

LMM foundations en in Mission Characteristics Character

Lutheran Men in Mission

Building Men for Christ

Winter 2026

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

Feeding Our Souls, And Each Other

by Vic Williams

As we digest the carbs and proteins that filled our plates, we also find ourselves storing up spiritual nutrients for the long, winding life slog we face, together and alone, once again.

he Bibles and Breakfast meeting at our church's fellowship hall always greets the first or second Saturday of the month the same way. After a few minutes of small talk we form a loose circle, say a prayer, then dig into egg casserole, fruit, yogurt, pastry—whatever the guys show up with -and coffee. Lots of coffee. Second helpings accompany more small talk and laughter and catching up.

It's a tight-knit group in this setting, even if we may not attend the same service or interact outside these walls. and we make the most of it.

Then we settle in to chew on the good stuff: The Gospel. We feed our bodies and our souls, sharing stories through

the lens of whatever Bible passage our leader has chosen, and invariably find plenty of avenues to "go deeper." We settle into the safe space at the center of every successful small group men's ministry—the very same space you and your brothers no doubt occupy at your own Bible studies, coffee klatches, service outings, and retreats. And through it all, as we digest the carbs and proteins that filled our plates, we also find ourselves storing up spiritual nutrients for the long, winding life slog we face, together and alone, once again. We feed our spirits through the divine connection God gave the disciples when Jesus called them to change the world. It's the very same connection that thrives today, with the risen Christ unseen but at our sides yet and always.

A reenactment of the "allegory of the long spoons."



THE INVITATION

Sometimes the connection and nourishment gain unexpected strength when a "new guy" shows up with a fresh dish of wisdom. In my case that guy was my son, Alex, who in early October was in town for our annual father-son golf trip (a blessed "home game" for me), which usually lasts about a week but extended to two thanks to the U.S. government shutdown, which continues as I write this in early November. Alex is a project manager for a DOD (DOW?) contractor in Colorado Springs, and he was suddenly on furlough, so rather than head home to wait it out, he opted to hang out with his old man, his much-loved stepmom, and a big chunk of extended family who happened to be in town,

Feeding, 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*.

Lutheran Men in Mission 8765 W. Higgins Road Chicago, IL 60631-4101 lutheranmeninmission.org projecttwelve.net

John Sundquist Executive Director john@lutheranmeninmission.org 773-380-2566

Vic Wiliams Board President/ **Foundations** Editor

vic.williams@ lutheranmeninmission.org 775-745-3190

Doug Haugen Consultantdoug@lutheranmeninmission.org

Kevin Burke
Discipling Consultant
kevin@lutheranmeninmission.org
920-562-1411

Kyle Pedersen Emerging Ministries Consultant *kyle@lutheranmeninmission.org*

Kathryn Hillert Brewer Foundations Designer

LMM iS ... Thriving, Thanks To You

"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." —Luke 12:48b

or most of us, the holiday season is a time of celebration and nostalgia. The sounds, sights, and smells of Thanksgiving and Christmas bring back a flood of memories and emotions

For me, music particularly puts me in the holiday mood. On a recent trip back from a One Year To Live reunion, I found myself flipping through records from my childhood and ran across an album by Noel Paul Stookey—the Paul of Peter, Paul and Mary. Though the album itself is not a holiday record, as I hit "play" many memories emerged from those well-used grooves.

For one, it was one of the few recordings my dad and I could agree that we loved playing. Another memory results from a comedic interlude toward the end of the album. With a unique comic wit, Stookey shared this passage: "to whom much has been given, much will be expected." He followed that with a joke about being bald: "if you have bouffant, could you lend me some?" While perhaps not the first thought that comes to mind when you consider supporting ministry, his point is appropriate for both hair and resources.

