



LMM

# foundations

Lutheran Men in Mission  
*Building Men for Christ*

Spring 2026

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

## ***How Do We Spend Our Time On God's Dime?*** **Finding Purpose In a Fragmented Era**

by Vic Williams

**The light of Christ does leak through the broken places, sometimes in slight, narrow, shifting shafts, sometimes in a glorious, blinding rush.**

**Men crave adventure, as did LMM's Kevin Burke in a recent backpacking/whitewater trip, but Jesus craves connection with and for us. We can have both, on God's time.**

Last fall a good buddy and I were hanging out by his backyard firepit, just talking life. He's in a second career as a licensed chaplain, following his heart and spirit in service to God—and to the men and women preparing for their transition from this life to the next.

I love hearing his stories about the folks he meets and attends to, mostly out in the Nevada hinterlands. Almost all of them are north of 75 and dealing with all kinds of physical and mental challenges. Some have never stepped foot in a church. Some are atheists or lapsed this or that or estranged from God through attitude or circumstance; some aren't really interested in the comfort my friend is trained to offer

them, through prayer and simple presence, often with ukelele in hand and always with open, non-judgmental ears and heart.

All are facing The End, and yes, some minds and hearts and spirits are changed as my friend shows up and sits with them and gets to know them and their families, if there are families around to know. The light of Christ does leak through the broken places, sometimes in slight, narrow, shifting shafts, sometimes in a glorious, blinding rush. It's tough yet rewarding work, a true calling that he never shies from or regrets taking on. He has a front-row seat to sorrow and regret and shame—how humans, at their extreme, beat themselves up even when their

arms and legs no longer function and their minds are dimming in confusion. He also witnesses incredible, soul-lifting changes of heart and full-on embraces of the unknown: Faith in final, full flower. He's learning about how God makes his love known somehow, some way, no matter the

**Finding Purpose,**  
*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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## There Is More To Do!

**W**hen was the last time someone asked you who you were discipling? Or how are you impacting the men around you in the name of Christ?

Recently I was talking to a potential new church contact and that was the question that came up. As he was expressing frustration that the church does not have a vibrant men's group, I asked him, "Well, who are you currently discipling?" Now you would think for a pastor, this should be an easy question to answer. But you would be wrong!

Too often we assume that people in leadership, particularly in the church, have the answers. At the very least we believe they know where to find the answers. In making these assumptions we lose track of one particularly important reality. Those church leaders and pastors are the same as we are—on a journey of discipleship, growth, and seeking.

Last year I shared that LMM nationally was entering into a new three-year strategic plan simply called "LMM is... ." The main goals of the plan: LMM to be **L**eaders in the future of men's ministry, LMM will **M**odel tomorrow's leaders today, **M**ultiply through expanding LMM's impact, and **S**ustain by creating stability for today an investment for tomorrow.

Part of this plan means we need to start answering questions, rather than just posing them. It means we lead through example, even as we seek to equip others for the challenges of both today and tomorrow—and, by the grace of God, growing the ministry and its impact along the way.

I am happy to share with you that the first year of this new effort was a remarkable success! In 2025 we reached more men than ever before—from those in individual congregations, to men seeking answers, to the more than 2,500 men who have been transformed by One Year to Live retreat. However you look at it, God was doing mighty things through the ministry of LMM. And *you* were an important part of what God has done.

As we look to 2026, I want to share with you three new resources which will be available before summer. They are:

- **A new Men's Discipleship Training Program.** This program is designed to equip those who complete it with the skills and knowledge to disciple men in their world and help others do the same.
- **A new half-day retreat.** In an effort to build better onramps to the One Year to Live retreat and the request of leaders across the country. LMM created a brand new experience which is currently under a working title of the "2 by 4 Retreat." It's a ready-to go-retreat with very little preparation needed other than a group of men hungry to grow together in faith and friendship. It is in final review and will be ready for national distribution by June 1.
- Finally, there will be a **new revised version of the Men's Leadership Guide** available soon. This is a complete revision of the first 32 pages of the Master Builders Bible available as a stand-alone piece to assist in the formation of healthy and vibrant men's ministries.

