

# Prairie Fire:

## Building Bridges

August 5, 2017



May the God of **endurance** and **encouragement** grant you to live in such **harmony** with one another, in accord with **Christ Jesus**, that together you may with one voice **glorify** the God and **Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore **welcome one another** as **Christ has welcomed you**, for the glory of God.  
Romans 15:5-7

Nebraska District congregations and schools are finding unique ways to be more visible and present in their communities. The Nebraska District would like to encourage congregation members to continue these connecting events while equipping them to be intentional about building meaningful relationships with those they meet.

**YOU** are invited to join others from across Nebraska for a one-day workshop designed to equip and encourage you to build caring relationships within your various vocations of family, workplace, church, neighborhood, and recreational communities.

The day will be filled with speakers and presentations designed to dig deeply into the topic of building relationships with others in the body of Christ, with family members, with co-workers and neighbors, and with those in our communities outside of the church, all for the purpose of sharing the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

**Where:** Concordia University, Seward  
**When:** Saturday, August 5  
from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
**Cost:** \$20 per person - includes lunch

## Agenda

- 8:30 a.m. Registration and Refreshments
- 9:30 a.m. Opening and Welcome
- 9:45 a.m. Keynote Speaker
- 10:30 a.m. Session #1
- 11:30 a.m. Lunch (provided on-site)
- 12:30 p.m. Session #2
- 1:30 p.m. Break
- 1:45 p.m. Session #3
- 2:45 p.m. Break
- 3:00 p.m. Keynote Speaker
- 4:00 p.m. Closing Prayer and Sending

PO Box 407 | Seward, NE 68434  
ndlcms.org /prairie\_fire | 888-643-2961



**Nebraska  
District LCMS**

# Keynote Speakers



## Why is Community Important?

**President Richard Snow, Nebraska District**

We are created for community. "It is not good that man should be alone." That verse is about more than marriage. It's about community. We are relational beings because we are created in the image of a relational God. God exists in relationship as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Whether extrovert or introvert, we long for connection. Ultimately that connection can only be found in relationship with one another as we are united in Christ — in a God who IS love.

## What is My Part in My Community?

**Rev. Greg Finke**

Christians are uncomfortable with the thought of being a missionary to their neighborhoods, workplaces, or schools. The reason for this is simple: We have one very important thing precisely backwards in our minds. What are the mindset and practices for mission that Jesus gives us in order to move us from nervous to ready?



---

# Breakout Sessions

The sessions are divided into tracks that usually focus on building a relationship in a particular vocation or foster growth in a specialized area. Participants are invited to dig deeply into one track by attending all three sessions in that area, or attend any three sessions from any track to cover many different areas. Congregations are encouraged to bring several people to attend different sessions. Your pre-registration helps us have adequate room and materials for all participants.

## United in Christ, for the Church and the World: a District Vision for Ministry

President Richard Snow, Nebraska District LCMS

### **1. Our Relationship to God**

The source of our faith, our unity as the body of Christ, and our witness to the world all begins in the Word and Sacraments. We are called together for worship to receive God's gifts in His Word proclaimed and sacraments given. We are called to dig deeply into the Word in study and prayer.

### **2. Our Relationships to One Another**

We are not just called to meet together, but to work together as the body of Christ. This session will look at tools that help us move together as His body. We have at our fingertips tools to build up the body: reconciliation, strategic planning, evaluations, budgets, and opportunities for visitation and encouragement.

### **3. Our Relationship to our Community**

Bodies do need rest, but they were created for motion. The body of Christ is created to be at work in the world. Jesus said, "Whatever you did for the least of these, you did it also for me." How do we serve the least, the little, the lost? And how might that service lead to opportunities to "share the hope that lies within us"?

# Living as an Everyday Missionary

Rev. Greg Finke, Director, Dwelling 1:14

## 1. Joining Jesus on His Mission

How can you and your people join Jesus on His mission in the places you already live, work, and play? In this session, Greg will show you how to live as an everyday missionary and how your congregation can support such a mission lifestyle.

## 2. Clear and Simple Discipleship

Leaders can't develop a system for discipling people until we know how to personally disciple people. In this session, Greg will lead us through a process of clarifying and simplifying our understanding of what discipling is so we can rediscover how to disciple people the way Jesus does in the Gospels.