Each year, friends like you give their time, prayers, and financial support that undergirds and lifts the ministry of LMM. You are ensuring that men across the country continue to be intentionally discipled to become bold, daring followers of Jesus Christ. Currently, the need for ministries like LMM is greater than ever. This year I followed the advice of one of my college professors who liked to say that the key to learning was twofold: consistency and repetition. Taking that advice this year, I have constantly reminded everyone who would listen of some important facts:

- 26% of men attend church—and the number drops quickly among men 24-40 ...
- ... Leaving 74% of men not attending church
- 65% of men self-identify as being lonely
- 90 million men are not involved in any discipleship
- 10% of US churches maintain a vibrant men's ministry
- 10% of men participate in any sort of men's ministry

There is a real movement of younger men returning to Christ. The need for resources and retreats ...is greater than ever.

Recently a fellow pastor was sharing stories about men 40 and younger and how they seem to be returning to faith and the church. He called it an "awakening in America." I believe he is correct. There is a real movement of younger men returning to Christ. The need for resources and retreats that can help men's groups and congregations reach this new wave of seekers is greater than ever.

LMM is ready, willing and able to meet this challenge head on. For the new year we are working on an expanded menu of retreats for churches and men's groups across the country. We are also partnering with Faith+Lead to offer an online Discipleship training program, and many other exciting things are in the works. Also, be on the lookout for new regional Bold Gatherings, OYTLs and other events. The work of LMM is helping spur an awakening among men in a real and lasting way.

We are determined, with your continued support and prayers, to build on the impressive record LMM has already set. Remember, over the past 12 years your support and prayers

Click to continue on page 5





Feeding, continued from page 1

turning it into the biggest reunion in years. We squeezed in a few more rounds than originally planned, even soldiering through the rain and chill of a multi-day autumn low pressure invasion. Over the coming months these rounds will be preserved for golf nut posterity on Alex's YouTube channel, which he called Midgard Golf after the Norse "Middle Earth" creation myth—good viewing if you want to see some sweet layouts while laughing at my swing.

So, knowing that our monthly Bibles & Breakfast meeting was coming up a day before his new departure, I took the leap and invited him. He jumped at the opportunity. I can't say I was surprised since he's a gregarious guy who loves to meet new people and attended Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd as a high schooler, but was thrilled nonetheless. And, yes, a bit apprehensive—in keeping with my lifelong battle with anxiety.

THE REVELATION

As is almost always the case, I needn't have worried. After our standard breakfast-and-bull session around the four tables set up for the meal, we rearranged into a big circle and dug into Luke 19:1-10, the pop-

Jesus didn't just invite himself into Zacchaeus' home, but into his heart ... a place of many rooms, as is God's kingdom. Room for mercy, for vision, for growth, for generosity, for welcome, for repentance—for love without bounds.

ular story of Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus—how the despised and diminutive tax collector climbed a tree to get a better view, only to be called down by name by Jesus himself, who then invited himself (and God) into Zacchaeus' home that very day, saying he "must" stay there. Scandalous? Of course, to Jericho's people, who considered Zacchaeus a Roman collaborator. But Jesus' loving embrace of the guy was pure grace in action, inspiring Zacchaeus to change his ways, give half his wealth to the poor and repay four times over whatever he'd taken from others.

Recognition, invitation, forgiveness, salvation: Bedrock Bible (and men's ministry) stuff, always fertile discussion ground for a group of

The Bibles & Breakfast group at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Reno, NV.

men who, at one time or another, have probably felt like outsiders, or struggled with seeing someone who they considered "undeserving" of grace. We zeroed in on how Jesus didn't just invite himself into Zacchaeus' home, but into his heart—which, the taxman realized, was a place of many rooms, as is God's kingdom. Room for mercy, for vision, for growth, for generosity, for welcome, for repentance—for love without bounds.