Additionally, I am excited to share with you that the fundraising dream Hal Derrick several years ago has become reality. You may remember that one of the last things Hal initiated before his untimely passing was to set a goal to raise one million dollars in planned giving pledges by December 31, 2025. Well, Hal deserves a big, "atta boy!" We surpassed that goal, and the work will continue as the Presidents Legacy Circle—helping ensure the work of LMM will continue for years to come.

Our work is far from over, but we take seriously the call of Christ in Matthew 28:19 when He said; "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." As you have heard me say before; We are up for the challenge! I am excited to see what God has instore for not only LMM but each of your congregations! In the words of John 4:25: "The fields are ripe for harvesting"!

In the power of the spirit, God bless,

**John Sundquist**  
Executive Director, Lutheran Men in Mission  
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**In 2025 ... God was doing mighty things through the ministry of LMM. And you were an important part of what God has done.**



**Finding Purpose**, *continued from page 1*

resistance He meets in those last moments of corporal life.

My friend has chosen a truly rich and rewarding “second act” path. He’s living out his faith even though he’s constantly battling doubt. Is he making a difference in these people’s lives? Is he truly bringing the kingdom to them, as Jesus commands? Is he bridging the all-too-common gap between religious habit—going to church, taking communion, reciting scripture and common prayer—and truly walking wet in baptism? Is he making the absolutely “best use” of his time, and God’s?

Those questions are impossible to answer in any quantifiable way, of course. They remain out there, unyielding and opaque. All believers ask them at some point in their lives, and in return they get silence or seek a sliver of clarity on the wind, or in a sermon, or in a favorite gospel passage. That’s faith, right?

As the evening deepened and the fire demanded fuel, we continued to explore the idea of intent versus action, the church of human institution in tension with God’s promises of boundless grace and love. Somewhere along the way the

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title of this dispatch came to me. Though I don’t think God cares a whit about money or accounting “best practices,” what are we poor, lost mortals doing to make the best use of time on His “dime?”

### **Everything Is His**

We hear it from our pastors and read it in the pages of the Bible quite often: Everything we have in terms of time, talent, and treasure belongs to God. His abundance carries us, even when the world seems sparse in spirit, empathy, community, and sanity. Our faith breaks through all that noise, sometimes when we least expect it.

I can think of many of those instances of “faithful surprise” in my own recent existence. When we guys gather for our monthly Bibles and Breakfast study, for instance, there’s always a breakthrough, a light going on in one of our hearts as we relate whatever gospel passage to what’s going on within and with-

**LMM’s board gathers in person twice a year to set a path for our vital ministry and make the best use of their time for business, prayer, and witness.**

out us. And that light spreads and sustains us long after the closing prayer is uttered and we head out the door. Seems like a great use of God’s time (and dime) to me. I know many of you agree.

When our LMM board and executive committee meet each month via Zoom and twice a year in person, we lay out a firm business agenda in keeping with our earthly obligations, but always leave or find ample time for reflection, storytelling, and prayer. We thank the Lord for our time together and feel His presence without fail. We feel his kingdom approach and expand. It’s all His, He’s sharing it gladly and gracefully. Again, time well spent.

### **It’s All Ours, Too**

But our board activities pale in comparison with what you, the disciples and mentors out in the field, are doing in their churches, communities, small groups, retreats, and wherever else the spirit leads you. With God’s breath at your back—let’s call it a mighty wind of faith—you’re bringing men to Christ in countless ways.

**Finding Purpose**, *continued on page 4*

**Finding Purpose**, *continued from page 3*

I think of our brothers in North Carolina who use their time and resources for all manner of outreach, from helping native tribes build structures on their land to making sure their neighbors have enough to eat or a place to stay—and guys across the country who make similar commitments to “the least of these” in their cities and regions.

