

**LMM**

Lutheran Men in Mission
Building Men for Christ

Summer 2026

foundations

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

Empty Nest, Full Heart

By Vic Williams

We have never quite fully loosened our grip, or perceived grip, on our four favorite humans. They'll always be part of our home, no matter where they live.

Like many of LMM's longtime brethren and their significant others, my wife and I have been empty nesters for quite a while now but have never fully embraced that common moniker.

We moved our older daughter to Chicago in early 2021 as Covid-19 restrictions still gripped most of the country, knocking out the 1,916 miles to the Windy City from Reno on I-80 in a little less than three days. She loves it there, not only spreading her artistic wings as a cartoonist but landing good work for the Canadian Consulate.

Now we're standing by as our younger daughter—fresh off earning an MFA in Art Studio from UC Davis (she's a photographer)—and her partner prepare to sell their car and furniture and fly off

to Brooklyn. Their friends have a spare room in their rent-controlled apartment not far from Prospect Park, so they're outta here, and not for the first time. Together they've lived in Portland, Ore., and Dover, NH, as they worked various jobs and reached educational goals, then came back west for two years. She pretty much moved out of our house the day she turned 18 nearly nine years ago, while her sister stuck around through part of college and Covid. But both, on balance, are what you'd call fiercely independent, which, for a parent, is mostly a blessing.

Same goes for their half-siblings from my first marriage, which ended when my son was 5 and his sister was 3. From then on I was the every-other-week-end-and-selected-vacation-time dad, somehow maintaining a strong pres-

ence in their lives though I no longer lived with them full time. After that challenging but truly blessed decade-plus of multilevel parenting, my son attended college in Reno before enlisting in the Army, where as an intel Specialist he did three tours in Afghanistan,



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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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Be the Body of Christ

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"—Romans 10:15

Have you ever thought what it means to be the Body of Christ?

When I reflect on Romans 10:13–17 alongside Micah 6:8 and the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20, I am reminded that these passages form the foundation of Christian discipleship. They call us to act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God, and boldly share the hope found in Jesus Christ.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Which is why Paul immediately asks the important question: *How can people call on Christ if they have never heard about Him?* And how can they hear unless someone is willing to share the Good News?

For more than thirty years, I have asked a simple question: "Did you come to faith entirely on your own?" Every believer points to someone—a parent, friend, pastor, neighbor, coworker, or even a stranger—who faithfully shared Christ with them.

Faith was born through the witness of another.

That truth reminds us that proclaiming the Gospel is not reserved for pastors or missionaries. Every believer is sent. Some are called to distant places, while others are called to their own families, neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities. Wherever God has placed us becomes our mission field.

Sharing Christ is about much more than speaking. Our lives often preach louder than our words. People notice how we treat others, whether we extend grace, whether we welcome the stranger, care for those in need, and love without conditions. As the saying goes, *"The walk talks louder than the talk talks."* Our actions either reinforce or undermine the message we proclaim.

In today's world, many people have encountered judgment before they have experienced grace. As followers of Christ, we are called to build bridges, not walls. We are to meet people where they are—with compassion instead of condemnation, with humility instead of pride, and with genuine love that reflects the heart of Jesus.

When we live this way, we become the hands and feet of Christ. We bear witness not only through our words but through lives transformed by His love. Every act of kindness, every conversation rooted in hope, every moment of mercy becomes an opportunity for someone else to hear the Good News.

The words often attributed to St. Teresa of Ávila beautifully capture this calling:

"Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours."

May we embrace that calling every day. May we go wherever Christ sends us, sharing His love through both our words and our actions. And may those who encounter us hear the message of Christ, come to believe in Him, call upon His name, and discover the hope and salvation He freely offers.

May we truly be the Body of Christ in our homes, our churches, our communities, and our world.

In the power of the spirit, God bless,

John Sundquist

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**The foundation of
Christian discipleship
... call us to act justly,
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then leveraged his experience and security clearance into several gigs as a defense contractor, including a couple years in Djibouti. Now he's a Space Force project manager in Colorado Springs. He turns 40 this summer. His sister, at age 38 and like her siblings a University of Nevada grad, is the only of our quartet of kids remaining in Nevada, living just a half hour away with her firefighter husband and our two grandsons, ages 12 and 10. We just spent her birthday camping in Northern California, reveling in God's creation, His bounty (including homemade chow and copious s'mores) and counting many more blessings.