Alex was more than eager to share his thoughts about the passage. An Army vet who did three tours as an intel specialist in Afghanistan before taking his skills and talents into the contractor realm, which led him to a long stint in Djibouti on the strife-torn Horn of Africa, he spoke about meeting people where they were, discerning who was friend or foe in the military sense, but also how best to communicate with them and find a way into their heart—to earn their trust. Then he pivoted to the idea of how we must turn outward, set aside our selfish impulses and feed each other any way we can. He even rolled out an apt reference to the allegory of the long spoons, which illustrates the difference between hell and heaven: In hell, the feast is out of reach because the spoons are too long for the selfish souls to feed themselves; in heaven, the spoons are just as long but the feast is well within reach. Why? Everyone feeds each other.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Alex said his piece and got plenty of positive feedback as I sat next to him, beaming with inescapable pride and realizing that, somehow, I'd passed a portion of my faith onto him, and he'd held onto it as



Feeding, continued from page 3

he approaches his 40th birthday next year. He'd seen and survived a lot over his life, starting with my divorce from his mom when he was not yet five years old. He'd been to war, engaged in firefights and come face to face with his fellow man in dangerous and potentially lethal moments. He'd seen the best and worst of us, as we all have, especially the vets among us. He'd survived a divorce of his own. But through it all, he's clearly never lost faith, or the desire to seek out God in the day-to-day tedium of work,

He's never lost the desire and ability to feed others, in whatever way he can. And that fills me with joy.

on the manicured fairways alongside his old man, and among a crew of Christian men, most quite a bit older in age, right here in Shepherd Hall, a former sanctuary where autumn light now slanted through stained glass in quiet blessing.

He's never lost the desire and ability to feed others, in whatever way he can. And that fills me with joy. So, as we nudge into yet another holiday season of sharing and feeding and awaiting again the new and forever light of Christ, let's keep showing up for one another—at Bible study, in small groups, among friends and strangers. Let's reach out, welcome, and savor the spirit. And let's keep inviting men to join us—sons, grandsons, fathers, grandfathers, friends new and old.

The door is open, the table is set, the heart is hungry. Time once again to feed each other.

Help LMM Make Advent 2025 Truly Special

Livery year, men from all over America contribute to LMM's annual Advent Devotion series, sharing their favorite Bible passages, memories, life lessons, and personal stories to help make the blessed season even brighter, and the waiting even deeper. Each week brings a new word to pray on and write about—a brief witness, a poem, a Bible verse with a reflection. You can even submit a video!

We're always looking for new voices, fresh perspectives, and even more wisdom from brothers in Christ. If you'd like to participate in this season's Advent Devotional delivered to hundreds of guys every day from November 30 until Christmas Day, please email Kevin Burke at **kevin@lutheranmeninmission.org** and we'll assign you a date and a deadline. We'd love to include your voice and perspective. Thanks, and have a blessed Christmas season.





From the Executive Director, continued from page 2

have made a powerful impact on men across the country.

- Over 89,000 men reached
- By year's end, more than 2,800 men transformed by a One Year to Live retreat
- Over 1,000 people and counting have experienced a Bold Gathering
- 15,000+ have taken advantage of the resources found on Project Twelve
- More than 68,000 Master Builder Bibles distributed

These are the natural results of following the Spirit and remaining focused on our mission. When intentional strategic planning gets added to the mix, bathed in prayer, God things happen. God has prepared LMM for this new reality as the Spirit guided the creation of LMM iS! The goal was to vault LMM to the forefront of Men's Discipleship and Evangelism in the United States. We will never lose sight of where we came from and mission that drives us as we equip and assist local groups to reach men and build genuine disciples of Jesus Christ – men who live out their bold, daring faith.

LMM iS...

Leading: by December 2027, LMM will be Leaders in the Future of Men's Ministry, equipping men for tomorrow and the challenges it brings

Modeling: by December 2027, LMM will Model Tomorrow's leaders Today. We will model disciples by launching a tested and vetted Discipleship Specialist Training, model effective and proven methods for studies and discussions as well as how to effectively partner with men regardless of faith tradition or background

Multiplying: by December 2027, LMM will expand its Impact – actively working with existing and new partners, expanding our current retreats and other offerings, and expanding multi-platform media impact

Sustaining: by December 2027, Stability for Today and Investment for Tomorrow - Increase funding sources and participation to ensure financial sustainability

It is an ambitious plan that asks all of us to step up and support the effort through prayer, participation and, yes, dollars.