## 3. Joining Jesus as a Congregation

What is the best way to make discipling people to participate in the mission of God the core of what your congregation does? In this session, Greg will identify the key things leaders can do to shift the congregational culture so that making disciples becomes the new normal. It's simpler and a lot more fun than you think.

# Building Relationships with our Muslim Neighbors

Rev. Jim Haack and Emad Tawadrous,  
Peace International Friendship Center, Omaha

## 1. The Teachings of Islam: The Qu'ran and Beyond

We may know a few facts about Islam from its main text, but what about other texts and traditions that shape how Islam is practiced? There is more to this worldview than meets the eye...and it's vitally important to be aware of these influences.

## 2. Muslims in America

Muslims live among us in every state, even in many rural areas. Some stand out. Some blend in. Some adopt American culture and values. Some do not. Almost every one of us has interacted with – or will interact with – these neighbors. The answer Jesus gave to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" applies to every single Muslim living among us.

## 3. Reaching Muslims with the Gospel

Everybody needs the Gospel! Muslims come from a non-Western worldview that poses its own unique challenges to our approach. Recalling that Jesus and the Apostles were Middle Easterners will be helpful as we cultivate trusting relationships in order to testify to the reason for the hope that we have.

# Healthy Relationships: Why and How

Rev. Justin Hannemann, LIMHP, LMFT;  
GracePoint Institute for Relational Health,  
Omaha

## 1. Why Are Relationships Important?

We are fearfully and wonderfully made. The physiology and chemistry of our brains testify to the type of relationships God would have us pursue. This session will provide those in attendance with an overview of the neurobiology of relationships that's easy to understand.

## 2. Healthy Relationships and Reconciliation in the Modern Family

Healthy conflict and reconciliation in families is one of the most important things needed today, but how can it be done? This session will explore the principles and practices of relational health, especially as they relate to the natural rupture and repair processes so necessary in Christian families.

## 3. Apology and Forgiveness in the Congregation

The Church is the Body of Christ, but it is made up of sinful humans who sometimes wound or offend each other. When those hurts are left unattended, conflict can grow and stifle the gracious message of the Gospel. This session will look at the process and benefits of apology and forgiveness in the congregational family, both among members and between church workers and members.

# Engaging the Wandering

Rev. Todd Kollbaum, LCMS Rural and Small  
Town Mission

## 1. The Big Picture

Every congregation has members who, for whatever reason, have become less involved in worship attendance and other congregational activities. Reaching out to inactive members is an important part of the mission work that the Lord calls and enables us to do. In this session, we will explore the reasons why we want to reach out to inactive members, what we have done in the past and what we should do in the future. We will focus our attention on Matthew 18 in order to change perceptions of why we do what we do.

## 2. The Strategy

In this session, we will take some broad brushstroke looks at why members become inactive and how we might communicate with them in their particular circumstances.

## 3. The Method

In this session, we will look at how we might engage inactive members with an eye toward building interpersonal relationships. We will personalize the process rather than attempt to apply a "fix."

## Building Relationships Through Educational Opportunities

Eunice McCarty, Director of Family Ministries,  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Grand Island

### 1. How to Engage the Mission Field in Your Early Childhood Center

Parents are paying to bring their children to your center every day. What can you do to intentionally reach these families? Come hear ideas from the District's Early Childhood Consultant and share some of your own.

### 2. Witnessing to Children and Families Through Outreach Events

The first step to building relationships with those in our community is meeting them. Outreach events hosted by a congregation or school are great ways to connect neighbors with your members. The events are often non-threatening and lots of fun for everyone! Come hear real-life examples of outreach events and how these can lead to witnessing opportunities.

Bethany Werner, DCE, Messiah Lutheran  
Church, Lincoln

### 3. Intergenerational Summer Sunday School Builds Relationships

Summer provides a break in the routine and an opportunity to try something new! An intergenerational Sunday School provides a chance for families to study God's Word together, model a pattern for family devotions, and grow in relationships with the body of believers.

## Demographics

Nathan Meier, Lutheran Church Extension Fund

### 1. Your Local Mission Field

Learn about the demographic tools available to congregations and other ministries that give a big picture view of your surrounding community, including information about population, households, income, ethnic diversity, religious affiliations, and more.