Through a couple decades of coop-flying on their part and somewhat measured but no less wistful patience on ours, we have never quite fully loosened our grip, or perceived grip, on our four favorite humans. They'll always be part of our home, no matter where they live. And when they come home to visit—as the youngest did over the July 4 holiday weekend, when we escaped the bombast, fearmongering and revisionist history being shoveled out in shameless heaps in our nation's capital by camping (do you sense a theme here?) at a favorite spot just a half hour from our front door—we recapture the joys and, yes, challenges of that-was-then parenthood.

Most of you dads out there can relate, and if you're not yet a dad, well, you will most certainly relate one day, should you choose to go the rewarding, exasperating, soul-affirming parenting route. You will take a life ride that is both



Should you choose to go the rewarding, exasperating, soul-affirming parenting route, you will take a life ride that is both the most common and the most singular in human experience.

the most common and the most singular in human experience. You will make your own mistakes, celebrate the milestones, rue the fleeting battles, discover tender and tough spots in your being that you didn't know existed, weather bouts of terror and inexplicable joy (often within a 10-minute stretch), question yourself constantly if not publicly, and, in the first of many mortal ends, beg the Lord for just one more minute with your kid—even if that minute is long delayed or denied.

Dadhood is beautiful and brutal, easy as breathing and hard as the tempered-steel expectations put on our kids. It's a mirror and a door, and all of us who gaze upon it and walk through it are forever changed in ways we simply can't calculate going in. Nor could our fathers, or theirs before them, or thousands of generations of fathers before them.

It's also one of many "identities" we wear as the years press on and the lessons keep getting learned long after our progeny have become their own humans in full. We are humbled by this identity, just as we are pumped up by a job well done at work or lifted in spirit when we put others' needs above our own. Once a parent, always a parent, yet becoming one also sows the seeds of its destruction as our primary, most powerful human guise. The ride of direct parenthood is a relatively short one, when you think about it. When I think of the mis-

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steps I've made with our kids, the words I can't take back and (worse) the words I kept to myself, I wonder if I was up to the assignment. I wonder if any of us is—at whatever level you found yourself—out of breath, ideas, and patience before stumbling your way back to a more secure but no less challenging place of limitless love. And now that I'm several years into emptynesthood, I wonder if I'll ever be prepared to say goodbye to my children when it's time for me to leave that nest, and my body, and every earthly identity I ever carried as blessing or curse or a maddening mix of the two.

Then I remember: God has a plan for that. Always has, always will. And he brought that plan into focus right here among us, by saying

goodbye to his own Son in the most loving way possible—knowing that He would welcome that same Son home after three days while opening that very same, bright door to the rest of us struggling and questioning and deeply flawed believers.

My head and spirit are spinning at this moment, as I reflect on the enormity of God's grace, and the unbreakable bond of parenthood we share with Him. He's our Father, too. We pray it every day.

But then I remember: every transition from one identity to another, whether grinding and overlapping or sudden and sharp, is the very thing Jesus had in mind when He asked those fishermen to drop their nets, leave the old man in the boat, and follow Him.

[Jesus] asked them not to shrink from the calling or shirk the responsibilities, but to grow in spirit like a mustard seed and welcome the human roadblocks with heavenly courage.

He asked them to abandon whatever identity they were clinging to.

He asked them to leave their fear of drowning and swim for the shore of freedom.

He asked them to jettison the rules and limitations that held them back and open their arms to the Word, the light, and the way.

He asked them not to shrink from the calling or shirk the responsibilities, but to grow in spirit like a mustard seed and welcome the human roadblocks with heavenly courage.

And still they feared, questioned, hid, doubted. Just as we do at certain moments of our blessed lives as partners, brothers, bosses, employees, teammates, builders, destroyers, winners, losers—and, yes, as kids ourselves, and parents of our own kids. They mourned their friend when He hung there and breathed His last, then rejoiced in trembling faith when He showed up in that locked room to rid them of the useless demons of trepidation. He left them there stunned and sent, but never really left them, just as He never really leaves us. Because He is us. And we carry him, just as our kids carry us. What a beautiful circle to behold, here in the summer light or any time of year.