It is easy to support the work of LMM. You can mail your gift or use any of the online options mentioned on our website. Better yet, join the Bedrock Society by giving at least \$20 or more each month. Whatever method you choose, please know that you are changing the lives of men as they come to model the character of Jesus. You are inviting new brothers to join us on the walk.

Thank you once again for all your prayers and continued support of LMM. Together we can continue to intentionally disciple men to be bold, daring followers of Jesus Christ! Together we will transform families, communities, and congregations along the way.

In the power of the spirit, God bless,

John Sundquist

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



Ideas For Growing Your Men's Group Ministry

By George A. Freestone

hinking about what your men's group might do to remain interesting to attendees, expand the members' knowledge of their faith, serve the community, and strengthen and improve the networking of the congregation?

Here are a few thoughts from just one Men's Group at Advent Lutheran Church in West Lawn, PA.

Our early monthly meetings focused on education over breakfast at local restaurants, being sure to include time for informal camaraderie and good food. The group has discussed many things, including various world religions and the large number of Christian denominations—doing so by reviewing books, chapter by chapter. We've also had special one-off topics like how to leverage Thrivent or how service groups (such as Common Ground) serve our region.

Additionally, we mix in reading from LMM's Master Builder's Bible for Men, alternating between New and Old Testament books. These sessions have always been open to men from Advent Lutheran and other neighboring congregations.

Of course, it's always a good idea to plan such meetings to fit the schedules of as many men as possible. I recall the time I appealed to our Church Council for something, to which a woman on Council responded with "now you can do something for us." She noted that our 7 a.m. weekday breakfast meetings were not convenient for those working, and that several women wished to attend the interesting



The Advent Lutheran Church Men's Group visits the local Common Ground facility in West Lawn, PA.

programs we offer. So, our four facilitators (always good to have more than one for sustainability reasons) decided to offer quarterly sessions at the church on Sunday, either before or following worship, with food. That has worked out very well. At one noteworthy session, Bruce Becker spoke about the horrific Nickel Mines shootings and the incredibly generous and forgiving response of the affected Amish community (available in video here). As with the monthly men's meetings, these too have been open to friends of Advent Lutheran.

Service is another key activity for the group. Just a sampling of projects we've undertaken over the past: assembling disaster kits for Lutheran

It's always a good idea to plan such meetings to fit the schedules of as many men as possible.

Disaster Relief; providing materials to Safe Berks for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence; facilitating meals for those at Common Ground; distributing Bombas socks to those in need; and odd jobs around the church (like relocating our Little Free Library and Pantry on the church property).

The Men's Group has also sponsored many interesting field trips for all Advent members and friends of the congregation. We have visited the Bible Museum in Washington, D.C., a local Synagogue and Islamic Center for services (after discussion of their religion), Common Ground,



the Lutheran Seminary campuses at Gettysburg and Philadelphia, historical churches (including the oldest continuing operating Lutheran church in North America at Trappe, PA), and, not long ago, Muhlenberg College. These have resulted in much positive feedback.

Around Veterans Day each year, the Men's Group sponsors movie night for all members of Advent and friends. This year we will be showing the movie Risen, a story about a Roman centurion tasked by Pilate to subdue reaction to Christ's resurrection and his journey of doubt and faith.

May these ideas and experiences inspire your men's group to continue being the hands and feet of Christ in your communities.



Another Advent Men's Group outing took them to the oldest continually operating Lutheran church in North America in Trappe, PA.

To honor our congregation's veterans, we publish three documents annually:

- Our Veterans Brochure (updated annually)
- Featured Veterans (each year)
- A Memorial Day Tribute (for deceased veterans)

These are well received and further network our congregation.

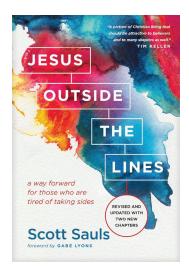
Finally, in 2019 the Advent Men's Group and a North East PA (NEPA)

Synod Men's Ministry committee sponsored a NEPA Synod-wide session for Men's Groups to share **best practices** and responses to challenges. Several visits to local Men's Groups were documented too. This was well attended, highlighting the good work of several men's groups and producing several **deliverables**.