I think of the LMM volunteers who schedule, plan, and execute every One Year to Live retreat with an ever-freshened sense of wonder and deep commitment to the bonds that powerful weekend produces.

I think of the guys who attend our Bold Gatherings with open hearts and minds to hear the testimonies of fellow believers, and follow up with stories of how their faith journeys found even firmer ground. I think of the hundreds of men who have made gifts of many dimes and dollars to LMM over the years, and those who continue to do so, in whatever way best fits them—and the members of our FDT team who walk with our donors every step of the way through simple, loving

relationship. I rejoice in the fact that, in the past year, we’ve also reached and surpassed our legacy gift commitment goal, as you’ll read elsewhere in this newsletter. Generosity abounds. Grace astounds.

### But Wait, There’s More

I sometimes let nagging worry seep through my thankfulness for LMM and its incredible ministry—concerns that we’ll go astray from making the best of our time on God’s dime.

What worries, you ask?

The brutally fragmented nature of our machine-driven day and age, for one. That doomscrolling and digital addiction in general will suck up more of our waking hours and leave us more mentally and spiritually spent than ever, more lonely, more “apart.” Technology is a two-edged sword; things like Zoom and texting help connect us, but nothing beats the face-to-face and heart-to-heart power of in-person interaction. Good thing LMM, and Christians in general, seem to excel at small group ministry!

I also worry about the widening (it seems) chasm between generations

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of men. LMM hopes to help narrow it through our new Men’s Ministry Guide and online (I know, I know) Discipleship Program, but that takes invitation, and trust, and more than one leap of faith. Can we all work toward building that bridge? Of course we can, with God’s help.

### Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?

Well, we know God certainly can, and does, with loving abandon. He empties His pockets daily for us. He leaves nothing in reserve, and I believe He smiles when we live with that same holy combination of emptying out and filling up for as long as we’re breathing, and long after, into eternity. Breathing is time well spent, too, because breath carries the spirit, which carries us toward the next meeting or act of community service, into the next prayer or ritual. And just as we breathe without thinking about it, we give our time, dimes, and talent—our creativity, our industry, our humanity—without expectation of “return on investment,” or should I say, *earthly* return.

So yes, brothers, as we celebrate the resurrection of Christ and look forward to the coming season of Pentecost, of faith on fire, we can spare the dime, and time. And do, in God’s glory.

**Bold Gatherings bring men together to go deeper in faith—God’s gifts well-spent, and well-shared.**



# Stories of Men's Ministry

## Hungry Men, Filled Hearts

By Dave Newman, LMM Network and Communications Director

Everyone at Zion Lutheran Church in San Antonio, Texas, agrees: Pastor Al Jensen is a people person. Ever since he accepted this call in January 2025, he is commonly described by our congregants as friendly, outgoing, caring, likeable, humorous, authentic—you get the picture. He is a people magnet not only to his self but to Christ. The following is **one** example of ministry he has brought to our church—a **Men's Breakfast**:

**Hungry for Food!** Of course, a main attraction of Men's Breakfast is the hearty food. Pastor Al's wife, Char, and mother, Mary, are the angels of the kitchen: choosing the recipes, shopping beforehand (in bulk for the next month where possible), preparing the dishes the night before, getting up around 4 a.m. on Saturday morning to begin cooking and then cheerfully serving the breakfasts at 8 a.m. sharp—to a group averaging **35 strong!** Every menu to date has been different, every plate has been overflowing, and every man has greatly enjoyed the wonderful meals.

**Hungry for Stories!** The Breakfasts center on stories. Pastor Al arranges for volunteer speakers to provide 30-minute presentations. We have

heard stories from an Air Force fighter pilot, a Medora, ND/Teddy Roosevelt enthusiast, and a baseball card collector. Each of them has been engaging—men typically stay after session with questions.

**Hungry for Structure!** The Men's Breakfast schedule and agenda are announced for all to see: second Saturday of every month from 8:00 until 9:00 a.m. Pastor Al thinks men need to know what they are committing to and promises punctuality. The brief, early morning hour is a nice way to begin the day, but men are not tied up at an event that takes away their whole Saturday.