Empty nest? Not really. Full heart in Christ? Yes, sir. Always and forever.



Jorge Coco Santangelo '15

The Call, by Jorge Coco Santangelo

Bold Gathering Season Is Underway

The second half of 2026 is a busy one for LMM's Bold Gathering series, with three gatherings slated before the end of the year. The first played out on July 11 at St. John's Lutheran Church in downtown Des Moines, Iowa, to a small but attentive crowd of bold and daring followers of Christ.

Rather than feature presenters from outside the immediate LMM family, this Bold Gathering zeroed in on longtime LMM servants and friends: Executive Director John Sundquist, Discipleship Consultant Kevin Burke, Emerging Ministries Consultant Kyle Pedersen, and Chad Borgestad, Senior Consultant for The Focus Group, which helps guide LMM's Fund Development Team.

"This is an abbreviated version of Bold Gathering, but powerful messages are being shared," said Burke during the event via LMM's Facebook page. Added Pedersen, "the guys in audience were engaged, maintained eye contact, and a bunch of guys were actively taking notes and nodding as I talked, so I took that active feedback as proof that they were interested and the topic was engaging!"

Burke spoke about his trip to Ethiopia July 1-13, an annual pilgrimage partially focused on his family's non-profit called (W) HOLE in the Roof. He and his wife

Amanda, who serves as a Lutheran pastor in South Carolina, partner with The Fares Medium Clinic in Addis Ababa. In 2021 they began securing sponsorships for families with special needs kids. "Currently we have 20 families and about half of them have sponsors," Burke says.

Sundquist put on his pastor's cap to concentrate on who God, Christ, and the Word are central to LMM's ministry. He built his Bold Gathering message on four pillars:

Sent – God sends every believer into the world.

Proclaim – Share the Good News through words and actions.

Hear – Others encounter Christ through faithful witness.

Believe – Hearing leads people toward faith and salvation.

Borgestad (aka "Gampu") shared lighthearted stories from his life's journey through marriage, raising a family across the country, and entering the joyful season of grandparenthood. Reflecting on his experiences, he highlighted the incredible opportunity and responsibility we all have—regardless of our stage in life—to step up, share our wisdom, and mentor the next generation. Through humor, personal anecdotes, and relatable insights on family dynamics, Borgestad's message offered an inspiring look at making a lasting impact.

Finally, Pedersen took the podium for his presentation, "The Power of Community in the Palm of Our Hands." Through some personal anecdotes and stories, he brought forward some practical and powerful ways to foster new community with men in your circles of influence via the ubiquitous practice of group text. For many men, it's a



gateway to consider engaging and modeling positive self disclosure.

"There is something that happens to each of us multiple times per day," he said. "It happens without us really noticing or giving it a second thought. Recent studies on brain science reinforce the brain chemistry that happens when this event occurs, and how the feel-good

Bold Gathering, continued on page 6

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dopamine hit makes it memorable —and most folks crave more of it.

“What is this event?” Pedersen continued. “It’s a simple text message that shows up on our phone. The buzz. The ding. The chirp... or even picking up your phone after it’s been in Do Not Disturb mode and seeing messages. There is a connection and the foundation of digital community!”

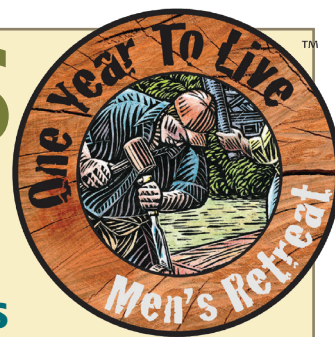
The July Bold Gathering talks will be posted at www.boldgathering.com and other LMM social media channels soon.

The next Bold Gathering is Aug. 15 at Peace Lutheran in Gahanna, Ohio, and closing out the year’s slate is Faith Lutheran in Golden, Colo., on Nov. 14. Stay tuned as speaker spots are filled and each meeting’s theme comes into focus.