May these ideas and experiences inspire your men's group to continue being the hands and feet of Christ in your communities.

Join A New Book Session With Your LMM Brothers

Jesus Outside The Lines: A way forward for those who are tired of taking sides



s Christmas approaches, join in a lively and deep discussion of a new book that helps us find "middle ground" so we can truly discuss Jesus' teachings without taking sides.

"Christianity always flourishes most as a life-giving minority, not as a powerful majority. It is through subversive, countercultural acts of love, justice, and service for the common good that Christianity has always gained the most ground," author Scott Sauls writes.

Scott Sauls is the founder and president of Healthy Leaders, Inc. and the Sycamore Leaders Community in Nashville, Tennessee. Previously, he served as senior pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church (Nashville) and as a lead pastor at Redeemer Presbyterian Church (New York City). Scott also planted and pastored two churches in Kansas City and St. Louis.

"The kind of voice we increasingly need to help guide deep and respectful conversation around the claims of Jesus is one of humility, kindness, and humor. Judging by this book, Scott Sauls is beginning to emerge as one of our best voices."

Sammy Rhodes

Zoom is the place, and everyone is welcome:

We meet every **Tuesday from 7–8 pm (Central)** and we always use this same invite link on zoom:

Meeting ID 873 6042 3196 Passcode 853568

What Will Be Your Men's Ministry Legacy?

ere we are again on Advent's doorstep, with the birth of our Lord approaching just over the cold and dark winter horizon. Here we are taking a breath to wait for the Savior, celebrate His coming, and carry the Holy Spirit with us, refreshed but ever mysterious. Here we are determined to somehow share our faith with family, friends, and strangers, in the strongest voice we can muster, even as the worldly Christmas tide threatens to sweep us away.



And here I am reaching out to you through these words with love—for you as a fellow brother in Christ, for the Lord as Jesus taught us and as Martin Luther discovered in such grace-filled joy and fury as a young man, and for all Creation and everything in it, starting with (haltingly) myself, my wife, my kids, my grandkids ... and my departed parents. My dad passed in 1998, my mom in 2012, leaving very quiet yet powerful legacies of love in their own ways. They were not churchgoing people, but as I walked through life I witnessed them live out a Christian life as best they could, with unquestioning love for me and my siblings—a love that never faltered through their many stumbles and mistakes. Though they left this world with very little money or material assets, they passed down riches of another, more precious sort. It's the kind of legacy we all hope and pray to leave behind for our loved ones, the kind they'll carry with them as an undying source of light.

I see Lutheran Men In Mission creating such a legacy for men, too. With every passing year I feel the foundation of faith and love that we've built together, through leaders past and present —and, most vitally, through you—only getting stronger. I see the waves of good work, born of inspiration and commitment and constant, joyous work, washing up on the shores of men's lives, buoying them through rough waters and giving them direction for the storms to come. I'm blessed and deeply thankful to be part of this ministry, to call my fellow board members brothers and friends. And just as I've made LMM central to my legacy as a man and follower of Christ, I've committed to help make sure this ministry thrives for those who follow us, both spiritually and financially.

Earlier this year I joined the growing family of men in what we call the Presidents' Legacy Circle —guys who have put in writing their pledge to include LMM in their estates in honor of past board presidents and those to come. So far I have added the organization as a beneficiary on my life insurance policy, and hope I have the means, when the time arrives, to also remember them in whatever other financial way I can. I do this not out of some cold numerical calculation, but out of the realization that everything I have belongs to God, and that in this small and worldly way—a necessary and practical way—I can help assure that LMM remains a "going concern" for thousands of men I'll never know, but with whom I share a sacred bond through faith.

Everything I have belongs to God, and in this small and worldly way ... I can help assure that LMM remains a "going concern" for thousands of men I'll never know, but with whom a share a sacred bond through faith.

So, as we celebrate Advent, Christmas, and the New Year with those we love, I invite you to explore the many ways you can include LMM in your own estate planning, and to join me in a form of stew-

ardship that will truly carry on after we've joined God in His kingdom.