**Hungry for Fellowship!** These breakfasts intentionally have no pre-requisites nor future expectations. Pastor Al simply wants men to have an opportunity to get together with other men outside of the Sunday worship setting. A men's mixer?? All men, familiar or new, are welcomed and included in conversation; learning about and getting to know each other.

**Hungry for Benevolence!** Men are asked for a \$10 donation to offset the expenses occurred in providing the breakfast. It is announced beforehand that any overages will be given to a good cause. Pastor Al reports that after three recent

# Stories of faith

Men's Breakfasts, \$815.00 has been collected for Habitat for Humanity.

**Hungry for Spirituality!** Possibly—these breakfasts are promoted and served at Zion Lutheran Church after all! They begin and end in prayer. Otherwise, Pastor Al sees the current, fairly secular format as a possible portal to future events. After relationships are fostered awhile, men may be more willing to further explore some deeper, more spiritual events down the road aways.

So perhaps you and your congregation are **Hungry for Ideas?** Pastor Al agreed to this article not because he is mentioned but because of the instances of the Holy Spirit at work through this ministry. He hopes and prays the readers may pick up a useful idea or two to grow Men's Ministry at their congregation.

*To God be the Glory.*





# Blessings and Opportunities

**G**reetings from the warm, dry West Coast, specifically the high steppes of Northern Nevada, where spring is on the doorstep and our Lenten journey continues—a journey that will most likely be completed at the Cross by the time you read this. Either way, I await the day when, together, we once again share those life-giving words at the top of our lungs and bottom of our hearts: “He is Risen Indeed!”

Overall, this Lent has brought so many blessings LMM’s way that our ministry, our reach, and our plans for the immediate and longer future are as strong and true as is our faith in Jesus Christ.

How has God shed his light on us this winter? Let me count the ways:

- Our board completed the first year of its “LMM iS” three-year plan with several milestones reached and more set in place, from the development of a new one-day retreat (currently in its final editing stages with real-time men’s group “testing” to follow), to the initiation of a new Discipleship Training Program that begins this spring, to the planning of several new Bold Gatherings in 2026.
- Men across the country continue to carry the “One Year to Live” torch, planning retreats from Florida to Minnesota to Washington State. This powerful weekend experience remains a pillar of LMM’s ministry and continues to lay foundations for effective, lasting men’s ministries at the local and congregation levels, which is, as we all know, where the rubber of lived reality meets the road of God-given grace.
- Financially we had our most fruitful year of individual giving since the pre-Covid days, putting LMM in a very healthy position to carry out its ministries and continue exploring ways to widen the net. Year-end gifts, consistent and faithful Bedrock Society membership growth, broader expressions of generosity such as stock transfers—all are important to the life of our brotherhood and shared commitment to Christ. Thank you.

**Our plans for the immediate and longer future are as strong and true as is our faith in Jesus Christ.**

**Thank you so much to the men and their families who stepped up to look beyond their earthly lives and include LMM in their plans. Your faith and generosity puts LMM in a great position to remain a vital and effective ministry for decades to come.**

- As John Sundquist notes in his message, our Hal Derrick Memorial Initiative, or HDMI, reached, then surpassed, its \$1 million goal of documented planned estate gifts. On behalf of the entire board and our Fund Development Team, thank you so much to the men and their families who stepped up to look beyond their earthly lives and include LMM in their plans. Your faith and generosity puts LMM in a great position to remain a vital and effective ministry for decades to come.
- Our board is the most committed and faithful crew I’ve ever worked with, and I know we will continue to build on that dimension of our LMM brotherhood as we say goodbye in June to Secretary Jim Schieble and Director of Development Rich White. Both have served admirably over their two three-year terms, and I

will always count them among my dearest and closest brothers as they continue to serve LMM as fellow bold and daring followers of Christ—just as so many board members have done before them. We are asking Rich to serve a third term! If you feel the spirit moving you to serve on our board or know someone who would be willing to step up in this vital capacity for LMM, please contact me at [vic.williams@lutheranmeninmission.org](mailto:vic.williams@lutheranmeninmission.org).