Bold Gathering is made possible through charitable contributions. If you would like to support Lutheran Men in Mission and future Bold Gatherings, please click [here](#). Thank you!

CORRECTION: In the Spring 2026 *Foundations* newsletter, an article about the 103rd annual gathering of NCLMM named the host church as Antioch Lutheran in Dallas, NC, but the host church was actually St. Paul’s Lutheran in Dallas, NC. We regret the error.

UPCOMING LMM EVENTS & programs



2026 One Year To Live Retreats

September 25-27, 2026

**Tracy’s Camp
Pinewood, SC**

Registration information
coming soon!

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/ for information

LMM Attends Rostered Ministers Gathering



In early July, LMM joined pastors from across the nation in Indianapolis for the annual Rostered Ministers Gathering. Over two days, leaders reconnected, discussed new and ongoing ministries, and enjoyed fellowship. At right, Executive Director John Sundquist, who was a featured speaker, made the rounds with newly elected LMM Board Secretary and Wisconsin-based pastor Tim Schroeder. At left, Sundquist joined LMM Board Vice President and Nevada-based pastor Jason Adams and Fund Development Team member and retired Illinois pastor Pete Hinrich at a Triple A Indianapolis Indians-Toledo Mud Hens game. Thanks to all for successful and spirit-filled gathering!



LMM in Sound Financial Shape, Thanks to You!

By Rich White, Development Director

As we pass the halfway mark of 2026, it's time to celebrate the spirit of financial stewardship that continues to fuel every element of our important ministry, from events to online content. On behalf of the entire board of LMM, I'd like to personally thank you for your faithful support. Following is an excerpt from our Annual Report.

In 2025 LMM saw a 19% increase in donor contributions over 2024. Annual giving from individuals, congregations, and Synods totaled \$228,000 with another \$101,000 from estate bequests. The total giving in 2025 was a 60% increase over 2022 which is our baseline year. In a typical year, giving from individuals, congregations, and

Synods provides 70-75% of LMM's total income.

We had 179 donors last year which was a slight increase over 2024 and a 16% increase over 2022. These donors came from 32 different states (including Alaska) which highlights the scope of LMM's reach. There were 144 donors who gave \$100 or more which made them eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting. There were 36 members of the Bedrock Society who give monthly via a credit card or ACH transaction.

For the past two and a half years we had the Hal Derrick Memorial Initiative (HDMI) to honor Hal and to raise \$1 million in documented estate gifts. The initiative ended on December 31, 2025. I am pleased to

Thank you for your faithful support!

report that we exceeded our goal! We received \$100,626 in bequests from 4 estates and \$960,875 in documented estate gifts from 15 individuals for a grand total of \$1,061,501. We believe that Hal is extremely pleased as he looks down on us!

Thrivent Choice 'Free Dollars'

Thrivent has upgraded Thrivent Choice to make having an impact even easier. Your full annual 2026 Choice Dollars® balance is now available upfront, so you can direct the entire amount any time until December 31. Please consider designating Lutheran Men in Mission as the recipient, and you can do it now to "set it and forget it." Thanks for your support!