### 2. Who Is Your Neighbor?

Learn about population group profiles known as Mosaic Groups and Segments and how they provide a unique, in-depth perspective on the people in your community.

### 3. Next Steps For Ministry

Learn about the ministry insights available for the people in your community, including ideas and resources for outreach to them.

## Jesus is the Boss That Builds the Bridges ... Through You!

Rev. Dr. Brent Smith, Mission Development  
Counselor, Mission Central

### 1. Multi-Site Mission at Home and Abroad

Jesus multiplied the Word in new places by carrying out His mission in multiple locations and among people of different cultures. Since the beginning, the community has been connected to the Gospel using a variety of venues. This session introduces seven areas of focus to transition from one ministry location into multi-site mission. It will follow the Mission Central model that emphasizes simple systems and personal relationships. It will provide examples of direct and indirect multi-site mission from LCMS missionaries at home and around the world.

### 2. Mission Central - Updates from Latin America & Africa

This session will focus on the latest updates on God's mission through your missionaries in Latin America and Africa. Come learn (1) where the missionaries are located and why; (2) what regional seminaries are multiplying professional church workers; and (3) see video direct from the mission field of building bridges into any community.

### 3. Mission Central - Updates from Asia & Eurasia

This session will focus on the latest updates on God's mission through your missionaries in Asia and Eurasia. Come learn (1) where the missionaries are located and why; (2) what regional seminaries are multiplying professional church workers; and (3) see video direct from the mission field with ideas for building bridges into any community.

## The Fruit of Life Together

Rev. Dustin Lappe and Tony Sanchez, Messiah  
Lutheran Church, Lincoln

### 1. Living as the Body of Christ

Our bodies have many parts, but those many parts make up only one body. So it is with the body of Christ. What then is our part in the body of Christ? And if everyone is living out their part, is the body healthy and growing and full of love?

### 2. Growing Together and Reaching Out

We are created for community. We are made for relationship. As we experience the joy of being part of the body of Christ, there are two important rhythms of life that we want to be aware of: growing together and reaching out.

### 3. Little Changes Leading to Big Impacts

As we create and cultivate meaningful relationships with both those inside and outside the church, the idea of building bridges that lead to witnessing and outreach can be intimidating. But reaching out doesn't have to be overwhelming. The reality is that the littlest of changes can lead to some of the biggest impacts in the lives of others.

## Every One His Witness

Rev. Mark Wood, LCMS Office of National Mission

### 1. LASSIE – A Simple Approach to Witnessing in Your Everyday Life

The Gospel is simple, but our world is complicated. How can we go about sharing the Good News of Jesus with people in our workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, and families without causing offense and destroying relationships? The LASSIE (Listen-Ask-Seek-Share-Invite-Encourage) approach to witnessing provides a practical and non-threatening way to “give a defense of the hope that is within you” in all of life’s circumstances ... and to do it with “gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). Through LASSIE you can avoid the fear, shame, and angst of many approaches to witnessing and experience the joy of being Christ’s witness in your everyday life.

### 2. Head, Heart, or Hands? Connecting to Communicate God’s Word

We are fearfully and wonderfully made, but not everyone is made in the same way. Our differences can (and often do) get in the way of communicating well with each other, including when we try to share the Good News of Jesus with people. “Head, Heart, or Hands” is a way of considering the primary ways in which other people connect and communicate so we can engage them more effectively. Whether you’re a Head person, a Heart person, or a Hands person, “Head, Heart, or Hands” provides some practical insights in how best to connect and communicate with the people who are like you and those who are different than you.

### 3. Being Intentional: Witness and Outreach Working Together

Do you find that your congregation’s outreach activities keep you busy but don’t result in new people becoming part of your church? Many congregations find that they are able to make connections with new people through their outreach events, but those connections don’t last much longer than the event. Moving people from the initial connection to becoming active in the faith life of a congregation calls for an intentional process that brings witness and outreach together. Using tools called the Outreach Funnel and Pathway, you can shape the Connect To Disciple outreach process into an effective outreach approach for your congregation.

## Operation Barnabas

Rev. Michael Moreno

### 1. Five Steps to Make Your Congregation Military Friendly

Your church has the opportunity to reach out to military families and veterans. By taking simple steps, your congregation can share the love of Christ and increase visibility in your community.