Spring is indeed upon us, and summer beckons. There’s so much opportunity for more growth among men in spirit, in service, in love for each other. Please join me in praying that God’s face will continue to shine upon us, and the gift of LMM.

Yours in Christ,

**Vic Williams**

Board President, Lutheran Men in Mission

[vic.williams@lutheranmeninmission.org](mailto:vic.williams@lutheranmeninmission.org)

# North Carolina Lutheran Men In Mission Celebrates 103 Years

Every spring, LMM gets a special invitation from a group of men who truly are the working, caring, giving body of Christ—North Carolina Lutheran Men In Mission—to attend its annual gathering at a church in the Tar Heel State. And every year we gladly accept.

This year’s gathering took place March 14 at Antioch Lutheran Church in Dallas, about 35 minutes from downtown Charlotte. National LMM’s Fund Development Team had just completed its own annual in-person meeting in Charlotte so several representatives stuck around to join their brothers for breakfast, lunch, an inspiring program featuring a keynote address from LMM Executive Director John Sundquist, and worship and communion presided by the Rev. John Spencer, Jr., and Minister Brad Alexander. Sundquist was honored with a special gift for his service and commitment to LMM on every front, as was LMM Discipleship Consultant Kevin Burke for his 2025 ELCA ordination in Word and Service.

The program revealed the depth and breadth of North Carolina Lutheran Men In Mission’s support of crucial local and regional ministries and other community efforts. Featured ministry partners included Kairos Prison Ministry, Home Grown Food Ministry, and Community Ministry, which continues to offer aid to victims of the devastating Hurricane Helene floods in western North Carolina.

“We’ve been doing this for 103 years, and South Carolina Lutheran Men In Mission has been around for 97 years, so together we have 200 years of ministry in the Carolinas,”

said Men’s Ministry Coordinator Terry Edwards.

LMM offers a big thanks to Edwards and all the bold and daring followers of Christ in North Carolina for their hospitality, deep faith, and commitment to their communities and our national ministry.



## UPCOMING LMM EVENTS & programs



### 2026 One Year To Live Retreats

**April 17-19, 2026**

**Camp Cherokee**

**Blacksburg, SC**

[Registration Information](#)

[Online Registration](#)

**April 24-26, 2026**

**Tracy's Camp**

**Pinewood, SC**

[Registration Information](#)

[Online Registration](#)

**May 15-17, 2026**

**Good Earth Village**

**Spring Valley, MN**

[Registration Information](#)

[Online Registration](#)

**October 23-25, 2026**

**EWALU**

**Strawberry Point, IA**

[Registration Information](#)

[Online Registration](#)

### SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

There are two scholarship funds available to offset the cost of attending a One Year To Live retreat. Please note that these scholarships are only available to first time participants and are not accessible by retreat volunteers.

**Noah's Fund** is dedicated to the spiritual uplifting of young men in today's world. It is available to men between 20 and 30 years of age.

The **One Year to Live Scholarship Fund** is for men of all ages.

For more information about these funds, click on the related link below:

[Noah's Fund Information](#)

[Noah's Fund Brochure](#)

[One Year to Live Scholarship Fund Information](#)

Visit [www.lutheranmeninmission.org/events/one-year-to-live/](http://www.lutheranmeninmission.org/events/one-year-to-live/) for information



# LMM Thank you to our 2025 Donors and Partners

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*Thanks to the help of dedicated and faithful givers like you, LMM revenue surpassed our giving projections for 2025, but there's always room for more in God's kingdom. Please consider inviting a friend to walk alongside you in LMM stewardship.*

\* Bedrock Society Member  
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*Your support goes 100% to LMM's vital, growing ministries, including One Year to Live Retreats, Bold Gatherings, and Project Twelve.*

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# 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](mailto:mail@lutheranmeninmission.org). Send a photo too!

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