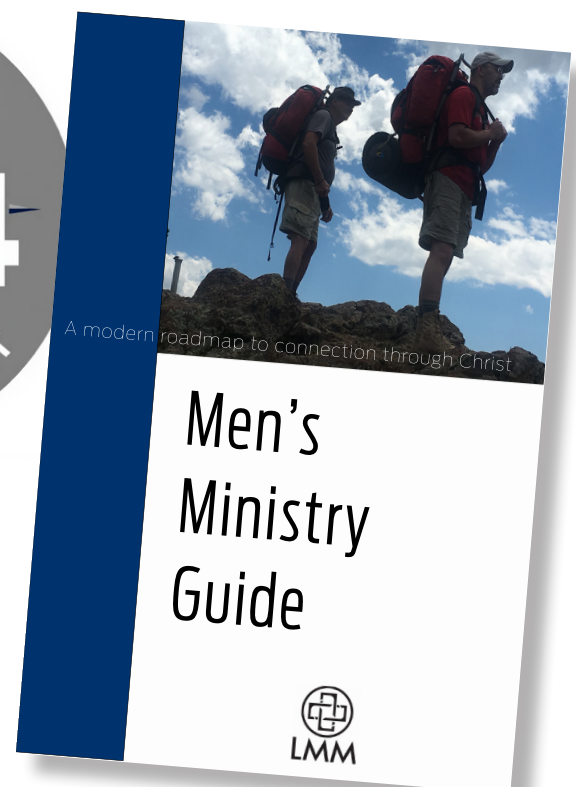
Check Out LMM's Newest Ministry Tools

Two of the biggest elements of the new "LMM iS" three-year strategic plan are up and available online. Both are ready to use and will help you realize your men's ministry goals.

If you're looking to establish, re-establish or expand a vibrant ministry within your congregation, look no further than our new LMM Men's Ministry Guide, a comprehensive and easy-to-follow handbook for building faithful and powerful small group gatherings, events, and retreats. [Download](#) the print-ready PDF today.

Speaking of retreats, our brand new 2x4 "retreat in a box" is great place to start at the congregational level—a turnkey, scripture-based half-day program that is sure to get your guys engaged and ready for the next level ... with your own One Year to Live event the ultimate goal. It's also available for download right [here](#).

We're working on yet more 2x4 retreats to be rolled out later in 2026 and beyond. Stay tuned for more information in our weekly newsletters and right here in *Foundations*.



The Power of Prayer Is Everywhere



I've long been of the mind that we can't escape prayer. It's all around us.

Every time my wife and I walk the dog in silence through the stretching shadows of a warm summer evening, we are in prayer.

Every time I think of a faraway friend and ask myself how he or she is faring, I'm in prayer.

Every time I cook a meal for family or friends and serve it with no expectation beyond that we enjoy it together and spice it with generous laughter—we are in prayer, whether we uttered a formal “grace” or not.

Every time I apologize or accept an apology, I'm in prayer.

Every time I awake and breathe thanks for, well, waking up, I am in prayer.

Every time I fall asleep after a full, fruitful day, I'm in prayer.

And every time I recognize God for bringing me whatever or whoever is blessing me at that moment—including the men of LMM, and the work they are doing for other men, through the power of the spirit and the closeness of Christ—I'm obviously in prayer. It's everywhere.

What brings this realization to mind, heart, and spirit? Besides the fact it's always buzzing in the background, just as prayer itself is, I am reminded of the ubiquity and unrelenting power of prayer by one of several Christian writers I follow on Substack, including a young pastor named Clint Schnekloth who pens a blog called *Lutheran Confessions*. He shares my belief that prayer is constant, like breath itself:

You can pray by heart, by which I mean either memorized prayers (I love these, and repeat the Lord's Prayer and other short prayers often), or just say whatever comes from your heart out into the universe and anticipate Christ will join you in those prayers to God. A favorite way of thinking about this for me is to assume that some of our shortest requests are themselves prayers. Classically, we can pray: *Please. Thank you. You're awesome. I'm sorry.* You can pretty these up into Book of Common Prayer level poetry or just express them emotionally in wordless yearnings. Doesn't matter much. But if the Psalms teach us anything at all, it's that you can pray basically anything at all.

So can we avoid praying?

I don't think so.

Even so, Clint is, like so many believers, vexed by one nagging reality:

I have, however, like anyone in the strange situation of attempting to maintain a long conversation with someone who never replies, struggled some with prayer.

I hear that. The struggle to take what we commonly think of as prayer to the human level of back-and-forth conversation with an unseen by all-powerful God is real. God doesn't answer, at least in a voice we can hear through the air. But then again, He does answer, doesn't He? He always comes through once we take a moment to realize it. I know this because the ministry of LMM comes through for guys in so many wonderful ways—expected and unexpected—that there's only one possible source. God equips every one of us, through the Gospel, through the words of his Son, to take on challenges such as the new LMM Discipleship course I'm taking as we speak alongside seven other guys (I hope you will consider taking part in a future cohort). He equips us to show up for book and Bible study, join in on Bold Gatherings, attend retreats, and donate our time, talent, and treasure—all of which strengthens our ministry, and therefore builds the body of Christ.