Thank you for your continued belief in and support of Lutheran Men In Mission. I wish you the brightest, safest, and most blessed of holiday seasons.

Your Brother In Christ,

Vic Williams

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

How To Give Through Thrivent Choice

Do you have Thrivent Choice Dollars to direct in 2025? If the answer is yes, please consider dedicating them to the ministry of LMM.

LMM has long participated in Thrivent Choice, every year brings a fresh crop of much-appreciated donations. This year alone we have received over \$1,000 in Thrivent Choice Dollars.

As the Christmas season and the New Year approach, we would deeply appreciate your donation. Simply go to thrivent.com/thriventchoice and select DIRECT near the bottom. Log in to your Thrivent account and follow the prompts. To specify LMM, type in Lutheran Men in Mission in the organization search box.

Thank you for helping LMM make more disciples!

-Rich White, Director of Development





Deepen Your Discipleship Journey

ant to be on the ground floor of LMM's newest ministry opportunity? In 2026, we are partnering with Faith + Life to offer a 12-week, online Discipleship Course for cohorts of up to 10 men at a time, with the first session slated to begin in winter or spring.

Throughout the Zoom-based experience, men of all ages will follow a specially curated series of Bible-driven activities, workshops, and studies that will give them to tools to take their commitment to Christ even deeper. You'll come away with renewed faith and confidence to share their love of Jesus with other guys and build a strong, vibrant, powerful men's ministry in your community.

Sourced by **Luther Seminary's Faith + Lead** online trove of resources developed by ministry leaders, each course will help men take church outside the sanctuary walls,

out into the world, and into the hearts of fathers, grandfathers, brothers, and sons everywhere. After completing the journey, each man will be a certified lay leader in discipleship.

To get on our list of prospective students, please

Men of all ages will follow a specially curated series of Bible-driven activities, workshops, and studies that will give them to tools to take their commitment to Christ even deeper.

fill out a brief online survey by clicking on the link below. In early January we'll get back to you with more details. Thank you for your interest, and have a blessed Advent and Christmas season!

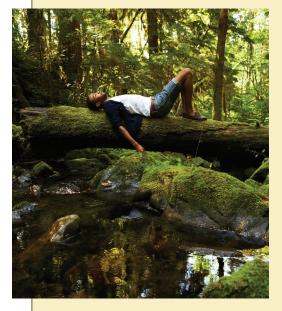
-The board and leadership of LMM

LINK TO LMM DISCIPLESHIP SURVEY

UPCOMING

ONE YEAR TO LIVE retreats 2025-2026





2025

December 12-14, 2025 Camp Carol Joy Holling Ashland, NE

Registration Information
Online Registration

2026

March 20-22, 2026 Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Center (LOMC) Oregon, IL

Registration Information
Online Registration

Coming Soon:

May 17-19, 2026 Good Earth Village Spring Valley, MN

September 18-20, 2026 Black Lake Bible Camp Olympia, WA

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



Grab Some LMM Garb For a Fine Holiday Gift

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?

With Christmas approaching, here's a great gift idea for yourself and your Jesus-loving friends.

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

You'll find a couple of embroidered polo options, a couple of hats and a t-shirt design. So far, men are reporting solid quality and value. In 2026, LMM plans to add even more options.

Once you've worn your new LMM togs and given a few away for Christmas, we'd love to know what you think. Drop us a review at mail@lutheranmeninmission.org. Send a photo too!

Place your order today, and Merry Christmas to all. https://lmm.printful.me/







SCAN FOR IPHONE



SCAN FOR ANDROID

Lutheran Men In Mission 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631

Equipping Men to be Bold and Daring Followers of Jesus Christ lutheranmeninmission.org | projecttwelve.net | boldgathering.com





Lutheran Men in Mission

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 8765 West Higgins Road Chicago, IL 60631 lutheranmeninmission.org projecttwelve.net

Lutheran Men in Mission Online

Find us online at *lutheranmeninmission.org*, or on:









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



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