### 2. Five Steps to Connect with the Military Community

Your town has a vibrant military community. The American Legion and VFW are just the tip of the iceberg. By developing relationships with these organizations, your congregation can share the love of Christ with military families in your town.

## How to Reach and Keep Millennials in the Church

Rev. Keith Haney, Mission Facilitator, Northern Illinois District

### 1. Make Room for Meaningful Relationships

The fact is that if you want to connect with Millennials in your family or those outside your church walls you have to build relationships with them. Sounds simple, right? Yes and no, because the type of relationships Millennials seek is a close personal friendship with adults in the church. What does this look like and how can it be done? Come learn about this generation and what they are seeking.

### 2. Connect Jesus to Their Culture

The Bible is clear that each generation is to pass along God’s unending truths to the next. How can we expect millennials to navigate the culture of today without a firm faith in Jesus and His Gospel message? The people of the church are in a wonderful position to teach Millennials cultural discernment and to facilitate a connection with Jesus that will bless them, the congregation, and the community.

### 3. Give Them Opportunities to Serve

It’s often said that millennials don’t want meetings – they want action! How can your church make room for these young adults to serve today in a way that helps them connect the rich history of Christianity with their own unique work to which God has called them?

## Starting New Ministries

Rev. Peter Meier, Director, Center for United States Mission

### 1. Start New to Reach New

This session will review the “why” of starting new ministries and look at various models for starting new. Participants will discover how to determine which potential models might work best in their context.

### 2. Five Habits That Bless

Participants will learn five simple habits for building relationships. These habits can be used as foundations for starting any new ministry.

### 3. Six Steps to Starting New

As you begin to strategize for starting new ministries, these six steps will guide you in your thinking, planning, and action.

# Special Ingathering

A special ingathering for hygiene kit items will take place at Prairie Fire. ALL participants are invited and encouraged to bring any of the following items to be assembled into hygiene kits. These kits will then be made available at the end of the day for participants to take home and distribute to elderly, fixed-income, single-parent, or other households in their communities. This is one way to care for or build relationships with others. Please consider bringing the following with you to Prairie Fire, even if you don't register for the assembly sessions:

- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Full-size bar of soap (in wrapper)
- Disposable razor
- Travel shampoo/conditioner
- Nail file/emery boards
- Band Aids - regular size
- Gallon zip-top storage bags

## Hygiene Kit Assembly

### Thrivent Financial

#### 1, 2, 3. Action Team - Learn and Do

Come hear how Thrivent wants to support your congregation's efforts to connect with your community by offering Action Teams which provide funding for outreach or educational activities, then practice an Action Team by assembling hygiene kits. This session will be offered during all three session time slots until all materials are assembled.

## Special Thanks

A very special thanks to these generous financial supporters that partnered with the Nebraska District to make Prairie Fire possible:



For providing an action team and general event sponsorship



For providing a grant for the parish nursing convocation

# Parish Nursing Convocation

## Building Relationships Through Parish Nursing

Chris Blanke, RN, MS, CPH, District Representative for Parish Nursing and Congregational Health Ministries

### 1. Connecting with Others Through Health Ministry

All participants are invited to hear an overview of health ministry. Participants will learn how health ministry reaches members and the surrounding community in a unique way.

### 2. Growing Your Health Ministry

Whether you want to get started or have had a health ministry for a while, this session will energize you for health ministry. Learn of the many ways to use your gifts for ministering to members and for reaching out into the community. Networking with others is part of this session. Come away with many new ideas!

### 3. Roles of Parish Nurses: Coordinating Volunteers, Connecting to Resources, and Health Advocate.

This session will explore several of the roles parish nurses can serve in a congregation. Participants will leave with many new resources. The target audience is for those in health ministry, but others can benefit.

## Special Notes

- Registration and \$20 payment deadline is Monday, July 17.
- On-site registration will take place beginning at 8:30 a.m. in the Thom Leadership Education Center (TLEC) at Concordia.
- Maps of Concordia's campus and room assignments for breakout sessions will be available at registration.
- For mapping purposes, Concordia's street address is 800 N. Columbia Ave., Seward.
- Lunch is included with registration and will be provided on Concordia's campus. Please share any special dietary needs on your registration form.
- Sessions will take place in the TLEC building. Large group gatherings will be held in Weller Auditorium. Good walking shoes are encouraged.