williams@lutheranmeninmission.org

My LMM Discipleship Story

Lon Buss ■ Leesburg, FL

LMM has changed my life by allowing me to serve God and others with its resources and events. I appreciate the value LMM puts on relationships and the impact of small groups. I feel the most important relationship is ours with Jesus Christ. Experiencing quality relationships with other men in a spiritually uplifting small group setting can help guys be better sons, brothers, husbands, dads, and church and community members.

For me that experience started 30 years ago when I realized there were things preventing me from being the best husband and dad I could be. I knew I needed a change. I started listening to Christian Radio and attended Promise Keepers events. Four of us started

meeting weekly to discuss scripture and our lives. Eventually our trust in each other increased, allowing us to go beyond the weather and sports. Things didn't change right away, but I knew I was on the right path. With time and encouragement, the changes needed were accomplished.

Eventually our trust in each other increased, allowing us to go beyond the weather and sports. Things didn't change right away, but I knew I was on the right path.

The resources and events LMM that makes available to men and congregations help men be who God intends

Stories of faith



I have been blessed with so many opportunities to share these [LMM] resources and events. I found a purpose in serving God and others in this way as it became my passion and continues to be today.



them to be: bold, daring followers of Jesus Christ. Over the last 20 years, I have been blessed with so many opportunities to share these resources and events. I found a purpose in serving God and others in this way as it became my passion and continues to be today.

It started in south central Wisconsin, when LMM offered Master Builder Bibles for Men to congregations who wanted to start or restart their men's ministry. That led to my involvement with a LMM fundrais-

Stories of Faith, continued on page 9

Stories of Faith, *continued from page 8*

ing campaign and becoming LMM's Region 5 Board Representative serving synods in Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, Illinois and Iowa.

It has been a joy to continue to represent LMM at events, lead workshops and retreats in multiple states, in addition to serving LMM in a variety of ways at the local, regional and national level.

Why do I support and help with the ministries of LMM? Because if just one guy can be helped the way I was, including a closer relationship with Jesus Christ, it will all have been worth it.

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Have a faith story to tell?

Of course you do! Stories are how we present ourselves to the world, to friends, even to strangers. In each issue of Foundations, we'd like to offer stories from Lutheran Men In Mission brothers from around the country—how God is working in your life, what the Holy Spirit is leading you to do in service to men's ministry, and how you hope to live into your faith.

To tell your story, contact Vic Williams at vic.williams@lutheranmeninmission.org

UPCOMING
LMM

ONE YEAR TO LIVE *retreats* 2025



September 12-14, 2025

**Black Lake Bible Camp
Olympia, WA**

[Registration Information](#)
[Online Registration](#)

September 19-21, 2025

**Sugar Creek Bible Camp
Ferryville, WI**

[Registration Information](#)
[Online Registration](#)

September 26-28, 2024

**Tracy's Camp
Pinewood, SC**

[Registration Information](#)
[Online Registration](#)

October 17-19, 2025

**Camp Cherokee
Blacksburg, SC**

[Registration Information](#)
[Online Registration](#)

November 7-9, 2025

**Camp EWALU
Strawberry Point, IA**

[Registration Information](#)
[Online Registration](#)

December 12-14, 2025

**Camp Carol Joy Holling
Ashland, NE**

[Registration Information](#)
[Online Registration](#)

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

Time To Get Your LMM Garb On!

Why not wear your faith in Jesus, and your love and support for fellow men of faith, on your heart and your sleeve while sporting the new LMM logo?

LMM has opened up their new online store for anyone to purchase items and have them shipped directly to them.

To start, you'll find a couple of embroidered polo options, a couple of hats and a t-shirt design. Let's check out the service and quality. We can add more and grow later.

We're ordering our first polos as we speak and we'll be happy to share our thoughts when they arrive. When you get yours, let us know what you think at mail@lutheranmeninmission.org. Send a photo too!

Place your order today.
<https://lmm.printful.me/>



Get the LMM App today!

You get quick access to:

- Project XII Lifelines
- Event Information
- Inspiration
- And more at your fingertips!



SCAN FOR IPHONE



SCAN FOR ANDROID

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Find us online at lutheranmeninmission.org, or on:



and the **Reaching Men** blog
at reachingmen.blogspot.com

Sustain our Mission



BOLD GATHERING



PROJECT TWELVE



As you count your blessings

consider supporting
Lutheran Men in Mission.

**With your support
more men will have
the opportunity to
become bold, daring
disciples of Jesus Christ.**

Visit the **donation** page of our website.
www.LutheranMeninMission.org