And so, as another long, hot summer plays out, I remember that we are all in prayer, together, no matter the miles between us, no matter if we've ever met personally. We are in this LMM journey together, led by a spirit unceasing and all-loving.

Let's say it together: God, *thank you. You're awesome. Sorry* if we every doubted you. And *please* keep the lines open. We know you will. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

Vic Williams

Board President, Lutheran Men in Mission

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Every time I recognize God for bringing me whatever or whoever is blessing me at that moment, I'm obviously in prayer. It's everywhere.

**Please. Thank you.
You're awesome.
I'm sorry.**

Stories of Men's Ministry

An LMM Primer

The following interview with LMM Board President Vic Williams appeared in the Sierra Pacific Newsletter earlier this summer. If you are a Netcaster or have a relationship with someone at the synod level in your region, feel free to copy and offer to their communications department. Help spread the good word about LMM's ministry to guys in your neighborhood!

What is LMM?

LMM is Lutheran Men in Mission, one of the last remaining national ministries to men whose primary focus and mission is discipleship and evangelism. Our goal is to intentionally disciple men to become bold, daring followers of Jesus Christ. We were chartered by the ELCA as a partner ministry in the 1990s but for nearly two decades have operated as a standalone, financially self-sustaining religious organization. We welcome all who identify as men without regard to denomination or past faith affiliation. Our website is www.lutheranmeninmission.org, or men can reach it by simply typing in www.lmm.men.

How does LMM support Lutheran men?

LMM supports and empowers men of all faiths, ages, and backgrounds, though most of the thousands of guys we have reached over the years, and continue to reach, identify as Lutheran. We work hard and with open arms to give men the tools to start their own small group ministries, plan and stage retreats and other events, and become engaged enthusiastic disciples for Christ. Our main ministries include Bold Gatherings (www.boldgathering.com), held two or three times a year and featuring speakers who share their faith messages in person and online; One Year to Live, a powerful lay-led weekend retreat that deepens men's relationships with God, their families, and each other; and Project XII (www.projecttwelve.net), an ongoing, multi-discipline and multid denominational journey into the Gospel and emerging ministries such as our popular Lifelines Bible study sessions, all of which are available online for no charge. We also offer weekly online book and Bible studies, are introducing new "2x4" mini-retreats for congregational men's groups, hosting in-depth online Discipleship Training Programs in conjunction with Faith + Lead beginning this summer, and reach directly into congregations and synods by identifying and equipping men to take part our growing Ambassador and Netcaster opportunities. Finally, we maintain

Stories of faith

There's simply nothing more powerful than a supportive foundation of fellow guys who share a passion for Christ and want to bring more light into their own lives, and the lives of those they love.

constant and clear avenues of communication with men via our quarterly Foundations newsletter and Ambassador-Gram, weekly e-mail newsletters, and letters and notes to donors at every level. I am blessed to be entering my third year as president of a very active, faithful, and engaged board. We're always searching for new ways to reach and raise men up in faith—our ministry is vital in the face of rampant male loneliness, disengagement, and economic and social challenge.

How has LMM made a difference in your faith?

In the nearly 20 years that I have been involved in LMM, I have taken my faith journey in directions and to personal heights I could not conjure on my own, certainly not in the years my faith wavered before I became a practicing Lutheran by joining Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Reno, Nevada. While the theology of grace carried an unexpected and powerful resonance for me in my own church setting, LMM helped me truly put my faith into action outside my church's walls and for men in my immediate orbit and across the country, which in turn ignites in them a more active faith for their families, in friendship, and throughout the travails of life. I have made countless friends who I now count as brothers. Being a fellow seeker and believer in the LMM universe of identifying, equipping, and mentoring has helped me to become a more fearlessly faithful father, husband, grandfather, and friend. I've embraced my creative spirit and talents as a loved child of God. And I'm constantly challenged in the best possible way, just as the original twelve disciples were challenged. There's simply nothing more powerful than a supportive foundation of fellow guys who share a passion for Christ and want to bring more light into their own lives, and the lives of those they love. LMM is a true life-saver—and life-giver. I invite all men to join us in our journey, wherever they are in theirs.

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/>



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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



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your blessings**

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

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